

## Value of a Plan to a Small City

By Ed H. McCuiston.

The value of any practical plan to any city, whether large or small, is beyond computation. If there is a real difference between the value of such a plan for a small, and one for a larger city it is a difference in degree alone, for it is not a fact that anyone will need a plan, and the other will not. This whole subject, with its apparent merit, is manifest to everyone whether a resident of a populous, or sparsely settled community. It is extremely difficult to express in terms of dollars and cents or in the parlance of the counting room the value of a plan for any community. John Burns, who is often referred to as the father of planning legislation, has rather fittingly emphasized this idea by saying, "that an investment in a good plan whether it be for new parts of a city or for the correction of older parts if regarded for a period of one year may appear expensive; if considered for a period of five years, it will be profitable; or if considered for a period of fifty years it will be an investment, which in subsequent days will make the community regret that it did not adopt it sooner."

The chief handicap of planning work is to be found, however, in the fact that its real and most vital fundamentals are so generally misunderstood. Orderly arrangement in community building has been practiced after a fashion from the earlier days of civilized life. But all of the earlier plans savored largely of blind, empty monotonous forms. Cities were far too commonly duplicates of each other from the standpoint of their leading features and street systems. The keynote of all real planning work as practiced in recent times is to be found not only in orderly arrangement, important as they may be, but also in a pleasing practical adaptation of the general fundamentals conceded to belong to this science, to the needs of a given community. The foundation of a practical plan, if executed with proper foresight, is not placed upon the surface of the ground merely, but rather should begin with a well ordered system of storm and sanitary sewers to which should be added in the more populous communities conduit plans with sufficient foresight to make adequate provision for all utility companies not only then in existence, but which may with reasonable probability be expected in any practically near future. After all underground requirements have been duly considered and thoughtfully provided for, the next step would logically and probably be to consider a system of public ways. This will consist of not only streets, major and minor in character, but also radical streets, boulevards, esplanades and other like ways adapted to the varying needs of the individual community. Under the head of public ways should also be considered the matter of Gardens, Parks, Recreational Grounds etc. There are distinctions in providing for all of these, that afford most excellent opportunities for displaying individuality and good taste. Many do not appreciate the distinction between a park and a garden. A park should be, if developed on the average city common, designed to become a very epitome of nature itself. Where possible, eligible sites where nature has never been disturbed should be selected, preserved and adapted to the use of the community. Gardens, properly speaking, are formal. In other words gardens are man-made. Parks should be very largely nature-made. A proper appreciation of this distinction will always prove helpful in planning and equipping cities, however monotonous or wanting in civic appearance previously. Even streets in the average town or village should possess an individuality not now commonly known. The question of width, the width of parkings, the kind or character of walks, the placing of shade trees and other embellishments are so numerous that it will be impossible in an address of this character to enter upon the discussion of them and I desire only to call attention to the facts just recited which are entirely in harmony with the best thought and work devoted now to this important subject. No greater or more inviting field ever tempted the ingenuity of men than is to be found in building and planning a city along comprehensive lines. The possibilities of such work, for the exercise of common sense, public spirit, artistic taste, etc., are almost infinite.

All men seemingly appreciate the value and utility of ordered display in the arrangement of the home or manifested in an office, counting room or industrial plant, but strange as it may seem these very same people are tot-

ally oblivious to the advantages which may be derived from the same character of orderly arrangement on a larger scale applied to the needs of the city in which they live. Many unpretentious homes, business houses and industrial plants are planned by architects. Careful drawings are made, detailed specifications are written, and almost infinite patience undergone to care for even apparently unimportant details, and this is well, but the thing which appears almost incredible and unbelievable is that only four cities in the great state of Texas have looked into the future with a sufficient degree of practicability to provide plans along the lines of which their future growth and development is to be directed. There are probably few if any more than one hundred cities in the whole United States that have exercised this same degree of foresight.

But I am abundantly justified in asserting that there is an awakening. In 1874, the architects and engineers of Germany for the first time in all history so far as we know, undertook to set out with some sort of standardized detail the recognized fundamentals of Town or City planning. Since that day substantial progress has been made, but there has been all the while much misconception and much misunderstanding of the real aims and purposes of practical planning. By no means the least of these is a sentimental one which commonly refers to planning enterprises of City Beautiful work. Real planning is not a fad but is at once the most practical, fascinating and beneficial work in which civic engineers ever engage. The value of a plan to any city large or small is inestimable. The larger the city the greater or more crying the need, but the plan itself properly adapted is indispensable, to progressive development wherever there is urban life.—Read before the joint meeting of the League of Texas Municipalities and Texas Town and City Planning Association at Dallas, Texas.

### THE MUNICIPAL ENGINEERS.

The taxpayer's "first deputy" in civic construction enterprises, and particularly in street improvement, is the City Engineer. This man must faithfully represent the property owners as the one who is responsible for the success or failure of the community pavements. He must be experienced in municipal work, skilled in designing and constructing public utilities and materials, and willing to adapt those innovations in which he finds merit to the needs of his city. Such a man is worth many times the salary he asks. The poorest form of economy a town can adopt is to select an engineer of limited ability because he refers to attempt the direction of a town's improvements for a few hundreds or a few thousands less salary than must be paid to secure a competent engineer of genuine ability and character—Exchange.

### IN TWO CITIES.

The Sun and New York Herald comments on the unsuccessful efforts of corporation and individual to come successfully with the heavy snowfall there last week. The fact is that the machinery is insufficient. The New Yorkers should be better prepared for the unexpected in the way of winter storms and they would suffer less: In Canada the worst is met with equanimity. For example, Montreal experienced a week-end storm which developed into a veritable blizzard on Sunday, with a wind of high velocity sweeping a heavy downfall of snow before it into huge drifts. At times the air was so thick that it was almost impossible to see across the street. Nine inches of snow fell and the wind attained a velocity of 46 miles. Yet the elements were combatted with quite a measure of success. The tramways service was maintained with the aid of two score snowploughs and sweepers, which worked continuously. The sidewalks were ploughed and traffic was on a normal basis on Monday morning. Montreal's houses and working structures are built for winter, and the fiercest storm that rages can be handled with the mechanical contrivances kept ready for just such developments. This is a good strong winter land.—Montreal Gazette.