

The Civic Improvement Movement in Ontario

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(Continued from last issue)

IN some places, the local board of trade has taken the initiative in promoting civic improvement, because they realize the fact that beautiful surroundings are a potent factor in attracting citizens and increasing trade. The Orillia Board of Trade a couple of years ago published a neat little booklet encouraging the citizens to unite in making Orillia an attractive spot for summer visitors.

From the *Ottawa Citizen*, we clip the following: "The people of Ottawa are taking an increasing pride in the appearance of the capital, which the Dominion Government has also done so much to beautify. Ten years ago there was only one park in Ottawa, and the most of the private residences were walled in by high fences; now there are seven parks, nearly all the fences have been taken down, so that gardens and lawns are open to the street, and those having available grounds for the purpose are planting them with flowers and shrubs, and generally adding to the beauty not only of the premises but of the locality." And so the improvement is going on steadily in many parts of the country.

VALUE OF HORTICULTURAL SOCIETIES

In some places the local horticultural societies have taken an active part in promoting civic and rural improvement, particularly along horticultural lines. In other places the work has been confined too much to a few special features of improvement, such as floriculture or window gardening. Such societies should be encouraged to reach out and take a broader view of their opportunities. I would suggest the following as a few of the avenues through which the local societies might work to good advantage in promoting improvement in their respective communities:

1. By conducting an educative campaign in awakening public interest to an appreciation of the value of neatness, order, and beautiful surroundings. To this end it is well to make good use of the local press.

2. By enlisting the support of the rising generation by flower competitions, and also by making school as well as home surroundings as beautiful as possible. Young people brought up amid beautiful surroundings may be counted on in later years to work for rural and civic improvement wherever they may be placed. I am looking forward to an early awakening of school boards to the importance of improving school grounds, and have prepared a bulletin on that

subject for the Ontario Educational Department this year.

3. By seeking the co-operating of other influential local organizations, such as the town council, board of trade, or school board, which may be willing to assist in making local improvements. In union there is strength.

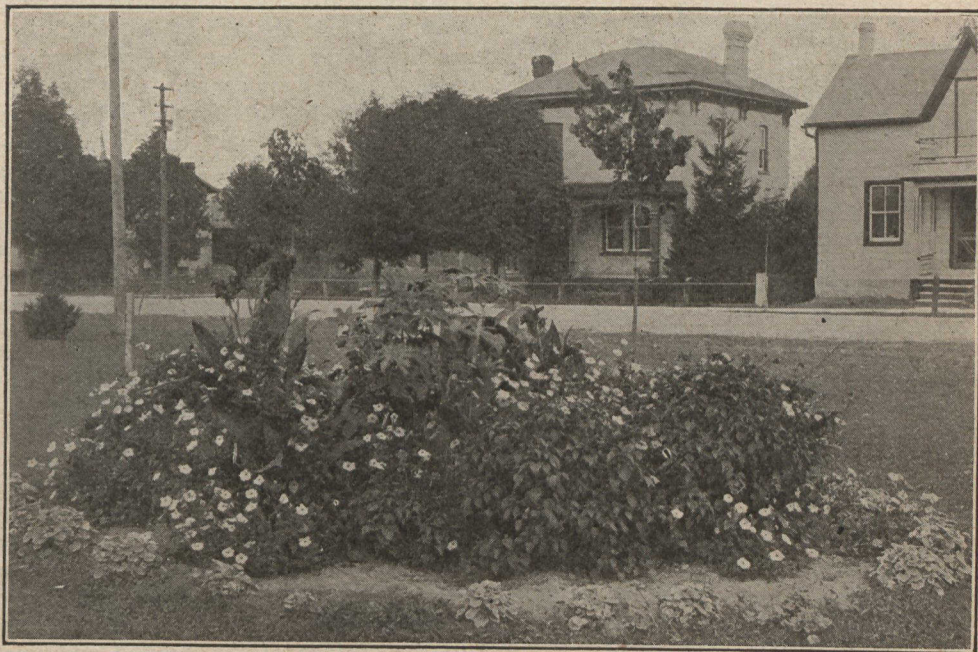
4. By working for the appointment of progressive local park boards or commissions and urging such boards to get possession of suitable lands for park

ance of our country. Tourists from all over the world would come to see Beautiful Ontario.

LEGISLATION DESIRED

There are a few things upon which it would be desirable to have some legislation in this country, and which this association might be instrumental in getting, if it were to join forces with other organizations which have been asking for the same:

1. Legislation to control the bill-



A Bed in Gore Park, Elmira, Ontario, Planted by Local Horticultural Society

purposes while they are cheap. Plans can then be adopted for their gradual development and improvement.

The Ontario Parks Act provides that one-half mill on the assessment may be used by any park board so appointed for such purposes. And whenever such money is judiciously expended, the increased value of adjacent lands will soon pay a good share of the cost of such improvements in increased revenues from taxes.

The park board in any town might also be asked to establish a small nursery, where trees, shrubs, and vines could be grown in quantity for civic improvement work, and could be supplied to the citizens at cost for planting in their own grounds.

5. Every property holder should be encouraged by precept and example to contribute his share to the general improvement of the place by making his own lot as attractive as possible. If every citizen did his share, what a change would take place in the appear-

board nuisance and advertising monstrosities which disfigure architectural beauty as well as natural scenery.

2. To prohibit the butchery of street and roadside trees by telephone and telegraph companies, and to compel the placing of their wires underground wherever they enter town or city limits.

3. To prevent dogs running at large within town or city limits.

There may be room for diversity of opinion upon all of these questions, but there can be no two opinions about it, that dogs and bill boards and unsightly telegraph and telephone poles are at enmity with civic improvement.

Some notes on new peonies, by Mr. R. B. Whyte, Ottawa, will be published in an early issue.

An illustrated article on "Window Boxes, Hanging Baskets and Rustic Stands," by Mr. William Hunt, Ontario Agricultural College, will appear in the next issue of THE CANADIAN HORTICULTURIST.