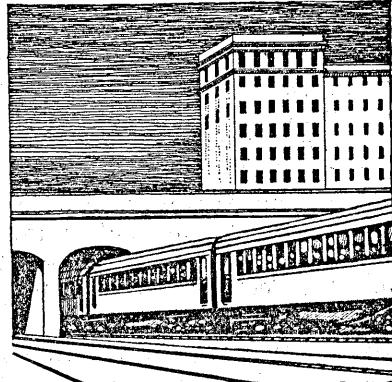
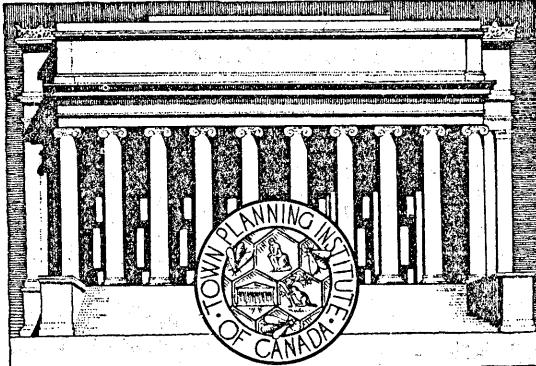


TOWN PLANNING



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Town planning may be defined as the scientific and orderly disposition of land and buildings in use and development with a view to obviating congestion and securing economic and social efficiency, health and well-being in urban and rural communities

RETIRING PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

By NOULAN CAUCHON

SIXTH ANNUAL MEETING OF THE TOWN PLANNING INSTITUTE OF CANADA

Montreal, April 22-24, 1926

I desire to express my personal pleasure and the gratification of the members of the Town Planning Institute of Canada in accepting the invitation of the City Improvement League of Montreal to hold our annual meeting in this great city. Montreal offers such a vast field of opportunity for taking the lead in Canadian planning and re-planning; for the foundation of new ideals regarding the living conditions of our people, and for helping to solve our traffic difficulties; and Montreal is equipped with so splendid a staff of technical men at the universities and within and without the public services that the rest of us, as mere onlookers, are suffused with hope and expectation that you will set an example which will stimulate and inspire all the cities of Canada to take a deeper and more active interest in this world-wide movement of town, city and regional planning. Since the papers to be read at this conference will have a direct bearing on the problems of Montreal,

it is needless for me to enlarge on the subject at this moment.

Tribute to City Improvement League

We are guests of the City Improvement League and my first duty is to pay tribute to the unceasing and unselfish toil of this body of citizens to create public interest in, and fashion the machinery for, a forward town planning movement in Montreal. We have watched the ups and downs of your league and have sympathized deeply with you in those times of discouragement when you have asked yourselves whether it was any use. The darkest hour is said to be before the dawn. We heard in Ottawa with a great deal of fraternal distress that the City Improvement League of Montreal was on strike and ready to throw down its tools. Then came the welcome news that one more effort was to be made, the best and the biggest, to touch the

hearts and the consciences of the powers that be, and when our services were invited to help the movement, they were given with all the good will we could summon.

Canada is yet in the backwaters of this movement, and though the responsibility does not rest upon us town planners—for God knows we have done pleading enough—ours will still be the duty for some time to come to educate our “pastors and masters” (I believe that is a prayer book phrase) to the imperative necessity of adopting new methods to guide and control the development of our towns and cities, in the interests of national health and well-being as well as in the interests of trade and commerce.

British Columbia Town Planning Act

The outstanding town planning event during the past year has been the passage of a Provincial Town Planning Act in British Columbia, which now leaves Quebec as the only province in Canada without a Town Planning Act. It is true that the British Columbia Act has been largely disembowelled in its passage through the legislature, but it does leave the zoning powers of municipalities intact, though it has largely shorn away the splendid provision for initiative and education which our British Columbia Branch of the Institute had so carefully provided in the original draft.

Quebec the Only Province Without a Town Planning Act

When the Province of Quebec comes to consider a provincial Act it will find there is quite as much to be learned from the failures and timidities of existing Canadian Acts as from their successes. It has a splendid opportunity of creating a provincial Act which may come to be known as the best Town Planning Act in Canada. The town planning movement has travelled much too far over the face of the earth for Quebec to decide that it can get along very well without it. It has recently been stated in a responsible American journal that the “surplus” young men and women of Quebec migrate, not to newer Canadian provinces, but to New England mills and that of the seven largest cities of Massachusetts, four have French-Canadians as their predominating foreign element, as has the State of Massachusetts as a whole. A great province like Quebec should have no “surplus” migration of its young men and women whom it has brought to the point of efficiency at much cost and sacrifice. It should hold a future for them all in its development. The statement quoted is significant enough to raise the question whether the time has come for the province to provide a new social and industrial background so that the wealth of its young life shall not be squandered in this manner. I believe that a provincial policy of town and regional planning would provide the background. Migrants are not made of contented people.

In this connection will you bear with me if I reiterate my gospel of settlement:—“small hold-

ings” and “intensive cultivation” around our urban centres, under sanitary, efficient conditions of civilized well-being and amenity, building up a great background of home markets and industrial power vs. the husks of hardship, isolation, deficiency and distress ever baiting a wilderness to the echo of “migration.” Great Britain is suffering today from the policy that drove its small holders and yeomen into foreign lands, suffering by a disastrous inability to feed itself, the realization of which is leading to an excited political movement to redeem the mistake and once more get the rural land into cultivation and the urban lands accessible to the people who wish to build homes.

Sooner or later we shall have to tackle the monstrous rise in urban land value which places a mortgage on industry, increases past endurance the cost of living and makes it well-nigh impossible for working families to acquire home sites. In this matter—with all our great spaces at our disposal—we are following the bad old practices of the older countries and are driving our people into exile. We provide free homesteads in the wilderness but home sites around our urban centres have to be paid for by the blood of our people.

In this connection I would earnestly commend to you an article on this subject by Mr. A. G. Dalzell, in the current number of our *Town Planning Journal*.

The best thing I can suggest is that Quebec appoint an expert body to make a study of all Canadian provincial acts; to find out why some of them are inoperative and well-nigh useless and to create for this glorious province a provincial town planning policy which will beat the rather wheezy band of Canadian provincial Town Planning Acts. Not only an Act for your towns, but an Act to plan the entire province, as the State of New York is doing.

Ottawa Zoning

Another event of importance has been the completion and submission of the Zoning by-law to the City Council of Ottawa, which is now considering its provisions. We claim that zoning has passed the stage of argument and experiment, or, if argument is still needed, we can point to other countries such as the United States which has now more than 400 towns and cities under zoning law and is increasing its zoning at the rate of 100 towns a year. Great Britain and France have each also about the same number of cities under zoning law, while in Germany and other European countries zoning has become a common part of civic administration. Zoning gives everyone who lives and does business in a city a chance for a reasonable enjoyment of the fruits of his labour and investment. While it may involve in some cases a little sacrifice of anti-social liberty it protects the most anti-social libertarian from the depredations of his neighbours. We cannot go on forever destroying life and building values because a few thoughtless or predatory individuals

wish to do as they like with the face of the earth for their own profit and without regard to the welfare and convenience of their neighbours.

