

BRICK FOR STREET PAVEMENTS.

THE recommendation of City Engineer Keating, of Toronto, that \$80,000 be expended in brick pavements, has, naturally led to enquiries as to the wisdom of the suggestion, and should it be carried out, of the ability of brick manufacturers to meet the demand. Interest in the matter is accentuated from the fact that the Council of the City of London has had this question under consideration, and recently sent a deputation to leading American cities to make enquiries as to the utility of brick pavements. Winnipeg is also giving thought to the question, so that altogether brick for street pavements is becoming an active municipal problem.

At all times the subject of road-making is an important one for municipal bodies, and students of municipal engineering, though opinions and experience differ widely in different countries. In Great Britain, Germany, and other continental cities, wood paving is growing in favor, recent investigations in Berlin, that had been conducted with a thoroughness, characteristic of the German people, and extending over a period of fifteen years, resulting in a verdict decidedly favorable to wood paving. In Canada and the United States, municipal bodies have shown a growing dislike for wood pavements. For a decade and more past, opinion has been growing in favor of asphalt, with brick, during more recent years, finding many strong advocates.

For street paving in Toronto brick has been very little used, though it may be news to not a few to learn that the following streets are paved with brick: Dundas street, from the bend to Lansdowne avenue; Lansdowne Ave., from Dundas to College; College, from Lansdowne Ave. to Bathurst; Bathurst, from Queen to Bloor, the pavement being laid between the street car rails only, and has been down about two years. Besides these streets, to a limited extent brick has been used for pavements in a few private lanes, and yards, where heavy traffic occurs. Just at the present time a lane in connection with the Gas Company's works, in the east end of Toronto, is being paved with brick by Messrs. Taylor Bros., of the Don Valley. This is in the line of an experiment, in anticipation of brick coming more widely into use for street pavements. Outside of these local instances, if we except a brick pavement on one of the main streets in the town of Chatham, laid in 1890, brick, as a paving material, has not been used in Ontario.

What is to be said in favor of brick paving? Contrasted with asphalt, it is claimed that it is less noisy. The objection against asphalt, because of its slippery nature in winter, rendering driving, in a measure, dangerous, will not hold good with brick, so its friends allege, from the fact that horses are able to secure a foothold in the small spaces between the bricks, and this prevents their slipping. In point of sanitation brick and asphalt hold about the same position. Where necessity compels the tearing up of the road to effect repairs in gas mains, water pipes, and so on, bricks are more easily removed and replaced than asphalt.

If brick, however, is to come into active competition with asphalt the decision will rest largely on the price, and the ability of manufacturers to make a brick of the needed quality, and evenness throughout. The bricks used on Dundas, College and Bathurst streets were imported from the United States, and cost, laid down, from \$20 to \$23 per thousand. About half of this amount was represented in freight and duty. With bricks manufactured in our own country, this cost ought to be largely reduced, and yet, as we understand the temper of those who have looked into this matter, the cost would need to be brought down to about \$12 a thousand, if the argument of cost of brick, as against asphalt, is to prove an important factor.

Are Canadian brick manufacturers in a position to make a satisfactory brick for street pavements, and in sufficient quantities to meet a large demand from leading municipalities? Why not? In the Don Valley and at the Humber, experts say that shale exists in abundance, suitable for making a good paving brick, so that Toronto is favorably situated for a brick industry. Mr. C. R. S. Dinnick has entered into the manufacture of vitrified brick at his manufactory, near Toronto Junction, and like others, looking forward to brick, coming into increased use for pavements, he has been putting himself in shape to meet a demand in this direction. In tests of vitrified bricks, made by Mr. C. H. C. Wright, of the School of Practical Science, Ontario bricks held a creditable place in contrast with bricks of well-known manufacturers in the United States.

It would seem, therefore, that there is much to be said favorable to brick paving, and if leading cities, like Toronto, London, and Winnipeg, are going to embark on work of this nature, there is encouragement for the extension of brick manufacture in Toronto, and other parts of Ontario.

OUR PUBLIC PARKS.

THE city of Toronto can boast of as many natural beauties of scenery in its parks and ravines, with their numerous glades and dells, as any large populous inhabited centre can wish. The Torontonians, generally speaking, proud of his city, and in all matters connected with municipal government is a law-abiding subject. There is one feature, however, in which his perversity and want of decorum may be said to earn for him the appellation, sometimes applied by provincial papers, of "hoggishness," and that is the determined way in which all these natural beauties are neglected and abused.

The condition of our public parks is deplorable. Apathy on the part of those charged with their proper maintenance leads the public to conduct itself in a manner which can find no parallel in any city of the size of ours. There is hardly a strip of boulevard which is not wantonly injured. The proper crossing place, or the appointed portion of sidewalk, is not put to its proper uses: a line across the grass is the rule. The earnest appeals of householders, who desire to keep their lawns trim and neat, are disregarded, and in public parks the rule is to avoid the path and spoil the sward.

The Horticultural Gardens, which for many years were a most attractive place of resort, are spoiled by numerous tracks cut across the grass to the Pavilion. There is no necessity for shortening the distance from the Carlton street gate to the Pavilion; the beautiful broad walks, with their flower-flanked borders, are much more pleasant walking; the use of them will permit of the beautiful sward being cultivated, which has always been the charm of this pretty little breathing space, whereas, the well beaten track across the grass is worse than an eyesore. In the Rosedale ravines, and those passing northward to Reservoir Park, there lie attractions innumerable for the opening up of lovely vistas, of charmingly wooded hill sides, gracefully curving drives, and glimpses of scenery overhead and in front, as one would traverse them, were they put to a proper and suitable use.

But what of the Queen's Park? Is there a citizen who can visit another town or city without being ashamed and humiliated as he thinks of the condition of this park? The limited area for a public park which existed a few years ago has been sadly encroached upon by the erection of huge piles of stonework, till little of the ground seems to be left, and what remains is in a state of disorder, which is shameful to those charged with the maintenance of the grounds. Not only this; the conduct of the public in crossing the sward in every direction to make a cut-off, thereby breaking down fences, encroaching on boulevards and private property, has made the Queen's Park one of the most neglected and pitiable sights anyone would wish to see. No truly loyal citizen can take a stranger through the park with a feeling of pleasure. We spend large sums of money in advertising the advantages of the city, enumerating amongst other things its natural beauties. Can we call the Queen's Park one of them?

How do we compare in the maintenance of our public parks with such cities as Montreal and Halifax? The latter city, with a population of one-quarter of ours, has a public park which is a delight to all who visit it; whilst a visit to Montreal in summer makes one come home with a heavy heart to contemplate decay and ruin in every part of Queen's Park.

There are several associations who are interested in promoting the prosperity of the city for directly financial reasons. These of themselves are powerful enough to cause some immediate action being taken to mend the existing condition of the park, could they be induced to do so. They would soon receive the assistance of other associations, whose artistic pursuits and education would be invaluable in restoring to its natural beauty one of the most picturesque plots of pleasure ground any city can wish to possess.

Mr. G. Ernest Fairweather recently delivered a lecture on "Art and Architecture," at St. John, N. B.