

Street Tree Planting and Boulevarding in Winnipeg*

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THERE is nothing which tends more to beautify the general appearance of a city, to impress its visitors, to add to its healthfulness, and to inspire its residents with a desire to improve and beautify their own homes and surroundings, than that of streets bordered with well kept lawns, and uniformly planted with clean and healthy trees.

In many eastern cities, different systems of boulevarding, tree planting and maintenance are in operation more or less successfully but in very few is the system comprehensive or general, and it is this point that I particularly wish to emphasize as upon its general application over the entire city depends its success.

This paper is not an academic treatise on how to construct a boulevard, or how and when to plant street trees, or even what trees you should plant, as I think these points are usually best determined by local conditions, but just a few facts about what has been accomplished by the Parks Board of Winnipeg, in their efforts to improve and beautify the general appearance of the city streets.

The term "boulevard," as it is generally used, denotes a drive or parkway,

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marginated with grass and trees, and is usually constructed and maintained in its entirety by the park authorities, for the use of light traffic only. In Winnipeg, the term is applied to the strip of lawn and trees which every paved street in the city has.

Our streets are wide, sixty-six feet or more, and, with the exception of the main business streets, are all constructed with a space between the sidewalk and curb varying in width from six to twenty four feet, the width on an average being fourteen feet on each side. It is this strip that is parked and planted with trees. The sidewalk is built next the property line, and with the roadway and curbing, is constructed by the city engineer's department.

When a street is paved, the property owners on it usually petition the city council at once for boulevarding and tree planting. If, however, they fail to do this, the council take the initiative, and advertise for thirty days their intention to carry out such local improvements, and, at the expiration of this term, if no adverse petition is received, a by-law is passed placing the control of the boulevarding and tree planting in the hands of the public parks board. This control includes any and all trees already growing on the streets mentioned

in the by-law, no matter by whom planted.

All expenditures on the boulevards are charged by the parks board to the city council, and by them assessed against the property owners, payment for construction being spread over a period of seven years, with interest at five per cent., sinking fund at four per cent. Payment for the cost of tree planting is collected in one year, and the cost of maintenance is assessed annually, this being authorized by special by-law.

This system was originated and worked on a small scale in 1896 by the board of works of the city council. In 1898, the maintenance of the boulevards was turned over to the parks board, and in 1900 the construction, tree planting, and sole control of the system. Since then, it has, like the city grown very rapidly.

At the end of 1908, we had approximately eighty-six miles of boulevards, planted with 20,000 trees, about 6,000 of these being planted by property owners before the streets were paved.

Prior to 1904, all new boulevards were sodded, but since then, more and more seeding has been done, till now practically all are seeded, it being conclusively proved that seeding, in spite of the adverse conditions prevailing on a public street, makes a much better and cleaner



Wellington Crescent Boulevard, one of the many Beautiful Streets of Winnipeg