The Ottawa by-law was submitted to representative committees of such public bodies as the Federal Department of Health, building contractors, Real Estate Board, Architects' Association and to the Trust Companies, the last of whom are particularly anxious that it should become law in order that their loans may have a greater stabilized margin of security. I venture to say that the time is at hand when the trust companies will require a certificate of zoning before they will lend money, as they now require a certificate of insurance—that the values may not disappear either by fire or blighting deterioration. The by-law is being printed and distributed in order that all citizens may have a chance of understanding its provisions.

Ottawa Centenary

The centenary of the foundation of the city of Ottawa by Colonel By is to be observed this year. The event will prove a wonderful opportunity for technical men to see that honour is done to a great engineer who showed town planning pre-vision of a high order. Colonel By planned and founded the initial city on broad and generous lines but, unfortunately, his successors, as was wholly the case in London and somewhat in Washington, reduced his breadth of vision to the narrow limits of a mean gridiron, without expanding any of the great arteries which Colonel By had illustrated. Everywhere this lack of foresight has piled up well-nigh insoluble problems of traffic congestion. In this matter Ottawa is no better off than other cities. Much of the work of the Town Planning Commission is concerned with the struggle to redeem such mistakes in planning and this with pitifully inadequate means.

Federal District

The salvation of the Capital City lies in the creation of a Federal District Commission composed of men of outstanding technical ability, properly sustained by parliament with both funds and moral support. We trust if this ever comes about that parliament will refrain from the wonted lapses into the "moral turpitude" of appointing political henchmen to control and conduct a work which can only be done by trained men, who have made a life study of the problem involved. I am not now speaking as an Ottawa man on Ottawa affairs but as a Canadian who looks upon the Capital City as the vital concern of all true Canadians. In this matter we may follow the lead of our neighbours to the south who, through the American Civic Association, are collecting representatives from all parts of their vast country to constitute a powerful body of public opinion whose business is to urge upon their government the making of the Capital City a thing of beauty and efficiency and a joy forever.

Montreal "Drive"

Your movement here in Montreal, I trust, and

believe, is destined to be known as one of the great events of this year. Those of you who have taken the lead know very well that you are not engaged upon a mere project for the "embellishment" of Montreal, though this idea still bulks too largely in the minds of those who have not got beneath the skin of town planning philosophy.

The town planning of Montreal will be something more than a mere scheme of embellishment. It will be a scientific attempt to grapple with your problems of traffic, railways, arterial roads, the disposition of buildings in relation to each other and in relation to their uses and will involve an intensive study of the great problem of housing the masses of low-paid wage-earners and protecting the values of all home makers. I am credibly informed that your city charter already gives you unsuspected powers in these directions and all necessary legal authority for town planning and zoning your city. If this is so it gives Montreal a tremendous advantage over other cities which have to spend years in acquiring these legal powers.

Canada Behind in Town Planning

The fact has to be recognized that Canada is considerably behind other countries in town planning matters. At the recent New York International Town Planning Conference representing twenty-four nations, Canada had little to show in town planning activity of which we could be proud. Mexico, usually looked upon as a backward nation, was in the forefront in town and regional planning, even aspiring to a plan of the whole national territory. Telling the truth is an unpopular pastime but it is the only scientific decency and the only way to direct action when great things need doing. Our individualistic policy has over-reached itself if it has left us incapable of co-operating for the general good. A social organism and a national organism cannot function and flourish where every man insists upon pursuing his own advantage even if it be to the detriment of his neighbours. That is only relative economics and sooner or later ends in anarchy and social discontent and rebellion. Much of the substance of civic development in Canada is a riot of stupid selfishness. In other countries the co-operative spirit has built up immense distributive and even productive agencies among quite ordinary working people and in our own country big businesses like joint stock companies have long since understood and taken advantage of co-operation for their collective benefit. The movement with which we are concerned has for its objective the general good, the greatest benefit and the greatest happiness of the greatest number; an economic idea which is by no means new in statement but which requires embodiment in a determined national policy.

The Somnolent Provinces

I would like to urge the members of the Town Planning Institute who are located in what we town planners call "the drowsy provinces," to band

themselves together and stir up some planning activity in their own immediate centres. It has taken a long time to map out Canada with provincial Town Planning Acts, but we have now become aware that the mere placing of a Town Planning Act on a statute book is of little use unless the provinces appoint executive staffs of trained men to carry the Acts into practice. We should have more local branches of the Town Planning Institute of Canada. The Vancouver Branch has shown the splendid utility of a local branch when operated by enlightened and enthusiastic men. During the last few years the Vancouver Branch has been the university of town planning thought in British Columbia. It was the Vancouver Branch which drafted the first town planning bill for British Columbia and if its bill had been accepted British Columbia would have had the best Town Planning Act in Canada. The Branch is now continuing its work. It has urged upon the educational authorities to make town planning a school subject and has offered its services in providing a textbook of town planning. Meanwhile it is sending out its speakers and missionaries among the municipalities of British Columbia to explain the Act which has been passed and to point out its possibilities for building up municipal progress and prosperity.

The Toronto Branch is also active and is preparing a series of town planning studies which will probably be published in due course and will doubtless lead the way to town and regional planning in that great metropolitan centre. All the same we have today only three local branches of the Institute. We should have at least fifty. We should have one in all the larger cities of Canada.

Looking upon town planning as the science of environment with the responsibility of determining the medium in which human life can be and thrive, may I urge upon our members to devote earnest thought to the solution of the problem of congestion, not through palliatives, but through radical and original investigation into the causes of congestion and seek designs which will develop the idea of diffusing traffic and minimizing interference and collision points. To judge of correlation and balance in a civic entity we can visualize it allegorically as a collection of living cells and arteries in the tissues of the body politic, or test the dynamic theory of moving bodies, in terms of population as a "fluid."

Success to Montreal

I will conclude by wishing the greatest possible success to your movement for the planning of Montreal. There is a tide in the affairs of cities as well as of men which leads on to fortune. There are many towns in Canada stagnating for lack of ideas, lack of scientific enterprise, lack of social sense, lack of perspective. They do not know why they are stagnating. They sometimes think that prosperity can be bought by flaring advertisements and immense bill-boards desecrating the beauty of the countryside, methods which have become

so commonplace and so silly that nobody takes any notice of them as nobody takes any account of the man who is always blowing his own trumpet. Something more intelligent than this is necessary. I venture to say that at this time no advertisement can be so potent of interest as a zoning ordinance or a comprehensive plan which will shape community life into efficiency and beauty and will convince visitors and prospective investors that a town is under orderly government and does not allow property values to be depreciated and destroyed by planless and jumble building.

Wherever a successful housing scheme on modern lines, especially for families of working people has been brought to fruition—proving that low-paid wage-earners can be housed in pleasant cottages with attractive environment and room to live and play—it is not an exaggeration to say that millions of visitors have been attracted to visit it just because everybody is interested in homes and every decent person delights to see that home-making, even for poor people, is not at all impossible, as it should not be in any civilized country.

