

ONE CAUSE OF DEFAULTING

The recent attempt of the land boosters to create a boom at Windsor, Ont., by circulating reports that a new huge factory was about to be built, brings forward a very serious question. That is, "How can the land boomers be kept in check, and thus prevented from ruining the credit of certain municipalities, and even lowering that of the whole Dominion"?

Unfortunately, but luckily for the first time in Canadian history, some Canadian municipalities have defaulted the payment of the interest on their bonds. Quite a formidable list was presented at the recent convention of the Dominion Mortgage Association. Their position has injured their sister municipalities who have kept up their interest payments.

And we believe that the cause which is most responsible for the defaulting of the municipalities is the action of the boom artists in the sale of lands.

Some of these sellers of real estate were honest. But too large a proportion stuck at nothing in order to effect a sale.

Plans were presented to the public which showed that the lots offered were close to the City Hall, when they were really a couple of miles, or more, away. The broken lines in the plan would be understood by technical men as indicating some distance between the parts. But the general public did not know the meaning, and their ignorance of this technical point was counted on and abused.

In too many cases, the members of the Councils, especially in the newer places, were interested in the sale of land. Consequently, they were anxious to extend the area of the municipality so as to include the sub-divisions in which they were interested, and then to spend the citizens' money in improving the vacant lots by putting in concrete sidewalks at least, and even water mains and drains in some places.

This was all right as long as the boom was on, and lots were changing hands. And some real estate dealers were clever in asking purchasers at what price they would part with their recent purchase. If they asked only a small advance, the real estate artist was astonished; later, he would offer adjoining lots cheap, as the man who had bought was going away and wanted to realize, so he said!

One gentleman warned members of some of the Provincial Governments that they should insist that every plan prepared for the sale of property, should be subject to the inspection of Government officials, any any real estate firm selling on any other plan should be subject to a heavy fine.

Something must be done in order to stop definitely and finally, the unfair and dishonest methods which have brought disgrace, not only in Canada itself, but in Great Britain, where so many Canadian lots have been sold which, if not worthless, are not worth anything like the price paid for them.

Will not the Provincial Governments take this matter into their serious consideration?

"PUBLIC OWNERSHIP"

The Public Ownership League of America announces the publication, henceforth, of a regular monthly magazine devoted to "public utility problems and social progress." The magazine began publication with the February number and was enlarged to sixteen pages in March and will hereafter be increased to 32 pages.

A GRACEFUL COMPLIMENT

The newly appointed Harbor Commissioners of Montreal paid a very graceful compliment to their predecessors by inviting the two preceding Boards to a banquet, and this reflects great credit on the present Commissioners, Dr. W. L. McDougall, Dr. Milton Hersey and Mr. Emilien Daoust.

There is no doubt that each succeeding Board has done its best for the good of the work to which they were appointed. The Harbor Board of Montreal for many years has been signalized as one working conscientiously and earnestly, and there is a certainty that the new Commissioners will keep up the traditions.

Looking back over some years' observation, it is easy to place great credit to the late Sir John Kennedy, C.E., as Chief Engineer, and his foresight, and to Mr. G. W. Stephens, who, as Chairman, spent time and energy in filling the position.

By the way, would not the correct title be "The Harbor of Canada in Montreal"? For, as Mr. Stephens once put it to some visitors, the port is not for Montreal, but for the Dominion.

STREET WIDENING

The city of Toronto has begun to understand practically what is meant by "Street Widening," as it has begun to make Teraulay St. suitable for heavy traffic by widening it down town and carrying it through certain blocks of property which prevented its continuance.

Already some of the difficulties are apparent, such as the unsightly and worrying "jogs" where the street has not been continued in a straight line. Also the necessity of leaving certain small pieces of land at such points, with the added trouble of finding some houses off the new line.

In Montreal, where the ancient city was a walled one, and all traffic was on men's backs, narrow streets were the proper ones. And Montreal is paying heavily for doing what is now necessary, widening many of her streets.

In this connection it is interesting to refer to the handling of this problem in London, England, in the case of the Kingsway. Here it was decided to cut a new, straight thoroughfare between two points. But more land was bought than was required for the width of the new street. So when it was built the city had land to sell, and out of a cost of £25,000,000 no less than £18,000,000 was returned at once by the sale of some of this surplus land, while the rents on what was left paid the interest. This, across the line, is call "Excess condemnation," and is a good plan for widening streets without cost—or with very little cost—to a city.

Montreal carried out this plan in extending St. Lawrence Street to the river front, and made a profit of some \$18,000.

NEW BRIDGES

Contracts for two new steel bridges have been awarded to the MacKinnon Steel Co., Limited, of Sherbrooke, Que. They are: two 160-ft. spans over the Matapedia River at St. Alexis de Matapedia, of which Mr. Charles Lamb Chandler is the contractor; and one 55-ft. span for the roadway at St. Germain de Drummond, of which Messrs. A. Cordeau & Freres, Notre Dame de Bon Conseil, are the contractors.