

## TWO YEARS IN BRAZIL—Continued from Page 309.

I pointed out to the municipal authorities that between all these villages and hamlets and the existing city an open belt of park-land, making a complete circle round the existing city, should be acquired at once, before it was too late. My proposition was that this belt should be a wide one; that the middle of it should be dedicated as a park in perpetuity, and that this should be made a remunerative undertaking to the city by re-selling the land on its margins at the enhanced value the dedication of the central strip for park purposes would give it. I am pleased to say that my report on this was enthusiastically received; but here again legislation is necessary. At present the municipal authorities have only the power of acquiring land for a specific purpose; they cannot acquire it to sell again, and the law will have to be altered to enable them to carry out the scheme. Some of the land I designated for park purposes is already the property of the municipal authorities of the city of Sao Paulo, but most of their land is low-lying and subject to floods.

The explanation of the possession of this land by the municipality suggests a brief sketch of the history of San Paulo. Brazil was discovered in the year 1500 by the Portuguese. For a long time, of course, it was a Portuguese settlement inhabited for the most part by natives, and to an almost negligible extent by European settlers who lived on the east coast. The Portuguese Government thought to encourage emigration to Brazil, and at the same time find a means of satisfying the demands of rapacious nobles and statesmen at home, by dividing up the colony, or at least so much of it as bordered on the Atlantic, into what were called "captancies," and giving each captaincy to one of its subjects. The city of Sao Paulo, however, was founded by Jesuit missionaries who landed at Sao Vicente, and were driven from there to Sao Bernardo, and ultimately to Sao Paulo. There is an interesting and rare map made in 1910 and copied in 1841. It shows how the original city occupied a triangular plateau between three eminences on each of which was a monastery. These monasteries occupied the strategic points most easily fortified. It was not against the natives that the missionaries had to entrench themselves so much as against the traders, who, being jealous of the success which the pacific methods of the missionaries met with among the natives, and because of the miserable failure which had attended their own ultra-barbarous methods, made war on the missionaries. The traders drove the missionaries from Sao Vicente to Sao Bernardo, and so persecuted them there that they went further into the interior and selected the site of Sao Paulo, because of its strategic advantages, on which to set up their fortified convents and carry on their missionary enterprises.

The Rua Sao Bento, the long straight street running from the monastery of Sao Bento to that of Sao Francisco, which is to-day perhaps the busiest and most important street in Sao Paulo, while at the same time one of the narrowest, occupies exactly the site of the primitive road on which the earliest native converts to Christianity planted their huts when they came to Sao Paulo to live under the protection of the missionaries from the marauding traders. Such was Sao Paulo in these early days, built in the fastnesses of the great mountains 2,400 feet above the level of the sea, and to such a city came the captain to whom the whole district was assigned. This captain took a point in the centre of the city and from it struck a circle with a radius of a certain number of kilometres (I forget how many), giving to the municipal authorities all the land within that circle. Year by year this land has been assigned by the municipality to settlers—at first free, until now the remaining land lies too low to offer desirable building sites. In fact, a map coloured to show what land is to-day in the possession of the municipal authorities may be taken as showing the land which is liable to be flooded. It must be remembered that in 1886 the population of the city of Sao Paulo was 47,000, and that the population to-day is approximately 500,000.

I also laid out large areas of land belonging to the municipality of Poços de Caldas, a city in the heart of Brazil in the State of Minas, and hundreds of miles from Sao Paulo. I laid this land out as parks and gardens. I was very glad I was asked to do this work. It gave me an opportunity of seeing something of the interior life in Brazil. It came towards the end of my stay, and when I was beginning to fear that I should come home again having seen little of the country beyond a few of its large cities. The journey from Sao Paulo to Poços de Caldas I

## RENTAL COURTS.

The topic of the hour in many Canadian cities is the housing problem and its near relative the rental question is also receiving considerable attention. In some respects the rental question is more prominent than the housing question because the people affected by increased rents are more numerous than those who are interested at this time in building new houses. Demands have been made in various parts of the country for the creation of rental courts whose duty it shall be to investigate charges preferred against alleged profiteering landlords. Our experience in connection with these bodies formed to control prices of various commodities has not been altogether satisfactory, mainly because their plan of action was based upon a foundation economically unsound. Rental courts may appeal to the popular mind and satisfy popular feeling for the time being, but in the long run they will be found to be a very unsatisfactory palliative.

The rental question needs radical treatment—we must get to the root of the matter. Rents are high because housing is scarce. Houses are scarce because it costs too much to build and maintain good houses. It costs too much to build because wages are high and materials are dear. House property is expensive to maintain because repairs are costly and our system of taxation is such that on land values. Just what a rental court can do to remedy these things is hard to see.

It is generally agreed by reasonable men that every man is entitled to a fair return on his investment. There are very few property owners who have received an average net income of 3 per cent on their investments in property during the last six years. Plain facts show clearly that there is a touch of irony in the branding of all property owners as profiteers. There are black sheep among the property owning fraternity just as there are in every family and the few profiteers which exist should receive prompt and drastic treatment from the powers that be. But the mere fact that rents are high does no of itself prove profiteering exists—there may be a reason. Let us be calm in our deliberations and fair in our judgment of the property-owner. If rental courts are established they can serve the useful purpose of placing the facts before the public. These will be preferable to the exaggerated statements now being circulated.—Canadian Finance.

## ROADWORK AND THE UNEMPLOYED.

In view of the possibility of extensive unemployment during the coming winter, efforts are already being made for the execution of special relief works. It is undoubtedly a good thing to consider the problem well in advance in this way, as, next to unemployment itself, nothing could be worse than to see men engaged on useless work simply in order to provide an excuse for giving them relief. Among the works under consideration are naturally certain road improvement schemes. Indeed, a fairly comprehensive programme has already been drawn up, which includes, as stated in our issue of last week, the construction of certain by-pass roads which the development of motor traffic has made a matter of real urgency. Two of these roads are already under construction in the Greater London area—one at Brentford and the other at Croydon. Others now contemplated in connection with the relief works referred to are situated at Eltham, on the London-Folkestone road, and at the east end of London to provide a better outlet in that direction. The latter scheme provides for a double tramway track in the centre, with space for up and down traffic on each side, crossings being provided at certain points only. Although the idea that roadmaking is an unskilled business has long ago been exploded, there can be no dispute that new roads such as those proposed do provide an opportunity for the employment of useful unskilled labor in excavation, etc. It is to be hoped that the anticipated distress will not occur, but that in any event these useful schemes will not be allowed to drop.—Surveyor (England).

shall never forget. The coffee plantations, the tropical forests, the wild mountain scenery made this a trip which can never be erased from one's memory. An even more memorable excursion was one from Poços de Caldas to Rio Verde, by a track over which a gang of men were sent in advance of us to make just passable for us. Brazil is a wonderful country and has a great future before it.