Town Planned Home Centres for Quebec

With its incomparable sites for home-making, the Province of Quebec might add to its credit for fine roads another achievement of fine home centres, but it cannot do so without cheap urban land and organized planning. A movement which will bring some of the best brains together to an International Conference from thirty or forty countries all ready and eager to tell their story of rural planning, village planning, town and city planning, regional planning and even national planning, cannot be shoved on one side as the futile babble of irresponsible idealists. If there is anything that is obsolete and wasteful it is the ordinary publicity methods of boasting and boosting which more often lead to amusement and scoffing than to either interest or business. Something better is needed in this wide-awake century and especially in Canada, if this century is to belong to Canada, as Sir Wilfrid Laurier once prophesied.

Standing, as we do, practically at the beginning of the town planning movement in Canada, those communities which put its philosophy into practice will have the first great "pull" at its social and industrial benefits before they become commonplace and known to all men. If I may use language for once that cannot be charged with ambiguity, they will get in on the ground floor. When tourists ask "Why should I take this road in Quebec?" if some one can answer, "There is on this road one of the most successful and beautiful specimens of modern community building," you may be sure that the tourist will take that road. The road that "has something to show" will be the popular road and among the millions of motorists who must be on the broad highway there may be some one who will see the industrial possibilities of well built communities, especially among those who recognize the inevitability of industrial

decentralization. Industries need workmen and they do not care to look for them in sunless slums because they know that strength and energy and efficiency are not bred in those places but only depressed vitality and industrial discontent.

The Province of Quebec should have a Town Planning Act and a better and bigger one than any other province in Canada. I think that its future prosperity depends upon it.

Memorandum on the Town Planning Movement in Montreal Since January 1st, 1926

By Percy E. Nobbs, M.A., F.R.I.B.A., R.C.A.

In the latter end of last year, the City Improvement League of Montreal decided on a serious effort to bring about a comprehensive plan for the City of Montreal, in view of the many problems of development with which the city is faced.

Before the end of the year, the City Improvement League Committee on Town Planning had come to the conclusion that the first step should be the creation of informed opinion on town planning matters among the educated elements of the population. It was felt that a good beginning would have been made if before the summer of 1926, the members of the teaching, professional and business classes in the city could all be made aware that in Montreal, as in every city, there was such a thing as a town plan problem. Further education on the many aspects of town planning might then be properly undertaken during the winter of 1926-27.

At this time of writing it is no exaggeration to say that both among the educated French and English, town planning has already become a topic of polite conversation in Montreal. This degree of progress in the movement has been brought about by the following activities.

McGill University undertook a series of fifteen lectures on town planning subjects, half of the speakers being from within the University, and of the rest, four were from Ottawa and one from Philadelphia. The attendance at these lectures consisted of persons seriously interested. Some of the subjects were of a general character but others were highly technical. Not much was said about Montreal's problems of the moment, although the past history and development of the town was thoroughly reviewed. The lectures were designed to deal with general underlying principles and received excellent publicity from the press in both languages. It is hoped to arrange for publicity in pamphlet form.

Even since the inauguration of these lectures at McGill University, the movement has had a good press, more particularly in the French newspapers, where several admirable leaders on town planning topics have appeared.

It is understood that a series of ten lectures on town planning has been arranged for at the University of Montreal and that these will take place once a week, beginning in April.

Lectures and speeches on town planning subjects have also been delivered before the following bodies:

At the Art Association of Montreal, a lecture was given on February 12th, under the joint auspices of the Art Association, McGill University, and the City Improvement League, by Mr. Clinton Rogers Woodruff, of Philadelphia. This gentleman also spoke before the Canadian Club on the subject of the "Modern Citizen and the Town Plan."

Other lectures were:

Montreal Women's Club—Miss Helen Fraser.

Local Council of Women—Mr. Ewing.

Women's Canadian Club—Mr. Nobbs.

Westmount Women's Club—Mr. Harold Lawson.

At the moment several other addresses have been arranged for and the Committee is compiling lists of ladies and gentlemen prepared to speak on various town planning topics, both in French and in English.

A beginning has also been made in the issue of a series of "documents" in leaflet form dealing with various aspects of town planning. These are first being produced in mimeograph form and issued to all members of the City Improvement League. Later on they will be printed for distribution broadcast through arrangements with the existing social organizations of the city. The first two documents to be printed are, No. 1, "The Plan of Chicago, Origin and Methods of Propaganda" and No. 2, "The Buffalo Zoning Campaign." Other documents in preparation are Nos. 3, 4, and 5, being lists of lecturers and addresses available, No. 6, "The Sociological Case for Zoning," No. 7, "The Economic Case for Zoning," No. 8, "Community Planning," No. 9, "The Traffic Problem," No. 10, "Skyscrapers."

It is hoped to issue a series of leaflets during the coming winter dealing in greater detail with various technical aspects of town planning.

Much assistance has been furnished to the movement by the Town Planning Division of the Parks Branch, Ottawa. The working library on town planning belonging to that branch of the Public Service has been lent for a few months to the library at McGill University to supplement the town planning literature already there. A selection of many thousand slides has also been loaned for the use of Montreal speakers. The services of Mr. Buckley, both in speaking and in preparing precis of information, have been of great value.

The Province of Quebec Architects have this year made town planning the subject of the annual exhibition which they organized jointly with the Art Assoc-

ciation of Montreal. In this exhibition there were 192 exhibits of which about 15 per cent. illustrated some of the great town planning schemes in the United States, while the rest were divided in about equal proportion between Montreal problems and plans being carried out elsewhere in Canada. The City contributed several valuable studies of traffic density and a model of the mountain to illustrate the location of the proposed street railway in relation to the Park.

The exhibition was open on three consecutive Sundays and was well patronized.

The City Improvement League Committee on Town Planning is now being expanded by increasing its number of members to about forty. Several ladies, closely connected with the larger Women's organizations, both French and English, have been invited to join the Committee. The main body of the Committee will, of course, consist of enlightened laymen, but the interested professions, architects, landscape architects, town planning and traffic engineers, will be strongly represented. The hope is that it will be possible to obtain reports and suggestions from individuals on this or that aspect of Montreal's town planning problems and to submit these to a sub-committee of technically expert persons before acceptance as part of the policy of the committee and of the league behind the committee. By these means the

general principles to be embodied in a comprehensive plan will, it is hoped, receive elucidation.

For the purpose of this season's efforts, the Committee has raised a sum of a few thousand dollars from friends and well-wishers and this money is being expended in part on publicity, and in part on the preparation of general surveys and studies of selected problems by Mr. James Ewing, C.E., for many years past the chief protagonist of the town planning idea in Montreal.

Looking to the future, those charged with the responsibility of guiding the effort, feel that, provided that funds for this preliminary work of investigation and education continues to be forthcoming, very great progress towards a definite policy could be made during the coming winter. They feel that the town planning effort of the City Improvement League should be continued until such time as an authoritative Town Planning Commission, adequately financed, is appointed, or alternatively an association comes into being of adequate financial strength to produce a comprehensive plan.

In either case, the good offices of such a body as the City Improvement League would be necessary to undertake the supporting campaign of education and in so doing guarantee both the ethical and economic aspects of the scheme.

March 9, 1926.

