

## *The Economics of Town Planning*

(By Noulan Cauchon, A.M.E.I.C., Chairman, Town Planning Commission of Ottawa.)

Biologically, an organism is a living entity—simple cell or complex—endowed with energy of growth and function.

Human organism—the most complex known—is the *raison d'être* of Town Planning—of its being a biological necessity.

The rays of the sun are the ultimate source of all energy on this planet, and as shown in the spectrum vibrate heat and light and chemical action.

Sunshine and vivified air are indispensable nourishment for human development—without substitute—wherein lies their virtue beyond mere accessories of mechanical light and ventilation.

Cities which are the sheltering hives of human organisms must afford suitable environment for organic growth and development; failing which they cramp, maim, and kill that life which it is their proper function to engender, energize, and enhance—to bring to the realization of life.

Economics is the science of the conservation and the conversion of energy in the maintenance of life—of human life.

Government, in the abstract and in practice, should be synthetic organization for the maintenance of life—of community life—of civilization.

This view of government manifests a claim upon it for securing, amongst other things, free access to sun rays and fresh air—energy—for us individually and collectively.

According to Mr. Fairfield Osborn, the "Capture, Storage, and Release" of energy is seemingly the problem of life itself.

Our planning, if it would avail and survive, needs meet the requirements of life—or organic life—it must make provision for structure and its nourishment and for the development of function.

Only that planning will prevail which recognizes the manifest oneness of nature

For the purpose of practical elucidation and accomplishment, forms and functions—evident inter-relation and inter-action subconsciously sensed throughout—may more conveniently be detailed as unit characters.

Let us consider the great functional ramifications of communication in their relation to organic existence—intellectual and emotional; material and spiritual.

The emergence of human speech and the advent of barter developed the written word and the highway—evolved the rapidity of modern thought transmission and of transportation—modern civilization.

Railways are, therefore, but a sub-division of highway function, but so far differentiated as to require individual treatment.

Railways seem destined to maintain and to increase their utility for long and heavy haulage.

This traffic will develop to the auxiliary measure of better highways and increased motor transport.

In the nature of things, railway facilities must adequately keep pace with the increase of population and production and their incidental services.

Duplication is economic waste.

A measure of competition is valuable as stimulus in social service, but if extended to the over stimulation of duplication will, by natural law, defeat its

own purpose—is a waste of energy; is uneconomic.

The principle to be applied as regards cities is Union Terminals.

There is little question as to the wisdom of a single system of trackage minimizing movements, crossings, and vast unnecessary capital expenditure. But there are optional ways of operating the necessary plant—ways of efficiency; measures of personal equation.

The more complex an organism the more delicate its functioning.

Montreal, as our largest city in Canada, is suffering from the lack of proportion in its services.

The purpose of town planning is to avoid and to eliminate congestion—on the railways, on the highways, and in all the vital agencies of progressive existence.

Montreal's problem is emphasized by its railway and highway requirements—it is conditioned by the necessary disposition of its centres of activity along the harbor front, and in turn is subject to the topographical limitations of the adjacent mountain.

The City of Hamilton has a somewhat similar problem, the proposed solution of which is as holding suggestive elements.

They have a housing problem—same as our smaller centres, only more so by reason of acceleration in size—it is all part of the oneness of your problem of existence which awaits progressive solution.

Town planning seeks to implement the social significance of scientific revelation.

To quote on a previous address to a Committee of the Senate (May 25, 1921): "It follows that determining the occupancy of land and of buildings, the width of streets and the height and bulk of structures in relation thereto, the access of light and of air, zoning, housing, the capacity of transportation, is elemental to healthy freedom of growth and of circulation; all, to the measure of their deficiency, shadow the birth rate and the death rate.

"The economics of regional planning, urban and rural, is the science of energy, of the conversion and conservation of energy, in the maintenance of life."

### LATE ALDERMAN DIXON

His many friends will regret to hear of the death, from paralysis, of Alderman J. P. Dixon, of Montreal, who, at the last three conventions of the U.C.M. represented the City of Montreal. Alderman Dixon, who had served in the City Council of the Metropolis for many years, was one of those men who took his duties seriously, practically giving up the whole of his time to them. Gifted with an optimistic disposition, the genial alderman always put life into any meeting that he attended, but underneath his geniality and optimism was a stratum of common sense which he used to good purpose when discussing municipal questions.

Building buildings that will burn is like winking at an old maid—it not only looks foolish, but there's no telling how serious the outcome will be.

FIGHT FIRE WHEN YOU BUILD—don't leave it all to the Fire Department.