

WHAT IS A "STREET"?

Every branch of labor, sport or other human interest acquires a vocabulary of its own, from handling a pick and shovel or "tag" to electrical machinery design or war. Many times words acquire meanings in these vocabularies different from those of their every-day use. It is easy to see why these special meanings develop, but every effort should be made to limit the number of them because of the doubt as to the meaning which may arise when the terms are used in a popular or semi-popular description. And the more nearly the subject is concerned with the interests of the public, the more should the ambiguity of these special meanings be avoided.

A recent instance is the publication by New York City of its corrected regulations for street traffic as prepared by the police department, which starts with "Definitions: (a) The term street shall apply to that part of a public highway intended for vehicles." Now there is only one reason for this that we can conceive of—that "street" is a shorter word than roadway, and one or the other must be used a dozen times or more in the regulations. But there are twenty reasons why "street" should not be so limited in its meaning as to exclude the sidewalks.

Webster defines a street as a "thoroughfare bordered by dwellings or business houses." The courts have ruled that the word street is understood to include the sidewalks. The police department itself, outside of the traffic force, is concerned with the street as a whole, including the sidewalks. It is very unfortunate that the citizens, who have only in recent years been educated to appreciate that "pavement" is not a term specifically designating a sidewalk, should now be confused by instructions given by a department of the municipal government to make a wrong use of the word street.

Misuse of other common words in these regulations are so absurd as to be amusing and liable to mislead only foreigners who are just learning the language. For instance, the definitions state that a horse is a vehicle; that a goat, if drawing a cart, is a horse; that a baby carriage is not a vehicle, but a wheelbarrow is, and the man who is pushing it is a "driver," and no driver shall be less than 16 years old.

There are abundant words in common use to specifically designate every idea which is embodied in these regulations, without this misuse of the language which is not only slovenly and uncalled for, but is liable to be misleading (one does not generally think it necessary to turn to a glossary of terms when reading about "horses," "vehicles" and "streets") and offers possible opportunity for legal defense against prosecution for an infraction of the regulations.

—Municipal Journal.

NO FREE TELEPHONES IN BUSINESS HOUSES.

The Los Angeles, Cal., city council has decided to leave the existing telephone rates in effect during the ensuing fiscal year commencing July 1. The only change decided upon in the present policy is that hereafter nickel-in-the-slot telephones must replace the free telephones that are found in downtown business houses and other places of business throughout the city. In other words, free telephones are eliminated.

The idea of establishing measured or metered service rates for business telephones was eliminated by the council. In deciding to fix existing rates for the ensuing fiscal year and to eliminate free telephones in the city, the council approved the rates as recently recommended by the board of public utilities.

It is proposed that the question of measured service rates shall be taken up with the state railroad commission at a later date and after the state board has assumed jurisdiction over utility rates in August.

CAUSE OF POLE FALLING.

A pole was old, rotten and decayed below the point where it entered the earth. A lineman ascended it and removed all but one of the old wires attached to it. Some minutes after the lineman went up, it fell, injuring him. The court held that the proximate cause of the accident was the decayed and rotten condition of the pole, not the removing of the wires, which, while they afforded some stability to all of the poles over which they extended, were neither used nor designed for that purpose, and afforded support to the pole only incidentally. The telephone company (in the United States) was held liable for the injury sustained by the lineman.

IDLE LAND PUT TO USE.

The back-to-the-land movement is showing good results right in Toronto.

The vacant lots in the environs of Toronto are being utilized for the growing of vegetables of all kinds. From the information that can be obtained, the system employed for utilizing the unused ground around the city is similar to that which has been adopted in many American cities.

The city is divided into nine sections or charitable districts, each of which has a superintendent to carry out the work of their respective districts. Miss Howe, secretary of the Social Service Committee for the east end, gave an encouraging report of the work in hand at the Evangella Settlement.

The use of the land is given gratis, and many of the churches contribute the seeds for planting. The officials are careful to see that no undue advantage is taken of the opportunities offered, and permit each individual applicant to have the use of a specified piece of ground.

Many prominent citizens are interesting themselves in the work, and promising results are looked for within a short time.

HOW CAN WE POPULATE OUR FARM LANDS?

There are two clearly defined and contrary forecasts of the after effect of the war on Canada. The pessimists declare that our immigration will suffer because all able-bodied men will be needed in Europe; that capital will not be loaned to us because it will be required to rebuild the shattered cities and public works; and that all the conflicting nations will be compelled to patronize their own farms and factories to save them from ruin.

The optimists contend that our immigration will be swelled by thousands who will be tired of perpetual conflicts; that capital, regardless of sentiment, seeks the most profitable fields; and that if we cannot get it in Europe we can get it in the United States; and that the assistance of Canadian factories and farms must be called upon to help rehabilitate Europe.

Men of high standing and sound judgment are ranged on both sides of this controversy, but there are indications that the optimists are prevailing. At any rate, economic history is fairly consistent on one point—the trade of a victorious nation thrives when the period of readjustment, immediately following the termination of a successful war, is over.

There is agreement as to the necessity of increasing the production of our land. We have plenty of land, but land without tillers will not produce wealth. Volume Number 4 of the Census, dealing with agriculture, which has just been issued in bound form, states that the total land area of the Dominion is 2,306,502,153 acres, of which, at the date of the Census, the nine provinces occupied 977,585,513 acres. Eleven per cent of the land in the provinces, or 109,948,988 acres, was occupied by farmers, while the land considered suitable for farming was 36 per cent of the total.

How to secure from these vast areas the production of which they are capable is our chief national problem. If we could solve it we would be assured of corresponding industrial development, and the necessary capital to finance both agriculture and industry. Canada needs an immigration policy which can succeed in settling experienced farmers from Europe and the United States on our vacant, fertile lands.—Industrial Canada.

CONSERVATION IN CHINA.

United States Commercial Bulletin says:—"Mr. Chang Chien, lately Minister of Agriculture and Commerce, visited Nanking recently, accompanied by Mr. Han, chief of the Bureau of Forestry in that ministry. He had inspected several sites for establishing forest reserves and had decided on two—one on Tai Shan in Shantung, famous as the burial place of Confucius, and the other near Feng Ssiang in northern Anhui. While in Nanking, Mr. Chang opened a school of hydraulic engineering, designed to fit students to become engineers for service in the Huai River Conservancy Works. He also visited the plantations of trees on Purple Mountain, maintained by the Nanking Colonization Association under the immediate direction of Prof. Bailey, of the Nanking University. Mr. Chang was one of the founders of the Colonization Association, and is much interested in its work. His interest has resulted in practical aid from the central Government in the form of an annual grant."