Montreal Town Planning Exhibition

By Harold Lawson

A Town Planning Exhibition was held in Montreal from February 20th to March 8th, at the Art Gallery on Sherbrooke Street, sponsored by the Art Association of Montreal, the City Improvement League and the Province of Quebec Association of Architects, with the object of stimulating public interest in all matters relating to Community, City and Regional Planning.

There were thirty exhibitors and 192 exhibits. In addition to many Montreal contributions, there were entries from Ottawa, Grandmere, Toronto, Chicago, Detroit, Springfield, Mass., Boston, New York, and Kansas City. All material exhibited was of a high standard and the work of the Canadians showed up quite well beside that of the Americans, though the American work treated of subjects generally more ambitious in scope and size.

An exhibition such as this obviously differs from the usual picture "show," but the technical charts and plans received quite as much public attention as the rendered projects. There was scarcely an exhibit that did not deserve some special notice, but space permits mention of typical examples only. Where so many must be omitted no detailed analysis of the others is possible and a brief description must suffice.

The Ottawa exhibits were very strong on technical information and showed ground which must be covered by Montreal and other Canadian cities

before they can hope to overtake Ottawa in town planning and zoning work. Mr. Noulan Cauchon's schematic diagrams of hexagonal planning proved exceptionally interesting. Other Ottawa exhibitors were Messrs. B. Evan-Parry and J. M. Kitchen, and the Town Planning Division of the National Parks Branch of the Department of the Interior.

Messrs. H. B. and L. A. Dunington-Grubb, of Toronto, showed some park plans and some excellent examples of community planning.

The Department of Works of Montreal submitted fourteen exhibits, including a model of Mount Royal, showing the proposed tramway route behind its summit. The model served the argument that the tramway would not interfere with the usefulness of the park as a quiet breathing spot, while making it more accessible to the multitude without impairing its natural beauty. The model seems to have effectually dissolved the violent public opposition to a mountain tramway which prevailed before it was made and displayed to view, which goes to prove the superiority of models over drawings as instruments of propaganda, where design on a large scale is involved.

A Zoning and Main Thoroughfare map of the island of Montreal and Surrounding Districts, made by Mr. James Ewing for the City Improvement League Committee on Town Planning, was given a screen by itself in view of its local importance. The

purpose of the Map was mainly to show zoning possibilities and contained suggestions for the location of residential, business, manufacturing and agricultural zones with a number of satellite towns and communicating highways.

Another contribution of local interest to Montreal was a "Plan of Proposed Co-ordination of Main thoroughfares for the Metropolitan District of Montreal," by Messrs. Lawson and Little. One of the purposes of this plan was to suggest means of overcoming the disadvantages of the present gridiron plan and the traffic obstacle presented by Mount Royal. Other features included railway terminal improvements, and a Civic and Educational Centre. There were two perspective sketches of the latter and a detailed plan of a proposed Union Plaza for the two transcontinental systems.

The firm of Nobbs and Hyde showed a birds-eye view and general plan of the University of Alberta and an exceedingly interesting housing development for Hampstead, a municipality adjoining Montreal. In the latter, forty houses are shown grouped in an original manner on a city block with due regard for orientation and all necessary modern amenities, with community play-grounds and tennis courts, central heating plant, and grouped garages.

The South Shore bridge and Boulevard projects of Mr. A. J. Lavoie, which excited so much public interest in Montreal before the present South Shore bridge was authorized, were also on display. They showed evidence of much study and great ingenuity. A contrast to these was offered by two blue-prints, somewhat meagre, of the elevation and plan, of the South Shore bridge by Messrs. Monsarrat and Pratley, Engineers for the structure.

Mr. Leonard Schlemm showed twelve subjects with an equally wide range of problems. These were no mere theoretical drawings but definite examples of work executed or in course of construction selected from a large practice.

Mr. Frederick G. Todd's prominence in the field of Park design was illustrated by examples drawn from all parts of the country and some subdivisions and town plans, including Mount Royal, gave evidence of his skill and versatility.

Mr. Rickson Outhet's, Mr. Schlemm's and Mr. Todd's exhibits were decidedly illuminating to the visiting public. Many expressed surprise at the variety shown and that our landscape architects

and town planning engineers did not limit their activities to Canada but operated in the United States with equal success.

Mr. Outhet was also responsible for the delineation of the six projects entered by the Province of Quebec Association of Architects. It may not be generally known that the Architects of Montreal, prior to 1908, tried to interest the authorities in certain improvements and had six re-planning studies made for the purpose by Mr. Outhet. If any one of these projects had materialized, Montreal's traffic problem would be far nearer a solution than it is today.

The Fairchild Aerial Surveys (of Canada, Ltd.) had twelve excellent photo enlargements, ten of which were oblique aerial views of Montreal. Many Montrealers got an impression of their city from a new viewpoint. The value of aerial photographs in City re-planning and Zoning is too well known to readers of *Town Planning* to require emphasis here.

It appears there was only one Canadian competitor for the famous Canberra competition. This was Mr. Seraphin Ouimet, who exhibited a general plan of his scheme and also a booklet showing all other drawings entered for the competition for the design of Australia's capital.

Too much thanks cannot be given Mr. R. W. Reford for the loan of his maps, plans and prints of Old Montreal. Mr. Reford's collection, which numbers thirty-five, furnished a rare treat to all interested in the growth of Montreal from its earliest days.

The Committee is grateful to the American exhibitors whose co-operation helped make the exhibition a success. It is regrettable that lack of space does not permit individual mention of the material they sent, but much of it is of course, already familiar to readers of *Town Planning*.

The exhibition may be regarded as the second attack in the present Montreal Town Planning "drive." The first was the Town Planning lectures at McGill University. Doubtless it had some educational as well as some inspirational value, and perhaps many who went carried away a new conception of the meaning of Town Planning. If so, it is to be hoped that these neophytes, as well as the back-sliders will enlist their support with the faithful who have been working for Town Planning for Montreal for many years past.

NEWS AND NOTES

New Methods of Suburban Housing

The subdivision of residential suburban property, as we have seen it in the older countries, and as we have known it in our own, is not a subject charged with romance. Sooner or later something better had to be done as a contribution to the building of our cities, something less wasteful and hideous in its results; some method that would

not completely banish art, design and social amenity from the domain of its operations. Some of the results of rabid individualism are by way of convincing us that nothing is so anti-individual and anti-social as crude individualism itself. Civilization—the word itself—really means progressive development of the social sense.

As a matter of fact, something different and

better has been born, largely due to a quite humble movement called in the Old Country "Co-partnership Housing." A group of artisan builders under the guidance of Henry Vivian, M.P., conceived the idea of acquiring a large piece of land, planning a group of houses *as a composition* with gardens, playgrounds, public hall and other amenities and occupying the houses, not as owners of the individual houses, but as tenants and partners in common ownership. Later, such groups have become a powerful factor in building up the Garden City.

The project had certain social advantages of a very solid character and the considerable advantage that in case of movement each tenant was responsible only for a number of shares, which could be held as a sound investment, or be easily transferred or sold. The movement has spread very widely in England, Germany and other European countries, and quite recently the Governor of the State of New York has recommended it as a State policy for solving the problem of New York housing.

