

MUNICIPAL DEPARTMENT

WOODEN BLOCK PAVEMENTS.

One of the important streets of Atlanta, Ga., is now being paved with wood blocks treated by a process invented by Mr. H. F. Williams, of San Francisco. The pavement consists essentially of a 6-inch concrete foundation, on which the squared wood blocks 4 inches deep are laid, with the fiber vertical, the joints being filled with a specially prepared asphalt.

The blocks are sawed from 6x6-inch timber which has been fairly well seasoned, each block containing a foot of lumber, board measure. They are then submerged in a kettle of liquid asphaltum heated to 300 degrees Fahrenheit, and kept there until all moisture is effectually expelled. They are afterward placed over the kettle in a box which has a screen bottom to allow the drippings to fall back into the kettle. The blocks are left in the bath from 10 to 30 minutes, or long enough to destroy the properties causing dry rot. When this treatment is finished, the wooden surfaces have become sealed by a coating of the asphaltum, and look as if they had been painted with coal tar.

The blocks are laid on the concrete so as to break joints in the unusual manner, and the surface is then covered with Williams' asphalt cement, which fills all the joints and covers the surface to a depth of about an eighth of an inch. A layer of sharp sand is sprinkled over the top, and the pavement is complete. The pavement is laid by the Williams Block Pavement Company of Atlanta, at \$1.80 a square yard, under a ten-year guaranty with good bond.

Before the city entered into a contract for this work, Mayor C. A. Collier obtained a report on the way in which similar pavements in San Francisco are wearing. This was written by Mr. Henry L. Collier, United States Examiner of Surveys, and reads, in part, as follows:

The paving on California street was laid 19 years ago. Two years ago the Spring Valley Water Company cut through it, the distance of two blocks, to lay water pipes; the paving blocks were found to be as sound as when first laid. I had one cut out in September last, and the one selected was in the crossing of two streets. Found it to be perfectly sound. Submerged it in water for eight days, with no perceptible increase of weight, and on splitting it open found no sign of the water having permeated it. I see no reason why this pavement should not last for twenty years more. The surface of the street where the Williams paving is laid is as good now as when first put down. It has had no repair work except two light coatings of asphalt, prepared by Mr. H. F. Williams, the patentee. Where the water company

cut through their trench, it was easily, inexpensively and excellently repaired. No sign of settling. With the exception that the asphalt coat looks a little fresher than the rest, I see no difference between this placed two years ago and that of nineteen years' standing.

The pavement on Sacramento street, near Montgomery, has been subjected to more traffic, consequently more abused. Express teams stand on it all day; the south drain next to the sidewalk is never dry. I had a block cut out from where the horses, for years, stood constantly. The surface had become somewhat irregular, but the block, when taken up, proved to be perfectly sound. This paving has been down 19 years, and has received no repairs.

That at the foot of Market street is subject to constant travel; thousands of the heaviest freight trucks pass over it daily. This paving has been down eighteen months, yet the surface is as regular now as when laid. No sign of wear, and no repair work done. Before the rains begin, Mr. Williams informs me, he will place a light coating of asphalt on it.

The paving in front of the Emporium, on Market street, has been down about 15 months. It is subject to constant travel—thousands of heavy freight teams pass over it daily. The surface is as smooth and regular to-day as when first completed. No repair work has been given it. In September last the gas company cut a trench through it. The blocks looked as if they were new, no sign of wear, and were found to be waterproof.

I also inspected the paving near wharf on Howard street, and the new Spreckles pier paving. The former has given entire satisfaction, though subjected to very heavy traffic. The latter, the day on which it was completed, the warehouse constructed upon it was consumed by fire. The stringers supporting the paving were so badly burned as to necessitate the taking up of the paving, which was found to be unhurt, save being charred slightly on the top surface. By scraping the tops and putting on a new coat of prepared asphalt, I would have preferred them to new blocks.

The paving laid 19 years ago was simply dipped in Mr. Williams' prepared asphalt. No precaution was taken, except to see that the blocks were well

seasoned. Now, the blocks are boiled in the asphalt.

THE MUNICIPAL ACT.

Mr. Kidd has introduced two bills in the Ontario Legislature to amend the Municipal Act. They provide for the following additions to the Consolidated Municipal Act:

"In case of arbitration under the preceding provisions of this section in determining the compensation to be paid for the use by a city or town of the court house, gaol or house of correction of the county, the arbitrators shall, so far as they deem the same just and reasonable, take into consideration the original cost of the site and erection of the said buildings, and shall allow such amount as they may deem reasonable for such use of the said buildings by the inhabitants of the city or town in common with the inhabitants of the county, although there may be no separate use thereof by such city or town as a municipality."

"When in any city or town the court house and gaol have been erected at the sole expense of the county after the separation of such city or town from the county, and when such city or town has not erected separate buildings, then the award may determine what sum shall be annually paid to the county as the share or contribution of such city or town in respect of the use of such buildings by the inhabitants of such city or town, and, in estimating such amount, the arbitrators may award a proportion of the interest upon the cost of such buildings, computed at the rate of five per cent., having due regard to the extent of the use of the said buildings by the inhabitants of the said city or town and county respectively."

A dispatch from Renfrew, Ont., says: The first fire test of Renfrew's new waterworks system was made yesterday under the superintendence of the Chief Engineer, Willis Chipman, of Toronto. It was a most successful exhibition. At one time five fine streams were playing over the flag poles of ten of the tallest buildings in town. The extensive sewer system, put in at the same time, will not be tested till next spring.

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