

Refuse Collection and Disposal



An important problem of municipal health is the removal and efficient disposal of house refuse with expedition, regularity and at a minimum cost to the ratepayer.

There are two kinds of house refuse, liquid and solid.

The former is called sewage, and in all up-to-date towns is collected in sewers and discharged in such a manner as not to create a nuisance. In some instances, municipalities in Canada have had to abate nuisances caused by sewage by installing and operating disposal plants. In the case of liquid refuse, the work of collection and disposal is done by the municipality at the minimum cost and to the great convenience of the householder. Who would suggest a departure from this sanitary method? What town councillor or alderman would suggest reverting to the primitive system of individual disposal?

What shall be said then as to the collection and disposal of all the solid refuse of the modern home? With but few exceptions, the problem has not been properly met nor efficiently dealt with, yet all must admit that, for the sake of health and the improvement of slum and urban sanitary conditions generally, we have yet a long way to go before it can be said that this work of bettering home environment is efficiently done in Canada.

A striking contrast in cleanliness is exhibited in Fig. 1. The upper illustration is a Canadian scene showing how the civic authorities deposit refuse in close proximity to a number of good residences. The 'dump' is not supervised in any way, and is as disorderly and filthy as one would expect to find in the centre of a savage town in mid-Africa, instead of in Christian Canada. The lower picture illustrates the good effects of civic efficiency. It is a view of the back premises of homes where refuse is kept in proper receptacles and regularly removed by the town scavengers to the destructor. There is no reason why every Canadian town and city should not be kept as tidy and as healthy.

The city dweller has not far to go from home to find evidences of garbage accumulation which are a discredit to himself as well as to the municipal authorities. Fig. 2 is an example of how house refuse will accumulate on the premises of the working classes even in a city with some pretence to a system of refuse collection, while Fig. 3 illustrates how the failure to efficiently operate what is intended for a good system is attended with even more untidy and insanitary conditions than exist where the work is left to the individual householder. Fig. 3 is an evidence that, in this particular city, the collection system was not operating as well as it should, and yet the same city was urging