From the successful experimentation of these societies, which have been, by the way, largely assisted by State credit, there has come into being a policy to make housing a subsidiary social science as part of the larger science of town planning and as a new phase of the art and science of architecture. Areas are being planned as residential units, not of a mere bunch of houses each occupying a certain area, and there breaking off its connection with the rest, but as a social and architectural composition each with a definite relation to the whole—like the items of a composite picture—and each dependent on certain common or public amenities, such as parks, recreation areas, public garages and central heating.

This new thing has a sound philosophy behind it, social, artistic and economic. A group of houses so planned induces and promotes social amenities and possibilities of neighborhood friendships such as mere rows of houses seldom even suggest. Architecturally such a group of houses makes a composition possible with the addition of pleasant park areas and open spaces which, while not private to the individual are private to the group. Economically, such grouping represents a considerable saving to the individual in land acquisition, legal charges, the borrowing of money and the use of common amenities, just as a wholesale transaction in common trade reaps advantage over the retail.

Mr. Percy E. Nobbs sets himself the task, in this issue, of expounding a scheme for suburban community planning. His sympathy with the co-partnership ideal is obvious, but for the benefit of those who are not familiar with it, or convinced of its soundness, he also presents alternate methods of financing the project which he thinks may reach the same goal of community planning.

Mr. Nobbs has a definite class of requirements in mind and he makes no pretense in his scheme of catering to low-paid wage earners. He has simply applied a co-operative method which originated with this class to a higher grade of social requirement.

Child Welfare and Town Planning

We quote this reference to the relation of town planning and child welfare in connection with a recent Child Welfare Conference. Mrs. Reford understands the relation and she knows Montreal.

But the home cannot be all-sufficient for the child's environment. Bad housing conditions and an utter absence of town planning are responsible for much ugliness in the life of the child. Mrs. Robt. W. Reford, president of the Montreal Council of Social Agencies, in her plea for more beauty in the life of the child, put it well when she said "we set little children with normal eyes and ears in the midst of such conditions and then expect a miracle to happen."—*Social Welfare*.

The child welfare organization are doing a great salvage work for humanity, but sooner or later they will get to one of the main causes of child destruction—the use of the land for congested living. Obsolete building by-laws and "the utter absence of town planning are responsible for much ugliness in the life of the child." Where land sweating has been abolished and scientific town planning established, most of the problems connected with child welfare—and labour troubles—do not exist because they do not begin to grow. There is no soil for them.

Town Planning in Politics

Town planners all the world over will be watching with active curiosity—and perhaps with some anxiety—the move in Britain called the "Urban Land Policy" which has been adopted by the once great Liberal Party as a "platform" for the next general election. This further digging of the subject into national consciousness may be of some value to the movement, but the adoption of it as the "thunder" of a party cry, is obviously fraught with danger. Fortunately all parties are committed to a national housing policy during the next fifteen years for the building of 2,500,000 working class houses and when the country reflects that this policy is to impose a charge on the national exchequer and local taxation during the next forty years of \$6,674,764,000 it will be difficult to escape the inference that something has been radically wrong with past methods of housing or to neglect the pressure of the town planning appeal.

Fortunately, too, there is a powerful group of town planning experts and exponents of town planning in the permanent civil service and a larger group in the outside voluntary service whose appeals are winning the ear of the nation and whose determination is to see that the national housing movement shall be controlled by town planning method. No party changes can now stem the tide of public conviction that town planning is essential to the solution of the housing problem. Legislation has been passed to provide national or municipal credit for the operations of Public Utility housing companies, such as the co-partnership companies and even more significant, for the establishment of garden cities, with public ownership of land and public

utilities as the basic principle. These reformers may well be trusted to ensure the permanency of the town planning movement and save it from perishing as a party cry.

All the same it is vastly significant to find a once great party so impressed with the obvious practicability and *popularity* of town planning that it will risk its existence and base its claim for power on a town planning programme and include in this programme the redemption of land values, created by the community, for the benefit of the community.

The general town planning movement, as such, has carried on no aggressive propaganda on this vital matter, though it has always been a vital element of ultimate town planning philosophy. The garden city scotched this problem at the beginning by refusing to allow any vested interests in land to get a foothold. When the question has been put to Mr. Howard in America as to whether town planning is possible, or garden cities, on the basis of private ownership of land he has always answered "Yes," but his colleagues have always been at hand to say that a thousand difficulties are removed by community ownership of land and that that is the basic principle of their success, since public revenue will depend upon reaping the values in land created by the community. America, so long doubtful on this point and so tender to the land owning interests, is coming to see this.

The four questions put to the British Liberal Party by the framers of the Urban Land Policy ask the members if they are in favor of town planning and replanning and of regional planning, and of redemption of site values for the benefit of the people who create them and obviously of the new form of leasehold created by the garden city, which puts an end to the predatory lease of other days. Here are the four questions:

1. To enable towns to cope with their present difficulties and to provide wisely for their future development, do they require wider powers of town planning and replanning, of land acquisition and of regional co-ordination? Do you approve of the proposals made under these headings and do you regard them as practicable?

2. Do you approve of the definite proposals made in the report in regard to the rating of site values and betterment?

3. Do you think that the proposals in the report offer a satisfactory solution of the leasehold problem?

4. What is your general attitude towards the proposals contained in "Towns and the Land"? Do you think that they harmonise satisfactorily with the rural proposals, so as to form a coherent land policy?

Is the policy one which, in your opinion,

is in conformity with the principles of Liberalism?

The Manchester Guardian has this to say on the matter:

Mr. Lloyd George in his speech on Saturday drew an enticing picture of towns and town life as they might be made under a policy of land reform such as that which Liberals have now put forward. Part of the speech sounded not so much like the exposition of a policy as like the preaching of a gospel. This new movement was not merely to reach material ends; it was to give life more abundantly. To take people from the slums and give them homes in semi-rural belts around the cities was one of its main objects. Land monopoly, the cause of slums, must be broken, and the socially created values in land must come back to the community to help pay for the building of a new urban England. To carry out this "peaceful revolution," a *revolution calculated to undermine revolutionary violence*, we were to have, as executive machinery, regional boards—leagues of municipalities—because the problem was regional, not local.

Another British paper has something to say that is not without application to Canadian conditions:

Around our cities, for thirty miles around London, there are large stretches of country which are certainly not being used to the best advantage. The owners pay rates on a very low valuation. For rating purposes their land is agricultural. But try to buy a piece and you find that they ask high building-land prices.

Compel them to pay rates upon the value which they themselves put upon their property when a buyer comes along; compel them to sell at the value fixed for rating purposes, and they will be in a cleft-stick. Either they must say their land is worth very little and sell it at that price, or they must pay heavy rates as the result of putting the value high. In such conditions the price of land would come tumbling down.

Ottawa and Hull

In 1915 a map was published, showing that the two cities of Ottawa and Hull, at a density of 40 to the acre, would cover five square miles. If it is supposed that these two cities will have a population of 350,000 in 50 years, then at the same density, an area of fifteen square miles will be adequate. But the subdivided area in and around these towns covers 65 square miles! It is the same story everywhere—land kept idle for generations, waiting for the growing community to give it value, except in a few wise towns such as Stratford, Ontario, which has put an end to this senseless waste by prohibiting subdivision of rural land generations ahead of the building requirements.

