

MUNICIPAL DEPARTMENT

DUST REMOVAL.

An English municipal engineer, Mr. George Livingstone, C. E., recently visited a number of American cities, and in a lengthy paper read before the British Association of Municipal and County Engineers, gives his impressions regarding municipal work. Regarding dust removal he says:

In New York each householder has to provide two moveable receptacles, one to contain dust and ashes and the other garbage. Every morning these are placed on the sidewalk in front of the house, and the effect can scarcely be said to enhance the beauty of the city's morning aspect. The authorities arrange for the removal of the contents under two contracts—one for the dust and the other for the garbage, the collections being made at the sweet will of the contractors. The contents, when collected by these conscientious gentlemen, are removed to depots located on each river, and the privilege of sorting them for the separation of such materials as are saleable is granted—chiefly to Italians. The residuum is then dumped in specially-constructed barges and taken out to sea. Many of the residents in the better-class neighborhoods consider the system so objectionable that they make private contracts for the removal of dust and garbage rather than have the unsightly receptacles in front of their premises until it occurs to contractor No. 1 to remove the dust and contractor No. 2 to remove the garbage.

In Washington the municipal authorities are in the unique position of not being responsible for the carrying out of this work. Each householder is obliged, by law, to get rid of his own dust and ashes, the authorities confining their efforts to the disposal of the garbage. How the work is accomplished he has no knowledge, nor did he find anyone to enlighten him on the point. When he ventured to express an opinion that the arrangement was open to grave objection, as dilatory people might neglect their obligations in regard to removal, and so cause a nuisance to their neighbors, he was told that the medical officer of health was empowered to order the removal of the dust heap within a given time. In case of non-compliance the authorities would remove the dust and recover the expense from the defaulting occupiers. Whatever objection there may be to such a system from the point of view of advanced sanitation, there is no doubt that it is an ideally happy one, in conducting to the peace of mind of the municipal officers, who are freed from the possibility of complaints regarding the non-removal of dust. On the other hand, whether under such circumstances a conscientious medical officer can properly safeguard the

health of the city is open to question. It can safely be said, therefore, that the dust problem is as far removed from solution among our go-ahead American cousins as it is among ourselves, and, on the whole, the author is inclined to the opinion that our own methods for the collection, removal and disposal of house refuse are, in spite of the worry they cause officials, superior to the methods in vogue on the other side of the Atlantic.

POLLUTION OF RIVERS AND STREAMS.

Governor Hastings, of Pennsylvania, in his annual message, has the following to say as to the contamination of rivers and other sources of water supply by the discharge of sewage into them:

"We have now come to a point where the people of the State must determine whether the rivers and other public streams shall continue to be used as public sewers, or whether the waters thereof shall be kept pure. Owners of property through which or past which a public stream flows seem to have falsely concluded that the stream itself is a private property, to be dealt with as the owners choose. They use it as a common carrier or depository to all the substances of which they desire to rid themselves. The refuse of mines and factories invades its shores, and unites with the solid refuse of tanneries and slaughter houses, the garbage and night soil of public institutions, factories, villages, and towns, the carcasses of animals dead of disease, the output of abandoned salt wells, and the washings of vast culm deposits, which frequently force it from its ancient shores. As our population increases, these conditions become worse, and, if they are to be permitted, the cities and towns of the State must look elsewhere for their water supply. There are few of our rivers and larger streams that do not carry the germs of disease, gaining in their unhealthy conditions more and more as they flow onwards to the sea. It must be admitted that it is impossible to avoid all degrees and forms of public water contamination, but it has been demonstrated that to a large extent it can be eradicated. Two cities in the State, Altoona and Reading, with the most praiseworthy public spirit and consideration for the health of the population living lower down, have established purification plants for

their sewage. These plants, although entirely unlike in construction and manner of purification, afford ample demonstration of the fact that purification of the sewage of large towns is a matter entirely within the reach of sanitary engineering. The scourge of typhoid fever, which devastated our military camps during the past summer, has brought us face to face with this question. No community can remain healthy while forced to use a contaminated water supply."

SEWER VENTILATION.

During last year the corporation of Bristol, England, authorized an eminent firm of engineers to examine and report on the propriety of having the sewer system of the city ventilated. The report of the investigation as to the feasibility of carrying out such a project has been recently handed in, and the expert opinion rendered, says the Sanitary Plumber, was to the effect that the necessity for ventilating sewers can only arise from two causes. In the first place, if it should become necessary for men to enter the sewers for cleansing purposes or repairs, it is essential that the sewers should be cleared of foul gases before the men go into them, for which provision had been made, the sewers being plentifully provided with open ventilators. In the second place, it has been stated by some authorities that if sewers are not ventilated there is a risk of the sewer air being forced through the house drains into the houses; but it has always seemed that if a house is properly drained—that is, the house-drain in the first place being provided with an intercepting trap and with a soil-pipe carried above the level of the roof—this could not occur, because if the sewer air were forced through the disconnecting trap it would escape up the soil-pipe rather than force its way through the traps and sanitary appliances into the house. This admits the possibility of the sewer air forcing its way into the house-drains in spite of the existence of the intercepting trap, and, in view of such an expert admission, the natural query which suggests itself is, What is the intercepting trap there for? Probably to "intercept" the flow of the house wastes.

Mr. Robert Kerr, manager of the Kerr Engine Company, has been elected by acclamation mayor of Walkerville, Ont.

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