

The Place of the Engineer in Town Planning

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cent in Shaughnessy Heights. There were only 11 persons to the acre. Undercrowding is as bad and as costly as overcrowding in cities.

It is not surprising that this kind of thing has led to excessive taxation in Vancouver. Instead of trying to get rid of the causes of this excess, efforts will be directed perhaps to increase revenues to meet new losses which must arise in the future from want of planning. Why should the engineer be made the scapegoat in all these administrative failures? Why are his resources and knowledge not employed to prevent instead of to cure bad development?

The employment of a competent engineer and architect to prepare a plan for Vancouver is essential as a basis for any reform or readjustment of taxation. There can be no equitable system of taxation unless it is based on a sound system of assessment, and there can be no sound system of assessment if the land is not planned and controlled in the interests of economical development and productive purposes.

Town Planning Areas Already Sub-divided.

It is desirable to prepare town planning schemes before land is sub-divided for building. In Vancouver and other British Columbia cities most of the land likely to be built on in the near future is already sub-divided. It would pay both the cities and the owners to cancel many of these sub-divisions, as is proposed to be done in the large cities in Alberta. The fact that such land is already sub-divided in Vancouver region will create difficulties in re-planning the street system, but it does not lessen the need for a plan nor limit its scope in any essential respect. A different kind of scheme is needed for an area already sub-divided. Perhaps the street and lot system may have to be accepted and the building development adjusted to that system, instead of the more logical course of planning the street system and development together. It is just as necessary and important, however, to plan the local improvements and the use to which they are to be put the height of buildings and the air space surrounding buildings, in respect of land already sub-divided as in respect of land still in acreage. Moreover even if the land is built upon, its building uses and densities for future purposes need to be regulated under a town planning scheme. There is no part of a city that can be safely left out of a town planning scheme, and none of which it can be said that it is more important than the other that it should be included.

Zoning and Engineering.

That part of city planning that is called "zoning" should be dealt with as part of a comprehensive city plan. Under zoning we divide the city into zones for the combined and overlapping purposes of controlling, first, the use to which the land is put, such as residential, business or industrial use, second, the area of any lot that can be covered with building, and third the height of building in relation to use and to area of lot covered and street width. All these matters have to be considered together. Economies in engineering services can be secured by zoning. For instance, construction of street surfaces can be adapted to the use, lighter surfaces and narrower streets for residence areas and heavier and wider streets for industrial areas. Water mains can be planned to suit the high

buildings in the business district and the low and scattered buildings in the residence district. Manufacturing plants that need large sewer capacity are not mixed up with detached houses that need only a small flow of waste. Fire control is easier and assessment can be more just.

Engineering service will not be adequately appreciated till it is more fully employed in preventing and less fully employed in trying to cure the evils of bad forms of city development.

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