

TOWN PLANNING—(Continued).

things a park system. In working out that plan it assessed adjacent building land with an improvement tax to pay the greater part of the cost of its park system. At first there was violent opposition, but latterly when the scheme was tried out approval was general. In a recent report by real estate men it was stated that the difference in favor of land fronting on the boulevard and park system was half a million dollars more than the entire cost to the tax-payers for all the open space and boulevards embraced in the system.

In fire-prevention and fire-fighting costing Canada from two to three dollars per capita more than some other countries, we have to recognize that the absence of planning in building regulations is one of the chief causes of our having to bear that extra burden, so it is all along the line in directions too numerous to mention. In every aspect of our municipal life want of foresight, of system, of adequate regulation as part of that system, we are producing results that are destructive of life and wealth. Such a tragedy as the one we have witnessed in Northern Ontario the other day would not be possible to any serious extent in organized town settlements if we had paid more respect to town planning. If the city is growing rapidly we need to plan for that growth; if it is standing still we need to plan either to keep its amenities intact and prevent it from resuming its growth in the wrong way, or else to plan it out of its moribund state; if we have financial difficulties in our city we will probably find that most of them are due to bad management of our real estate problems and want of planning in regard to the matter where we spend most of our capital for local improvements. In agricultural areas, in villages as well as in cities, there is the same need for planning; the Province needs to be planned as well as the city. The linking up of the plans of adjacent cities, towns and rural districts can only be properly done under a municipal system which is part of a provincial system. That is why, in some provinces the passing of a town-planning law is accompanied by a demand for the creation of a skilled department of municipal affairs, one of the things we most need in Canada.

The town planning outlook in Canada at present, so far as the principles on which it is based are concerned, may be summarized as follows:

1. We must plan to build up a more scientific form of Government and now is the time to lay the foundation.
2. Municipal administrations control greater financial interests and matters affecting public health than any other kind of administration. Town Planning which deals with the proper regulation of the use and development of land for building purposes is the most vital matter affecting these financial interests, and the health of the people.
3. We want more respect for those who administer municipal affairs, but that will only come when municipal administrators have more respect for themselves and for their expert advisors.
4. The land system is at the root of all our municipal problems and we need Town Planning in unison with the same system of valuation and assessment to provide us with a better basis for the future.

Progress in Canada.

The outlook in regard to actual progress in applying these principles in Canada is most encouraging, but just a word as to progress elsewhere. Since town planning methods were first employed in Italy in 1865, in Sweden in 1874, and in Germany in 1875, there has never been any falling back to the old system. The obsolete methods we are still pursuing in some Canadian Provinces have long ago been discredited. But a word of warning is necessary. Town Planning in Germany is not an example to be followed. Like most German institutions it is based on outward appearance and ostentation and increases rather than lessens bad housing conditions.

In Great Britain, on the other hand, the first object of town planning, is to secure healthy housing conditions and to conserve financial interests. The Town Planning Act of 1909 is working successfully in both directions. Progress is indicated by the following figures showing the number of schemes promoted—about 150 in number—dealing with 250,000 acres.

1911	3
1912	11

1913	19
1914	23
1915	49 First year of war.
1916	45 (Estimated).

Of these schemes it is to be noted that 139 out of 150 have been prepared by officers of the municipalities without any outside expert advice.

In the United States great progress had been made in several States, and about 50 plans have been prepared. In Massachusetts the creation of Town Planning Boards are compulsory in each municipality. In Greater New York a plan has been prepared and passed into law limiting certain areas which cannot be used for factories or stores, fixing residential areas and practically revolutionizing the method of developing real estate. To-day when some of our Canadian cities are trying to out-distance New York in high buildings, New York herself has seen the folly of crowded high buildings, and is reforming herself by giving up the very things we have been so freely taking as an example.

In Canada, however, we are improving all the time, and in a more general and scientific way than in the neighboring republic. Our Town Planning legislation is being taken as a model in the south, and the time has come for us to be the originators instead of the imitators. In Nova Scotia we have advanced legislation with certain compulsory features under which Halifax and other cities and towns, and even rural municipalities are proposing to prepare schemes. In New Brunswick, St. John is preparing a scheme for 20,000 acres. The matter is also being taken up in Prince Edward Island in connection with agricultural development. In Quebec there is no general legislation in force, but the need of it is petitioned for. The same applies to Ontario. There is partial legislation dealing with Town Planning problems in both these provinces, but urgent need for a comprehensive act. Further West we have a good Act to enable authorities in Manitoba to prepare schemes. An Act has passed its first reading in Saskatchewan. It will no doubt be passed into law next session. In Alberta the use of the Act of 1912 is only now being considered because its value to enable cities to properly regulate real estate development and to prevent the financial troubles which inevitably follow from widespread and haphazard suburban development is only beginning to be properly recognized. There is an urgent call for legislation also in British Columbia.

I have just completed a tour from the east to the west and from the west to the east. Town Planning is now looked upon in every province I have visited as a sane and common-sense proposal to give local authorities the needed power to properly control their future growth and to avert the possibilities of financial disaster. I could name a hundred cities, towns and districts which are active in the matter: Vancouver, Victoria, Edmonton, Calgary, Medicine Hat, Swift Current, Regina, Saskatoon, Winnipeg, Fort William, Port Arthur, Toronto, Hamilton, Renfrew, Brantford, Kitchener, Ottawa, Kingston, St. John and Halifax, are a few amongst those which are most active in the matter outside of Quebec. In Ottawa the scheme has been promoted by the Federal Government and is not of the kind that can be imitated and carried out by an average city. What we want is legislation which will add to the powers of our municipalities to deal more effectively with future growth, at the same time setting up machinery to enable the Province to be of more effective use in advising and helping the municipalities and in securing co-operation between those whose interests overlap or whose boundaries adjoin.

In this short paper it is only possible to give a brief summary, but I hope I have said sufficient to enable you to appreciate the advisability of our completing the link of town planning legislation from coast to coast. I have no fear that that link will not be completed either to the east of Quebec or the west of Ontario, but your help and counsel is needed to get the two largest provinces in line with the others. I trust before you disband, that you will petition British Columbia, Ontario and Québec to follow the lead given by the other provinces. You may rely on the co-operation of the Commission of Conservation in giving effect to that legislation when it is passed, because we not only believe that we must in Canada to-day conserve human life and promote social ideals, but that the most needed thing to accomplish that task is to lay a scientific and economically sound basis for our municipal government and development.