(Continued on page 29)

THE SUBDIVISION OF RESIDENTIAL SUBURBAN PROPERTY

PERCY E. NOBBS, M.A., F.R.I.B.A., R.C.A.

Community Planning

Community planning, in its modern applications, is very closely, but not inextricably, related to the co-partnership housing movement. It is due entirely to this movement that it has been shown to be financially possible that a playground or a tennis court may be shared by a group of occupiers who could not individually afford anything of the kind, where such occupiers live on the moderate scale denoted by the six or eight-room house. Of course the squares of London and Edinburgh and many other cities have for a century or more been exemplifying such sharing of garden amenities by the wealthy, and every village common shows that there is nothing inherently modern in the idea.

These remarks are designed to show how easy it is to arrange for community use of playgrounds, tennis courts, garages and heating stations under co-partnership, provided you can get the co-partners; but there are several other ways of getting a similar physical result in the development of property by means of financial policies to which our people (of the Montreal district for instance) are more accustomed.

For the benefit of readers unfamiliar with the intricacies of co-partnership in house-owning, a brief description of this principle on which the financing of our houses and playgrounds can so readily be achieved will be found later on herein.

We now proceed in the light of the results of co-partnership to the consideration of what is, in the opinion of the writer, a better way of parcelling out the land within a block into lots, than is general here.

The Site

Design is inevitably a synthetic expression of an inter-relation among (1) requirements, (2) characteristics of materials, and (3) technical methods. Where a building scheme is the subject of design, the site is one of the material elements, and what you can, or what you can't, do with the site, are characteristics of that element. These "cans" and "can'ts" which have to be distinguished from the "shoulds" and "mights" are either economic or legal inhibitions. Thus, the very system on which land is held, and the regulations to which its use is subject, bear fruit both in the plans of cities as they exist today and in the shapes of the buildings that grow upon the blocks and the lots into which the city subdivides itself.

Land Tenure

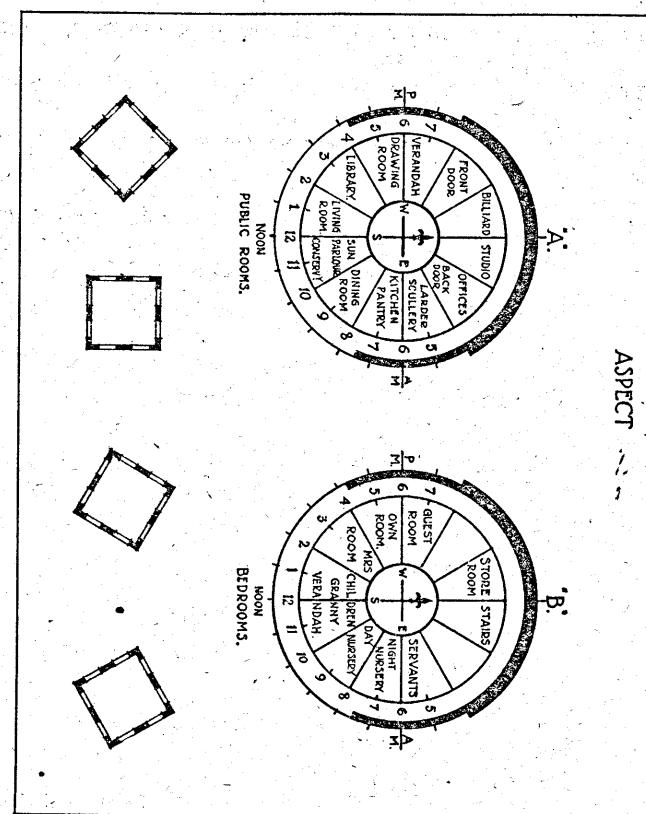
Now, there are certain systems for regulating the use of land which, when combined with certain methods of holding or hiring land, are inauspicious, or even pernicious, in their results. That must be abundantly clear to those of us who take any interest in public health and social well-being, or who have had opportunities to realize and appreciate the abomination of desolation that characterizes the

periphery of Montreal and many other great cities, at points where mere accretion, as distinct from organic growth, is allowed to take place.

House Planning

Our business of the moment is with one form of real estate only—Houses (small ones, for brain workers), of the kind the majority of the staff of any great teaching or financial institution are interested in. We must take the internal organization of these houses more or less for granted, as containing a general place to have one's being in, and a place to eat, and another to prepare food in, and accommodation for a maid, and three bedrooms, one big enough for two persons, and a den or study. The kind of houses often built on land costing \$1.00 or more per square foot. Such houses can be both built and heated most cheaply while preserving essential amenities when constructed in groups of three, four or five.

What we are concerned with however, is not the detailed plan but the disposition of such houses so that *all the rooms get sunshine some time in the day* and at the best time with respect to their uses and so that all windows have pleasant outlooks, the back views being as good in their way as the front views. And furthermore, when there are enough such houses under consideration we are concerned with the investigation of the possibilities of joint or common services for heating, for garaging, and joint or common ac-



commodation for playing and for exercise. What we are very specially about to concern ourselves with are the questions 'What do such ameliorations and amenities cost?' 'Need they cost anything?'

Sunlight

The diagrams we here insert will serve as reminders that no matter where the street front of a house may be, the sun is the primary factor in the proper disposition of any room on any lot in any given part of the world.

Then again if we just consider how many good houses are ruined in use and value by bad ones alongside (bearing in mind that there are as many kinds of goodness and badness in houses as in men) our minds will be opened to the possibility that these things may cost very much less than nothing, even after the necessary hire of brains has been suitably paid for.

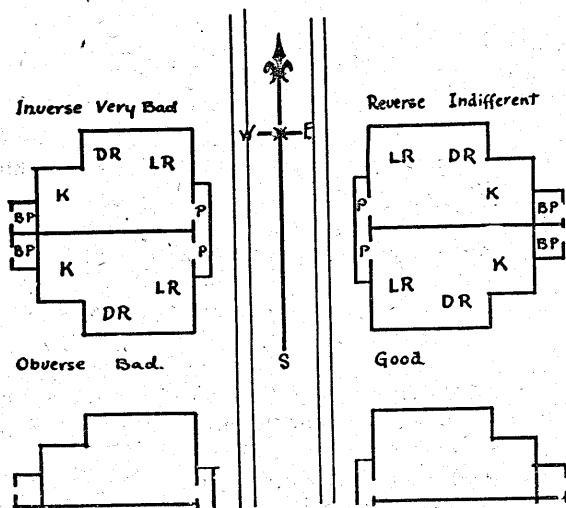
Most of the subdivision now in effect on the island of Montreal is rather unintelligent, and decidedly extravagant; furthermore, a gridiron plan has been almost accidentally imposed upon the city, without respect to the varying contours of the land between the mountain and the river, and once started in that area it has been continued over half the island, in defiance of the path of the sun. That more natural and studied methods of subdivision have been initiated at a score of points, and by a dozen planners, is perhaps not as well known as it should be.

