

LIGHT AND SHADE IN VANCOUVER'S "WEST END."

Meantime, in dealing with things as they are, we think it well to emphasize that it is more than time that the civic powers—that be in Vancouver City should give attention to the lack of light and the superabundance of shade that obtain in various streets and blocks in the city's West-End.

The season when, so far as man's understanding of climatic changes and conditions is concerned, we must still undergo occasional experiences of fog, is almost upon us again, and the poorly-lighted blocks and dark lane crossings are an incentive to "hold-ups." Here and there there are street blocks with only one electric light at an end, while many untrimmed trees, often so close as to tend to obscurity even after autumn has justified its continental name of "The Fall," may remind the reflective wayfarer of marked passages in Shakespeare such as:

"How often times the sight of means to do ill deeds
Makes ill-deeds done!"

Let the Vancouver City Lighting Department wake up!

STREET NAMES AND HOUSE NUMBERS?

In the same connection it is timely to advocate some clearer method of marking the names of streets and avenues. Shortly after reaching Vancouver an old country student, on finding the street marking method in vogue—of cutting the names in the concrete pavement, asked (in anti-prohibition days) if that system was for the convenience of citizens who felt their way home in the dark?

But why should not Vancouver City lead in a street-name-lighting system?

Then while the city looks after the corporate interests, citizens individually might be asked to give attention to some number identification system. A light on the verandah which showed the number of the house, would have the double advantage of increasing the light in the street or block and otherwise enlightening the callers or enquirers unfamiliar with the neighbourhood.

MR. BOWSER AND THE RESOURCES OF B. C.

In the last issue we had a reference to the versatility of the Attorney-General, Mr. Farris, who happens to be a member of the Vancouver Kiwanis Club. In the meantime, it was interesting to find that Mr. W. J. Bowser had been invited to address that organization on the "Resources of British Columbia."

One feature of the meeting (at luncheon) was the happy way in which Mr. Roy Long, Kiwanian President, who is, we understand, attached to the "other party," introduced the speaker of the day.

Lawyers, like ministers, have an advantage over other business or professional men, in that their regular work keeps them more or less in practice in public speaking, and tends to that measure of confidence—not to say assurance—that is itself so important an adjunct to effective speaking that it may sometimes lend to forcefulness in utterance a merit not due to the matter. But when, as in the case of "Roy", we have a lawyer with literary leanings, enthusiastic in his exposition of the ideals of Service and Fellowship, and devoted to making the Club he heads a real power in the community, we have a citizen of whom still more should be heard.

The difficulty that Independents have with political Party men is that often they become so "hide-bound" in their attachment to their own party that they will allow nothing but merit to belong to their own men, and little but the reverse to be attached to those on the other side. Politically, Mr. Bowser lacks not for opponents and critics as well as friends.

But any stranger who heard him expound the possibilities and outline the resources of British Columbia could not have avoided being impressed as the ex-Premier warmed to his subject, and convinced that here is a man who believes in British Columbia, and who with his strong personality should yet do good work for the Province, whether among the "Ins" or the "Outs."

Like Premier Oliver, Mr. Bowser visited the Peace River country during the past summer, and he had much that was of interest to say of that vast territory,—which is no doubt destined to have a steadily-increasing connection with the Pacific Coast.

A NOTEWORTHY REPORT ON ELECTRIC RAILWAYS.

Foresight in community welfare is not met with as often as hindsight but a report made recently by a commission sitting at Washington, D. C. shows a unique and uncanny ability to read the future of a modern city's transportation facilities.

In the summer of 1919, President Wilson of the United States, in response to a request from his secretaries of commerce and labor, appointed a commission to inquire into the conditions of the electric railways of the country, which conditions had become so serious owing to a variety of causes that the public was suffering a disruption of their service. The president appointed Charles E. Elmquist, president of the national association of Railway and Utilities Commissioners, as chairman of the commission and a number of leading figures in public affairs as members thereof. This commission recently made a report and while it pointed out the causes for the condition of electric railways of which there are 44,835 in the United States and of which 8612 miles have been abandoned or junked or are in the hands of receivers, the commission rendered a constructive report intended to replace the electric railways as efficient, progressive carriers, fulfilling an important public service.

That electric railways are essential to community development, that they must expand with the growth of communities and that their credit must be restored are several of the conclusions arrived at. Of the causes which have brought electric railways to their present condition, only passing mention can be made. The report does not absolve past managements from responsibility for financial excesses nor present managements from their duty to give efficient service. But it points out that fixed fares, special taxation and automobile competition have been large contributors to the financial condition of this public utility.

Having made these observations on causes, the commission turns its back upon the past and looks to the future of cities which depend upon electric railways for transportation and recommends the elimination of public antagonism as a means of restoring credit, so that electric railways may attract new capital for extensions and improvements. It recommends also that labor give its full co-operation, that labor disputes be settled voluntarily or by arbitration so that the transportation service of a city should not be subjected to paralysis.

A chapter of the report is devoted to the subject of regulation but it is not to question the advisability of regulation so much as to recommend the mode of regulation, which it declares should be flexible enough to enable the railways to obtain revenues sufficient to pay the entire cost of the service rendered, including the necessary cost of both capital and labor.

On the whole the report is constructed always with the object in view of securing for the public the necessary service. "The first essential" it says, "is service to the public. Due recognition of this fact will secure to the investor a safe return upon his investment and to the public uninterrupted operation."—Reviewer.