

pavement laid by his own company, or a good one laid by a competitor.

After properly priming the home office, the promoter then supplies the chairman of the visiting committee with a letter of introduction to the president of his company. When this letter is presented, the president graciously receives the committee, and, unless they have a million dollars to spend, turns them over to his assistants for their further good treatment.

Inspecting Pavements

Some engineers have a notion how such a municipal junketing party as I have just described inspects pavements when it reaches, say, New York. The committee puts up at some hotel like the Belmont, and the guide picks them up there in the morning right after breakfast, which is at about eleven o'clock. He then charters automobiles and starts out to show them some of his company's good pavements.

He does not say that he is showing his company's good pavements, for he knows that as soon as the cars begin to ride smoothly some alderman is sure to remark: "Why, this is a good pavement; who laid it?" And the guide knows that he will have an opportunity to answer, sort of off-hand like, "Oh yes, we laid this one in Nineteen Blankety-Blank." He puts the date back just as far as he thinks the credulity of the committee will stand, but he always makes the remark in such an off-handed manner that he can gracefully correct himself if challenged.

Competitor's Bad Ones

Then the guide swings the party over some bad streets, quite accidentally, of course, knowing that the same alderman who put the former query will pipe up and ask: "Who laid this rotten piece of work?" Of course the competitor did; that is why the committee is riding over it. All paving companies make some mistakes, and each knows where all of the other's mistakes are located.

By this time, the committee gets interested in picking its own streets, and mentions Broadway, Wall, and other world-famous thoroughfares; but the guide does not have to answer questions relating to the pavements on these roadways. The committee is enquiring about tall buildings, prohibition enforcement, and many other things that their home people did not send them out especially to investigate.

In the afternoon, they are interested in knowing the kind of roads in Central Park and on Riverside Drive; then it is dinner and the theatre, etc., and the next morning the chairman of the committee asks the guide for a memorandum of the streets they have seen, and is handed a nicely type-written report suitable for use by the committee as its own,—prepared just by way of suggestion, of course.

The Same Punctuation

On one occasion two committees visited New York at about the same time, and the guide, not having time to write a special report for the second committee, made a few necessary changes in the carbon copy of the report given the first committee and had it rewritten for the second.

Both committees arrived home somewhat the worse for wear, and, thinking the reports they had received from the guide would do very well as they were, had them re-copied and submitted to their city council as their own, and the local paper in each little city printed the report of its own committee in full.

The two towns were only about fifteen miles apart, and the local pro-bono-publicos noticed a strange likeness between the two documents. Upon close comparison, it was found that even the punctuation was identical, errors and all.

Had the guide known his geography better, he would not have made such a serious blunder. As it was, his firm lost the contracts and some aldermen in both cities lost their jobs at the next election.

The First Problem

The above probably tells quite clearly, in a back-handed way, what I think is the first part of a city's paving problem: Honest, efficient city government.

Lacking this starting point, the solution of the remainder of the problems is practically hopeless; if people want better streets and roads to drive and truck over during the next few years, it behooves them now to give very careful attention to their civic government.

Good government makes good paving possible; I have never known bad government to produce anything better than Montreal has in its down-town district to-day as a heritage from its former careless citizenship.

City Government

The general development of good city government from bad has brought forth certain definite principles that are now embodied in a model city charter published by the National Municipal League, as a guide, to be altered for local application. This document may be secured by writing to the league's headquarters in Philadelphia. Many Canadians are numbered amongst the membership of this league, and its work applies to the cities of both the United States and Canada.

This model city charter provides what may be briefly described as the commission-manager form of government, with proportional representation. Westmount already has the commission-manager form, as have some other Canadian municipalities; and possibly some of them have already adopted the proportional representation feature. This new type of charter has given satisfaction to the cities which are working under it. Ashtabula, O., adopted it first, and Kalamazoo, Mich., and others followed.

The Second Problem

The second part of a city's paving problems is raising money. And right here I want to disabuse the mind of any man who thinks that good city government can be supported and well-paved streets constructed and maintained on a system of too low taxes supplemented by municipal hot air.

The question should not be so much, "What is the tax rate?" as "How is the municipal dollar being spent?" If it is being economically and justly handled, we can possibly get more value from a Canadian dollar by municipalizing it through the tax-roll than in any other way; certainly better value than they give us in the United States these days.

Our Municipal Bonds

I do not see anything wrong in practice with the principle of issuing municipal bonds to pay for paving city streets; but the less it is necessary to resort to this practice, the better. The matter should be governed by strictly business practice. Sometimes it is good tactics for a man to mortgage his house; sometimes not.

The greatest difficulty is the temptation which municipal bonds offer to the crafty politician to spend money in this generation, have paved streets and both the political credit and graft that may be had by paving them, and at the same time maintain a low tax rate to show the people at election time so they will keep his party in office. Nearly all of this type of politicians work to the motto, "After us, the deluge."

Most of our cities have been through just this experience; but they do not wake up to the true condition of their municipal affairs until it is too late and the city credit has been pledged to such an alarming extent that the evidence of it cannot longer be kept out of the tax rate. By the time they realize that they have been trusting their affairs to men who are either dishonest or incompetent, but more probably both, the political boss can well afford to retire and go to live as a country squire in some foreign country.

The Third Problem

The third part of a city's problem is spending the money; not for the benefit of the spendee, but for the good of the city.

That is where we engineers and public works men are supposed to come in. Had we more to do with this spending in the past, and the politicians less, there would not now be a necessity for raising so much money either for present needs