

THE CITY OF MONTREAL—Continued.

COMPREHENSIVE PLANS NEEDED.

Montreal has now reached the stage when it is essentially necessary to lay out its plans in a comprehensive manner on broad lines, looking to the great growth which is in evidence on every hand.

This makes it necessary to secure the services of an expert of experience in connection with large cities. The days of doing things by piecemeal in Montreal no longer exist. To illustrate, before paving a street it should be seen that the drains, watermains, gas, etc., are all in order, and not first do the paving and then tear it up for repairing any of the services mentioned. Take for example, Sherbrooke Street. This street has practically been blocked for over four years, in connection with the building of a drain the full length of the street, say six or seven miles, at an enormous cost. One would naturally suppose that the other services would receive attention when this work was being done, and that, probably, provision might be made at a little extra cost for putting those unsightly wires underground. My reason for mentioning this particular street is in order to illustrate my point.

CONDUITS.

These are a live question which has to be faced, and I am glad to observe that experts have been appointed to make a report on this important question. Probably a solution, to a certain extent, may be found a little later on when an underground railway may be built.

STREET PAVING.

There is a good deal of agitation at present regarding the paving of streets in consequence of the new law which places the entire cost of the paving on the proprietors on each side of the street, the City in the meantime doing the financing and spreading the cost to the proprietors in the shape of a tax over a number of years. Heretofore, the City has paid the entire cost of these pavements and a large number of streets have already been paved. Consequently, no doubt, those who are now called upon to pay the entire cost think that the City should bear part. In the majority of cities where this local improvement tax exists, the City, as a rule, contributes one-third and the proprietors two-thirds of the cost, which seems reasonable. Then it seems to me that in the case of a public thoroughfare, such, for instance, as Craig street, or St. James Street, the City should consider whether it would not contribute a larger proportion of the cost, and it certainly should pay for the cost of the intersections. I am afraid this matter did not receive the careful attention to which it was entitled before legislation was put through.

WATERWORKS.

We are very fortunate in having an abundant supply of water passing our doors, having the River St. Lawrence flowing right by the City. When the proposed filtration plant is installed, I believe it will be all that is requisite to give pure water to the citizens.

GARBAGE.

It is surprising that in these enlightened days, garbage and ashes should be allowed to accumulate

in a large number of the lanes during the winter months, and that those unsightly open barrels, which are seen from time to time should meet one on the curbs and also that some system of carting away the garbage should not be inaugurated, such as by means of covered vehicles. The Health Officers should also insist on having covered receptacles for the garbage. You will find it difficult to find a system more lax than that carried on in this City.

CHARTER TINKERING

The time is now ripe when a comprehensive charter should be prepared for the City. It must be degrading to our representatives, as well as to our citizens, to have to go to Quebec, year after year for changes in the charter. This charter tinkering gives an opportunity to those who have axes to grind, to bring them forward. It would be well, I think, to spend a few thousand dollars in the preparation of a charter which might be called the consolidated charter of the City, and brought down to date giving the City such powers as it is entitled to. For the purpose of preparing a charter, a small committee might with advantage be appointed, consisting of a couple of able lawyers familiar with municipal law, and two or three representative business and financial men. Without waiting for the new consolidated charter, arrangements should be made for a further restriction in the borrowing powers. The debt of the City should not exceed 15 p.c. of the taxable valuation—this is supposed to be the present limit. And owing to the large increases in property valuation, it might with advantage be reduced to 12 p.c. of the taxable valuation. If any special loans are required for extraordinary purposes which would exceed the above limit, a special tax should be imposed to pay interest and provide sinking fund, subject in every case, to the approval of the majority in number and in value of the real estate owners affected. This is the general law in force in the towns and cities of the Dominion.

GROWTH.

The future growth of the City is unquestionable. Its situation is almost unique. It has in its immediate vicinity great water powers. It is at the head of navigation, and as the Dominion progresses, Montreal is bound to progress. Values are increasing on every hand, and I venture to predict that within less than ten years the City of Montreal will have a population of a million. There are those who assert that it will reach a million in much less time, and if the citizens of Montreal will arise to the proper sense of their duty and take a greater interest in civic affairs, then this City will grow and prosper and become one of the greatest on the continent.

The department of lands of British Columbia has made an application to the Dominion board of railway commissioners for an order "regulating the operation of locomotives with regard to the spreading of forest fires upon adjacent lands in the dry season of the year." The hearing has been set to take place in Ottawa on February 6, at 10 o'clock.