

mostly dormers or, if shaded by tall neighbors, might be mostly glass.

The Worship of Mere Bigness.

At last the daily press is beginning to say something in the way of sound criticism upon the senseless idea that seems to possess people in this country that our happiness is to be found in rapid growth. Grow we must, but it is the kind of growth implied by this emulous haste to be big—the kind of popular mind that is implied by it—that makes the judicious melancholy. The *Toronto Globe*, commenting upon the appointment of a Commissioner of Publicity and Industries for Toronto thinks that “the notion that a few more factories pulled in from outside towns, a few more miles of streets and buildings, a few more people gathered together within the city limits would add to the greatness of the city and to the honour of its citizenship” is “grotesque folly”. The *Mail and Empire* is strong upon the unfriendliness to other towns of trying to tempt works from them, and the unfairness to existing manufactures in Toronto to offer special inducements to others to come in. All this is delightful to read; especially the argument of the *Globe* that “the city itself—the opportunities and comfort and wholesomeness of its life—is its own best publicity agent”; that, “by improving the conditions of life in the city,” the City Council “will help to make Toronto not only a magnet to outside enterprises but also a place worth while for its own citizens.” There is nothing vulgar about *that* idea; *a place worth while for its own citizens*. What a vision of dignified enjoyment of life this calls up, compared with that other idea of haste to be big, to beat some other town in size—to be rich, if you will. Does that last possibility invalidate all protest? There is no truer philosophy of life than that those who “covet after” money (or desire it unduly), pierce themselves through with many sorrows. And it is unquestionably an undue desire for wealth that makes its attainment condition life so as to postpone the enjoyment of the passing years.

It is common talk, among those who knew Toronto thirty years ago, that the present city, with all its “improvements,” is not nearly so pleasant to live in. What are the improvements? In general they are material; light, power, means of locomotion; not civic improvements in the true sense of the term, but commercial ventures of corporations formed not so much to contribute to the happiness of the public as to profit by their necessities; and the noise, dust and crowding together, which are the disagreeable elements of city life, are so much accentuated by some of these improvements that to them may be attributed a principal share in the gradual growth of the unpleasantness that distinguishes the Toronto of to-day from the pleasant city of thirty years ago.

Mere size and the accompanying disintegration of society have of course an important place in the changed conditions of life as cities grow. These are unavoidable and it is no doubt necessary to give up with a sigh some of the former charms and turn our attention to making new ones which will mitigate the evil of mere size. To aim principally at increasing it is certainly not the way.

Here is what the *Globe* has to say upon the subject, after advocating the adoption of a definite policy of

action with regard to propositions that have already been made for the beautification of the city by a scheme of parks and driveways, lake-front and island improvement, beauty-spots, playgrounds, &c.:

“To deal with these problems would require intelligence and constructive statesmanship far beyond that involved in the appointment of a Commissioner of Industries. It is by solving these larger problems, by improving the conditions of life and beautifying its surroundings, by letting some touches of nature get back into the lives of the children who must play in the streets and of their parents who must toil in the factories—it is by progress in ways such as these that Toronto will, indeed, become a great city, and not by mere breadth and bigness.”

This is the gospel of civic improvement in brief. This must play a part, and a fundamental part, in any policy for a city's growth. Without it—to increase the labourers in a city, (and we are all labourers), and make no provision for their life—is a senseless and sordid policy that ought to be, and we may hope is, out of date. If an effort is made to increase a city's size, a parallel effort should be made to prevent greater size making the city less fit to live in. The appointment of a Commissioner of Publicity should not be made without appointing also the Commission for Civic Improvement which was so forcibly commended to the city of Toronto by some of its greatest citizens last January. The city will grow without a Commissioner but it cannot become great without the Commission. To add to the traffic on the old lines will only increase the unattractiveness of a city which is already too big for its present plan. There must be new lines of traffic run by a Commission with power to buy and sell land for the purpose. For a great part of its work we are assured such a commission would only want a loan; but it need not be required to be entirely self-supporting for it is likely to be a better agent for publicity—a greater “magnet to outside enterprises”—and in a more permanent and wholesome manner, than the publicity commissioner himself.

QUESTIONS FOR STRIKERS.

A friend of mine, whom I have known for years as a carpenter's foreman but who is now an employer, raised a couple of questions the other day, apropos of the carpenters' strike in Toronto, which seem worth passing on.

The first question is: Since perpetual rises in the wage of carpenters seem to better them but little, who gets the money. He observes that a house he bought some years ago for \$600 is now worth \$1,500, although it is not as good a house as it was, and he has come to the conclusion that he has got some of the money. And, if the value of this house has risen by mere pressure in the atmosphere of prices, he argues a prompt response in the value of houses which are being built when the strike and the rise in wages occurs. Thus, if wages rise 10 per cent., a house, which was to cost \$2,000, promptly becomes worth \$2,200. The owner is none the worse and probably a little the better; for these uncertainties in the building business require the insurance of plentiful value for houses. But, it will be said, the strikers are richer too. Are they? That is the question. They get more money, but they have raised prices in getting it. They have to live in the houses of which the rent has gone up 10 per cent. Their butcher and baker are in the same position: but these can distribute their rent in the price of bread and meat, so that it is repaid to them. By whom? Ap-