

with its twenty-nine districts each under a Mayor and Council; to European practice of uniting municipalities for specific purposes, and to the recent legislation of Berlin, Germany, which has created a Metropolitan Council composed of representatives of a large number of jointly interested municipalities.

But we need not rely too much on precedents before taking action. We have enough political genius in our Provincial Government, and among our Municipal Councils, to work out a system that can meet our own needs.

#### A Possible Organization.

A metropolitan policy would necessarily have to be decided by a body representing the various municipalities included. The Berlin system provides that each Municipal Council must have at least one representative, and no single municipality (Berlin for example) more than two-fifths of the total number. Representatives are appointed from the various municipalities and taxes levied would be allocated amongst the various municipalities according to the nature of the work for which the tax is levied, each municipality thus preserving its own identity. The constitution and powers of the Municipal Council would have to be defined by Provincial legislation, provision being made where advisable for appeals to the Ontario Railway and Municipal Board.

One might forecast a possible Executive or Commission appointed by the Metropolitan Council as follows:

(a) An Electric Commissioner. His duty would be to take charge of the development of inter-municipal electric lines, location of local industrial and residential centres, lighting, telephones, etc.

(b) A Road and Parks Commissioner. His duty would be to take care of road construction and make provision for parks, playgrounds, and other breathing places.

(c) A Health Commissioner. His duties would have to do with sewage, water and related services.

Action with regard to a metropolitan area need not necessarily wait on the outcome of the negotiations between the City and the Toronto Railway Company. At the same time it is obviously essential for Toronto to provide adequately for radial entrances into the heart of the City, otherwise civic and metropolitan development will be retarded, to the loss of all parties concerned, as long as such provision is not made.

Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Saskatchewan, Alberta and Ontario have passed Town-Planning Acts which bear on the suburban problem. But Canada has yet to establish a metropolitan organization. The problem is of still further interest by reason of the fact that what is found workable for one district will likely serve for general application.

#### Some Possible Questions Answered.

This committee has been instructed by our City Council to lay the matter of a metropolitan area before the representatives of the various municipalities concerned. The first question we may expect from the representatives is—and one may anticipate the same query from many citizens of Toronto—why is Toronto pushing this scheme now? Torontonians doubtless think their taxes high enough already, and that any comprehensive metropolitan scheme must mean more of them. As for the outsider he will suspect that Toronto is endeavoring to “put over one on him”, and will ask where is the joker? It may be well to forestall such questions by recapitulating a few explanations, so that with a frank understanding of the situation faster progress may be made.

In the first place let us start with the assumption that a suggestion that will work to common advantage

need not arise from a selfish desire to “do” somebody. This is a case in point. The proposition of a metropolitan area is based on the desire for mutual advancement of Toronto and its entire surrounding district. The fact that it is being definitely formulated now by Toronto means little. The idea has been in the air for a long time, and has been suggested probably by as many rural councillors as by City aldermen. There is no joker on either side.

Why should Toronto inaugurate the plan? Simply because Toronto grows as the country and towns round about it grow; and life in the City is made cheaper and healthier and better by the most intimate possible connection between City proper and surrounding country and towns. No fresh argument need be advanced to convince people of that.

The towns and rural municipalities may be expected to lend it hearty support because they have everything to gain by being brought into ready communication with their civic centre, which they can bring about more readily and cheaply by mutual agreement and concerted action. In fact, without Toronto's co-operation it would not be possible. The agitation for a Markham-Toronto Electric Line may serve as an illustration; as also the incipient movement for a Brampton-Toronto Line.

As to costs: in respect of trolley lines and electric energy by working with the Provincial Hydro-Electric; in respect of roads by working with the Provincial Government; by wise use of the local improvement principle, and by mutual support and careful financing, costs should be kept at a minimum and be more than offset by the advantages accruing.

#### The Metropolitan Programme.

Let the programme be definite—inter-municipal electric lines; local electric power and lighting; permanent roads; a broader study of sewage and water problems.

#### Workman's Home at Akron

Scarcity of houses for working men at Akron, Ohio, induced F. A. Seiberling, a prominent manufacturer of that city, to devise a plan whereby this obstacle of the securing of good men in the shops might be overcome. To that end he purchased about 300 acres of farm land not far from the eastern edge of the city. An expert landscape architect was employed to plant trees, lay out streets, establish drainage and divide the land into lots. The next step was to call for plans of types of houses in quantities of 100 houses. The first 100 houses are now being erected. They include almost every type, size and price of house that may be required and desired by workmen of larger and smaller families and income. Full information about the allotment, houses, prices and terms of payment has been assembled in a booklet, which will shortly be off the press. The cost of the house is added to the cost of the lot, and to these are added the cost of pavement—required on the principal streets—cost of sewer, water and gas, all other work being done with the greatest economy. Land, houses, and improvements are to be supplied at the lowest figure and at actual cost to the workingmen. He pays or all this on the basis of rent. His payments do not begin until he moves into his house, when, of course, he ceases paying rent on his former habitation. The prices are so graded that he will be able to pay out in from 10 to 15 years without any special effort on his part. There are details in the contracts covering protection and preservation of their equity by widows in the event of the husband dying. An insurance arrangement is also being worked out. The population of Akron is now estimated at 90,000. It was 69,000 in 1910, and 42,000 in 1900.—American Contractor.