

The public parks of the city are under the control of the city council. There are 21 parks having a total area of 1,152 acres.

A modern and complete system of street cleaning, watering and scavenging is owned and operated by the city. The supervision of the sanitary arrangements of the city is under the control of a local board of health.

#### Water in Concrete.

The precise amount of water which should be used in making concrete, has been a matter of considerable difference of opinion among engineers, some preferring a moderately dry mixture, others a mixture that is wet. A paper describing the results of tests in this respect, read recently before the Western Society of Engineers, summed up the conclusions drawn from experiments as follows:

First, a medium concrete, or one that has not enough surplus water to produce quaking, while having enough to permit easy and thorough ramming, is most desirable. The specification that the concrete shall not quake in the barrow nor while handling, but that it may be wet enough to quake when heavily rammed, would seem about right for regulating the amount of water to be used. Second, it is probably safer to have an excess than to permit a deficiency of water. Above all, however, it is of the utmost importance that the concrete shall be consolidated thoroughly by ramming.

In the discussion following the paper, it was agreed that for contracted spaces, as between timbers, a wetter concrete may be used to advantage, as it can be pushed and compressed into spaces more solidly, resulting in a more compact concrete for the work as a whole.

#### \$50 and \$5,000.

The money expended upon roads in Ontario, and the work performed, is in most cases scattered over the entire township, irrespective of the greater need of certain roads, or parts of roads, and the amount of travel over them. Pathmasters do not feel the necessity of concentrating money and labor on finished work, while councillors are subject to the urgent appeals of nearly as many people as there are votes. The thin veneering of disconnected improvements upon the roads is soon lost, and the roads return to their former condition.

With the application of money upon definite and substantial improvements, the results are far different, and in a few years there is a marked improvement in the average condition of the highways. It is not necessary that the amount expended shall be large, in order that it may be economically expended. The one principle underlies the expenditure of \$50 and of \$5,000, that whatever is done, must be well done.

#### Working the Municipalities.

We sometimes wonder if the various municipalities realize the extent to which they are being worked, (there is no other word to express it) by some of the various industrial corporations doing business within their borders. And the "boards of trade" which have been recently organized in so many cities, instead of doing what should be their obvious duty in protecting local capital against such schemes, in many cases appear to be only too easy prey for financial adventurers. It may be added that these schemes usually receive material aid from the local press.

The form of procedure is often very much as follows: On the formation of an industrial company letters are sent to a number of cities, preferably to the local Board of Trade, but if not so to municipal officers. The formation, objects and prospects of the new concern are outlined, and then comes the question. "What can you offer us in the way of free land sites, rebatement of taxes or subscription to our stock should we decide to locate in your city?" It is generally understood that the municipality making the best offer will get the plant. Then follow statements from the Board of Trade and articles in the local papers, in which an appeal is made for local support. It is pointed out that here is a company desiring to locate in the city. That it will give employment to so many hands, will benefit the local tradesmen and industries and will aid in the upbuilding of the city. All of this is true provided the company is on a strong basis, but the local authorities seldom seem to realize that in these days of idle capital a sound proposition would not need to ask for such supports.

Another form which the request sometimes takes amounts almost to municipal blackmail. A company conducting business on an insecure basis sometimes demands concessions in the way of municipal favor or stock subscription, threatening, in the event of their demand being refused, to move to another city, throwing so many persons out of employment and withdrawing from the city so much of its prosperity. And this course is often facilitated by the willingness of the sister city to extend to them the aid which has been refused by the place where they were originally located.

We cannot blame the company for wishing to secure for itself the greatest advantages possible, but when as is so often the case, their demands become exorbitant, it would seem that there should be some citizens clear-headed enough to point out the folly of acceding to the demands.

We have in mind one company, located in Massachusetts, which had made unsuccessful attempts to secure stock subscriptions in different states. Failing in this, it demanded that a certain amount of

capital be subscribed within the city where it was located, threatening that the plant would otherwise be removed to a nearby city, where the favor could be obtained. At the present writing no capital has been subscribed and the plant will probably be removed. From what we learn of the company, the city will be at but small loss from its removal.

Of course there is another side to this question. A new company, with sound prospects, but cramped for capital, in return for the benefits which will accrue to a city from its operations, may ask for a rebatement in its taxes, etc., for a limited time, very much in the manner in which free rent for a month or more may be offered to a tenant to reimburse him for the expense of his removal from some other location. Or, when the benefits to a city are obvious, it may only be just to hope that local capital may share in the profits of the enterprise; but when these limits are exceeded, and, as has been the case, the city is asked to assume a large part of the financial risk of the new venture, it is carrying the matter far beyond the bounds of equity.—*United States Investor.*—

One of the large water mains in an American city recently developed a serious leak through which many million gallons of water escaped. The cause of the trouble was at first thought to be that the hot salt water from the Railway and Light Co.'s waste pipes had eaten a hole in the bottom of the water pipe. Two theories were assigned for the trouble, one of which was electrolysis, and the other chemical action of the hot salt water. A New York electrolysis expert made a thorough examination of the water system and found that the pipes were in danger of destruction by electrolysis caused by the escaping current of the railway company. The city engineer after examination of the broken pipe said that the damage was caused by electrolysis and proved this by whittling off a piece of the iron pipe with his pocket knife. The current was found to pass from the water to the waste pipe and this set up an electrolytic action that caused the water pipe to disintegrate.

The town council of Glasgow, Scotland, during the past summer (so says one of its members, Bailie John Ferguson, in the Glasgow Evening News of August 29), has carried by an overwhelming majority a resolution to invite the municipalities of Great Britain and Ireland to meet in conference to consider how best to formulate a public bill, on the lines of the Glasgow bill now pending in Parliament, for levying taxes on land values. Over 100 public corporations had responded on August 29, and arrangements are being made for a convention. The Glasgow bill is what would be known in this country as a "single tax" bill.