Some Subdivisions

I confine myself to some subdivisions which approximate to community planning in this locality, and to undertakings with which I have been directly concerned. It is thus possible to speak with fuller and more detailed knowledge of the condition involved in the cases under review than by dealing with more admirable examples under the handicap of partial information.

ASPECT

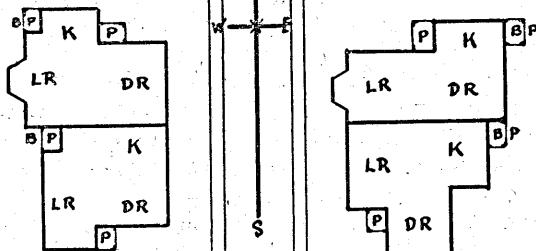
Sacrifices for Street; Prospect only Considered.



In illustration of the general principle of com-

ASPECT

Reasonable Consideration for ASPECT



munity planning, some theoretic diagrams are reproduced. These show that it is often possible by a little arrangement to secure playing space within the block, to say nothing of grouping in place of lining of the houses.

We now pass to the consideration of an odd shaped parcel of land, with difficult levels, an orientation at cross purposes with all its boundaries, and having little in the way of views, but that little quite worth making the most of. It will be noted that these houses have a distinctly least architectural or service side to the lane. They do not, however, show to one another any sides not quite as good as their fronts. Their courtesy to their neighbours outside the group is not of a very pronounced kind, and certainly no worse than what they receive. That is to say, the group, as such, supports the values of its constituent members.

The next subdivision is one for a very difficult piece of steep land, with quite magnificent views. It is obviously desirable that this should be enjoyed from as many windows as possible. The houses are arranged so as to admit of considered views over the roofs of those below and also between the houses. As the slope is steep, and to the south-west, it was not difficult to obtain a fair and equal distribution of sunshine. The placing and shaping of the houses in this scheme are controlled so as to reasonably safeguard each occupant against eyesores. Again, if a certain similarity of character is thus attained in the houses, this would tend to sustain value where vain repetition, on the one hand, or a heterogeneous patchwork of materials and traditions, on the other, would have a contrary effect.

Queen Mary's Gardens

We now pass to the consideration of the intentions which underlie the Queen Mary's Gardens Scheme at Hampstead, as set forth by the promoters.

The block of land for which this community building scheme has been planned is situated in a suburb

to the northwest of Montreal, and is bounded on the north by Thurlow Road, on the South by Queen Mary Road, and on the East and West respectively by Northeote Road and Merton Road. It comprises about 240,000 square feet, divided by the original subdivision of 1912 into thirty-six (36) approximately equal lots which, under the original regulations, could be used only for residential purposes for single or semi-detached houses.

The community building scheme we now describe provides for forty-one (41) dwellings, arranged in groups, and for the following common service buildings and common recreation grounds:—

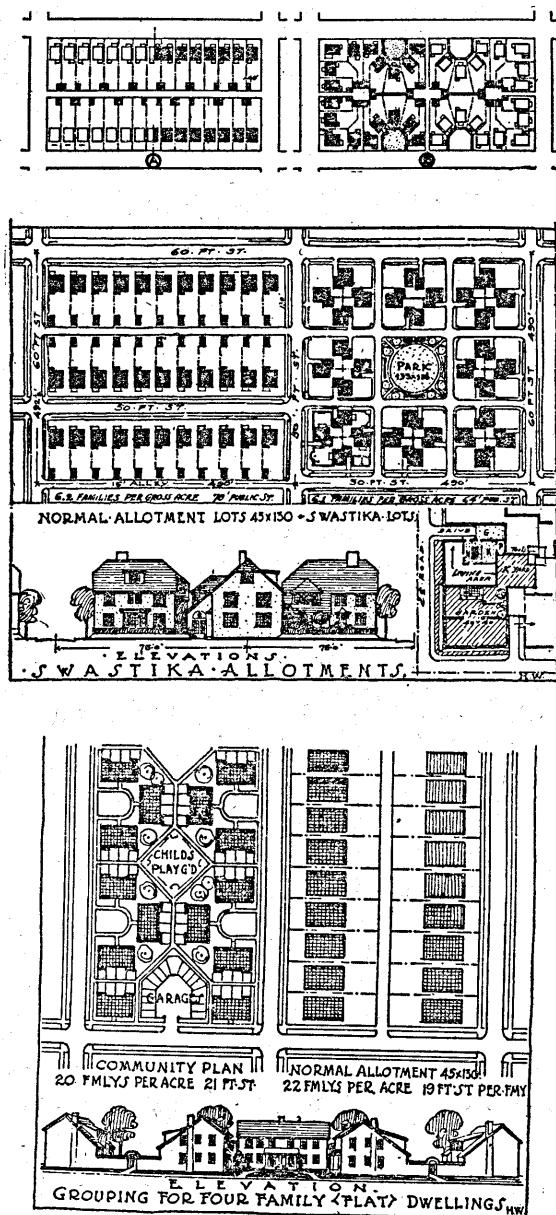
- (1). A central heating plant;
- (2). A central garage (for 36 cars);
- (3). A wet weather playground or loggia;
- (4). Two children's playgrounds;
- (5). Two tennis courts for adults;
- (6). A twenty foot belt of lawn and trees all around the block.

Besides these, a site is provided for a small fire station for the Town of Hampstead. This conveniently masks the heating plant. Protestant and Catholic schools exist respectively within two and ten minutes walk of the block. The introduction of the autobus promises all necessary facilities in the way of rapid public transit.

Were the originally proposed development to take place there would be on this land thirty-six (36) self-contained houses, most of them in semi-detached pairs. These houses would probably vary in size, appearance and cost to a degree undesirable in the interest of the average owner. Each would have had far more garden and yard than most of their owners would have found it convenient to keep in good order. Each would possess its own heating furnace and coal stove. Many, if not most, would have garages, involving internal driveways and pavement crossings, and about half of the houses would front to the North. All this entails waste of several kinds. Furthermore, no individual proprietor could feel security on the score of neighbouring buildings supporting his investment. Repetition by speculative builders would be not only possible, but probable, over much of the area. Intermittent construction over a period of years would further deter the full realization of values.

The community building scheme now proposed requires the removal of the original restriction as to detached or semi-detached houses, and the substitution of control through by-laws, and an Architectural Commission. By the scheme herein described, the following advantages accrue over and above the common services above referred to.

