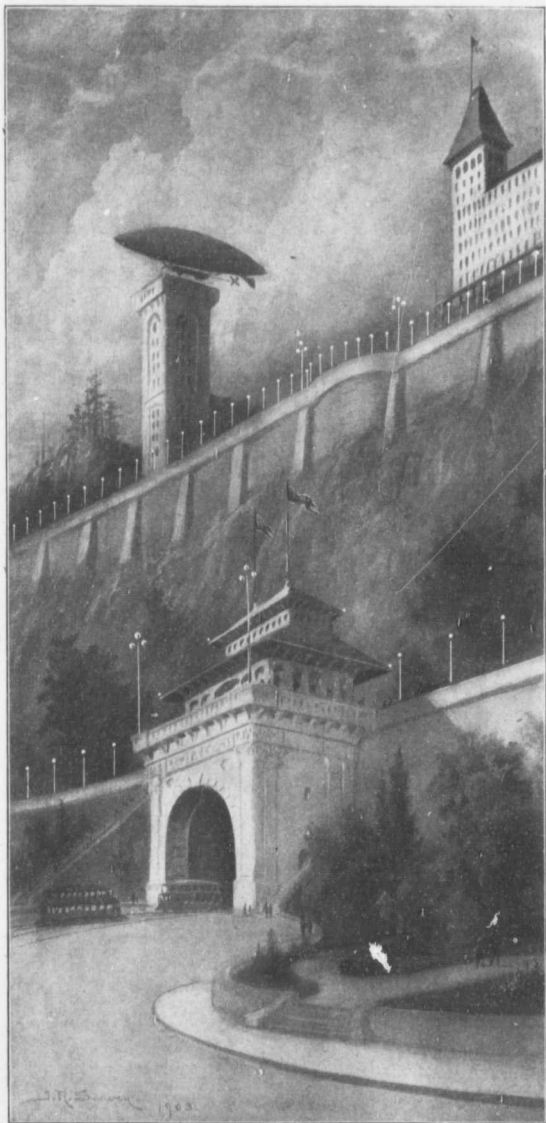


Hamilton Spectator Carnival Souvenir



"Electric roads ran into a tunnel."

they would scarcely recognize their old home. Under their municipal system so great a development in so short a time would have been an utter impossibility.

While the citizens of 1903 fondly imagined their city to be great industrially, it was not until the aldermanic system was done away with and the government of the city handed over to a high salaried board of commissioners, subject to government control, that the city really forged ahead. The commissioners were required to furnish guarantee bonds for amounts much greater than the annual revenue of the city. These were so worded that, in case of default by any one member, the others were, under the bonds, held liable. So admirably, as is well known, did this plan work that to this date there has been no financial loss to the city through its board of commissioners, and the plan is still working well.

Quickly following the change to the commissioner idea came a revolution in the franchise business of the city. Under the aldermanic board system practically all public franchises were held by private companies. The shareholders in these companies grew rich, and the richer they grew the more autocratic did they become. In every council the franchisers secured a majority of the total vote either by straight bribery or by a judicious distribution of patronage. For the rights yielded up the city was paid but a mere pittance, and the companies ruled supreme. What brought an end to this sort of thing, and to the aldermanic boards, was the deliberate attempt on the part of a City Council in the year 1920 to hand over to a private company the waterworks system—the only municipally owned franchise in the city. It was a daring bit of jobbery, and had it not been for the earnest opposition of a few honest men in the council, and the fear of an aroused and indignant people, the scheme might have succeeded.

Many years before this time a visionary promoter had suggested that Hamilton should be supplied with drinking water from Lake Erie by means of a canal to the mountain brow from the Erie level. Every few years the scheme was brought to light again, talked of and lost sight of. It was too expensive, so it was thought. The engineering difficulties were unsurmountable, etc. But in the year 1926 Hamilton found that her old Lake Ontario waterworks system was played out. It was not able to do the work required of it, and factory owners were forced to pump their own water supplies from the bay and lake. There was agitation for a new plant, and, concurrent with this agitation came the old Lake Erie canal scheme again. This time it assumed a more practical form. The Erie-Hamilton Water, Power and