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Special Articles

MUNICIPAL POWERS IN DEALING WITH TOWN PLANNING SCHEMES

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Municipal powers in Canada vary with the size of the town; and as town planning has not until recently been thought of seriously, there are no uniform powers for Canadian municipalities in dealing with town planning. Although Germany was the first to deal with town extension plans in an enlightened way under Government control, the Garden City movement in England, started by the large manufacturers, was the first to influence town planning in its true meaning in England and on this continent. This brought about the necessity of having broader laws, made to assist such enterprises, without having to resort to private bills, the result being the passing of the Housing and Town Planning Bill by John Burns.

This was to amend the law relating to the housing of the working classes and to provide for town planning schemes, the appointment of county medical officers, and the establishment of public health and housing committees of county councils.

The bill not being generally known, I will try and tell you in plain phraseology what it contains, with the hope that it may find its way in its broad meaning through the Legislature in Ottawa.

Every County Council must establish a Public Health and Housing Committee.

Every County Council must appoint a Medical Officer, the Local Government Board in London prescribing his duties; the Board's consent to his removal from office being necessary. He shall not engage in private practice.

The Town or County Council may promote or assist societies by grants or advances on a co-operative basis, for the erection or improvement of dwellings for the working classes; the loan not to exceed two-thirds the value of the property.

Capital money arising under the Settled Land Act may be expended for the erection of dwellings for working classes, as well as for cottages for laborers, farm servants and artisans, whether employed on the settled land or not.

A Town Council may purchase land (even compulsorily) for working class dwellings, or acquire land by agreement if not immediately required.

A Town or County Council may purchase land for town planning schemes.

It shall be the duty of a town themselves to carry out any improvement schemes (except such schemes as they enable others to execute).

A town must furnish a report to the Local Government Board on any crowded area if wanted.