

A NEW IDEA IN HOLIDAYS

WRITING in a Montreal daily paper not long ago, Mr. John H. Roberts makes a curious suggestion about summer holidays which is valuable grist at this time of year. His chief contention is that the Canadian idea of a summer home puts too great a strain upon the mother of the family. Mother is worn out with packing, getting in supplies, putting the summer house in order and entertaining. To meet this evil, as he terms it, he makes these suggestions: "What we really want is an organized holiday movement which would teach us how to enjoy holidays, show us where to go and how to get there, and enable us to make the most of the all-too-short vacation time. I am not writing for those to whom expense and time are no object. I have in mind those of us who only have a limited amount of time and money to spend. This section has its holiday needs met in the old land by what is known there as the Co-operative Holiday movement. The idea originated in the brain of a clergyman and has spread at a remarkable pace until to-day there are seven or eight different holiday-homes, including one in Switzerland.

"The association has bought large houses or mansions in different parts of the country, it places a matron and a staff in charge of each one, and keeps them open for the larger part

of each year. Comradeship is the keynote of the movement and with the holiday is combined the educational ideal. For instance, each day has its programme of trips and excursions from the Home to place of interest in the surrounding country. One day there will be a mountain climb, another a drive to some famous old castle or monastery, perhaps, or a tramp to some point of interest. Arrived at the destination for the day the ladies of the party make ready the meal which the men have carried in their knapsacks. Then some geological expert or teacher of history gives a talk on the subject of particular interest in that locality, and, it is safe to say, that these holiday-makers return knowing more of their country's wonders or its story than the average vacation tripper would learn in a lifetime.

"Why cannot we do something like this in Canada? We are a young people and our history is in the making. But we could, I believe, develop a movement which would help us to know our country in the most intimate sense and link us together in the bonds of steadfast comradeship. Holidays organized, purposeful, and helpful may be had, but not on the present aimless plan most of us now follow. I shall be most happy to co-operate with any of my fellow-citizens to whom the idea here advanced may appeal."

IMPROVING TORONTO

THE other morning in Toronto, an important report was laid before the City Council. It was that of the Civic Improvement Commission, which for two years has been working up suggestions for developing the scenic environment and comfort of Ontario's chief city. In the year 1909, the Civic Guild, an active association of prominent citizens with the aesthetic interests of Toronto at heart, impressed upon the City Council the need of taking immediate steps to further civic beautification. It urged that other cities on the continent of America of the same size as Toronto were years ahead in providing facilities which are regarded as requisites in the ideal modern city. It charged Toronto with not making the most of its natural advantages. In response to this appeal the City Council appointed a board, called the Civic Improvement Committee. The report of this Committee lays before the City Council thirty-eight suggestions.

The most interesting features of the report deal with transportation problems in Toronto, and the civic centre ideal plan of the city.

The committee first takes up the width of streets, with the solution of which four factors are considered, pedestrian, vehicular and street car traffic and planting. It concludes that 21 feet of roadway is the minimum required for street car traffic on a main thoroughfare, and that room for three lines of vehicular traffic should be allowed on each side, with a sidewalk at least 16 feet in width. With this data the minimum width would be 104 feet. A secondary main thoroughfare is also considered with a width of 87 feet, and it is recommended that residential streets should be as narrow as is consonant with safety and convenience.

In considering the question of downtown congestion, the readiest form of relief is concluded to be the abolishment of one set of tracks for a distance of at least several blocks in the most used thoroughfares. With

practically every downtown street saddled with car tracks it is stated that there is no reason why a judiciously planned scheme should not result in securing a distinct saving in the time required to reach a given point, in simplifying traffic and in reducing danger to both pedestrians and those in vehicles.

Speaking of diagonal thoroughfares, the report says: "Centuries of city planning in Europe and the wonderful activity in America during the past eighteen years, since the World's Fair at Chicago, have established radial thoroughfares as a fundamental requirement of any comprehensive solution of a city's transportation problem. Queen Street, east and west, and Yonge Street are main thoroughfares radiating at right angles from Toronto's business centre. A brief glance at a map of the city will convince the most casual observer that both of the proposed diagonals as planned by your committee will facilitate traffic for very much larger areas than Queen or Yonge Streets."

Consideration of this question leads to a discussion of the civic centre as a feature of the city plan. "The leading main thoroughfares of the city should converge to this centre, in order that the development of the city may be harmonious along predetermined lines, the stability of property values increased, and the speculative element in city lands lessened," the report continues. "If the two main diagonals were put through with a width of at least 104 feet, and preferably 125 feet, it might be that the transportation problem could be satisfactorily solved by making the other principal streets (with, perhaps, one or two exceptions) secondary main thoroughfares. It seems certain that Queen Street must develop into the basis of the city's transportation system, and as it is rebuilt it should undoubtedly be widened to at least 104 feet throughout its entire length (corresponding with the present wide portion just east of Spadina Avenue)."

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