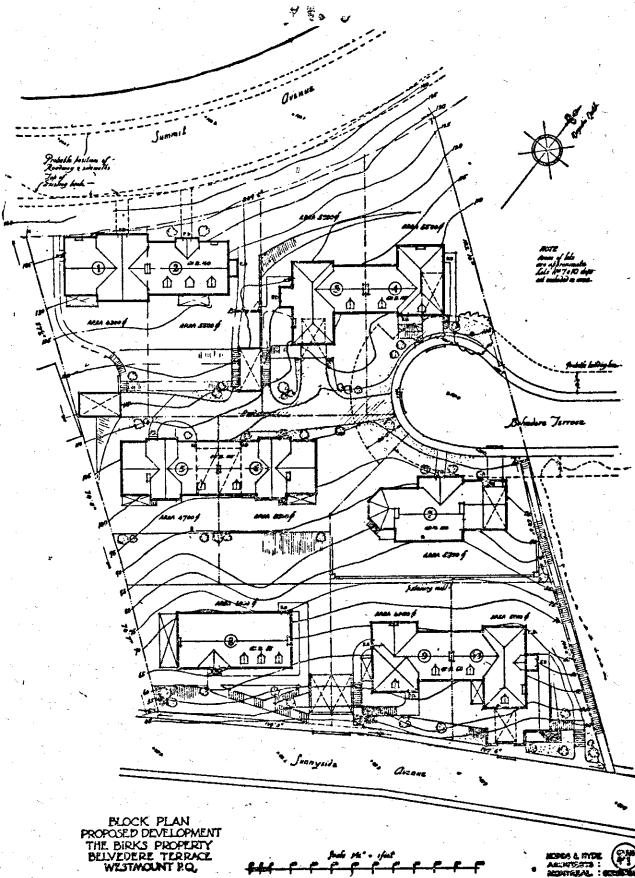
1. *Prospect.* Every house has an equally good outlook, back and front.
2. *Aspect.* No house has a North frontage. In most cases the dining rooms have morning sun, and the living rooms afternoon sun. In a few cases, where this cannot be arranged, the dining and living rooms are *en suite*, so that sunshine can provide each, both morning and afternoon.



Examples of Community Planning. Diagrams from 1925 Transactions of the American Institute of Architecture

3. *Heat Losses.* Generally, the smaller houses in the group have but two outside walls, and the larger ones three, for heat losses.
4. *Professional Services.* Architectural and Engineering services and superintendence on a scale impossible in the case of individual small building operations can be provided for a scheme of this size.
5. *Responsible Builder.* An advantage of construction by such a project is that a contractor of ability and adequate financial strength is assured.
6. *Amenities.* An occupier in this scheme takes up residence with a completed environment, and is assured as to his surroundings.

7. *Gardens.* Each house has a small private garden to the front, and a small service yard in rear—enough to keep tidy.
8. *Garages.* In the central garage what paving it requires is of high quality, and the street is available for bringing the car to the door when needed.
9. *Lanes.* A system of open lanes enables good delivery and garbage removal to be conducted through each service yard gate.
10. *Community Land.* The surrounding 20 feet belt and the several play and recreation grounds, besides ensuring light and air to each house and place for children and adults to amuse themselves out of doors, provide outlooks much more interesting than the usual suburban street, back yard or neighbours' flank wall view.
11. *Central Heating.* The convenience of an apartment house can be secured in a scheme of this kind, without extra cost over that of running individual heating systems, and with far greater efficiency, provided the extra initial outlay is faced.
12. *Economy in Construction.* Great saving can be effected by the reduction in (1) Overhead costs; (2) Materials bought in large quantities and (3) Standardized joinery and fittings—fully 10% in this case.



By such a community building scheme every house gains the fullest support in value, not only from the character of its immediate neighbours, but from all nearby buildings. *Indeed, the whole district and adjoining blocks stand to profit.*

In the Queen Mary's Gardens project a general uniformity of character is aimed at by the scale of the structures, the types of windows and woodwork, and similarity of roof material. The individuality of the several groups of houses is dependent on variations, within limits, of the roof form and the walling. The general types of the houses proposed are based more or less upon the old French tradition in the Province—a thoroughly acclimatized style—but the layout and equipment are essentially modern.

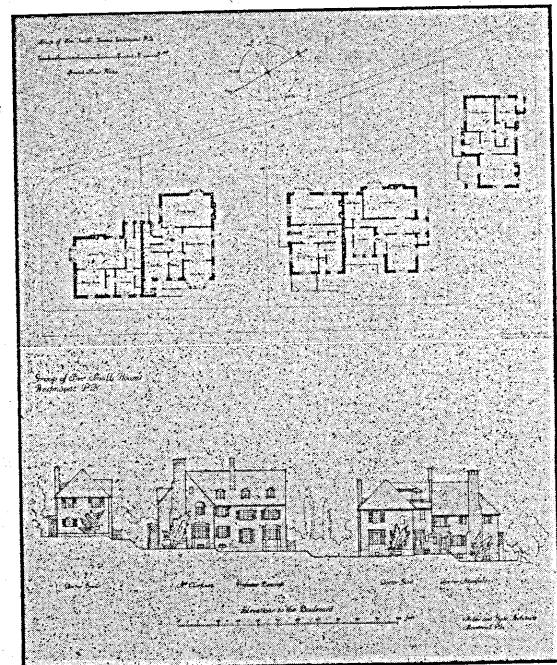
The cost of the houses with prepared land averages \$12,100.00 for each house, and ranges from \$9,100.00 to \$14,900.00.

Procedure

I.

One method of procedure would be to form a company which would have the following functions:—

- (a) Purchase the land.
- (b) Act as proprietor for all construction contracts.
- (c) Sell the houses on completion.
- (d) Own and operate the garage units.
- (e) Own and operate the heating plant.
- (f) Own and operate the common land, garden belt, tennis courts, playgrounds, paths, etc.



A Subdivision to Secure Community of Sunshine
A Westmount property

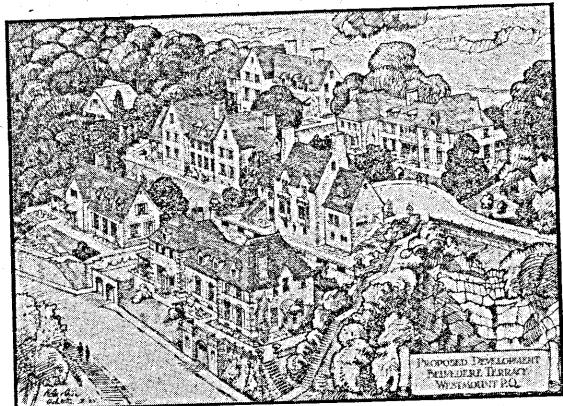
As to the houses, no plan is absolutely repeated more than twice throughout the scheme, although sixty per cent follow a general type and all conform sufficiently to gain full advantage of standardized joinery and fittings and wholesale purchase of materials.

First Payment	\$3,000.00
First Mortgage at 6½ %	8,600.00
Balance of Sale at 7%	2,500.00
<hr/>	
	\$14,100.00
Annual payments by Purchasers:	
Heating Service	170.00
Gardens and Common Ground	100.00
Interest on first mortgage	559.00
Interest on balance of sale, paying off principal \$2,500.00 in 18 years	250.00
	<hr/>
	\$1,079.00

or about \$90.00 per month.

So far, so good. We are probably all agreed that it would be pleasanter, healthier, and in the long run cheaper to live within a community planned group such as this, than in a row of semi-detached houses, or in a detached house, with backs to look at, back yards to look into, and possibly at the mercy of that crudity in a neighbour which the kindly Santayana assures us may represent "the beginning, not the absence of taste," and which may, besides offending our sense of what a neighbour's place should be, hit us between wind and water, should we desire to sell out.

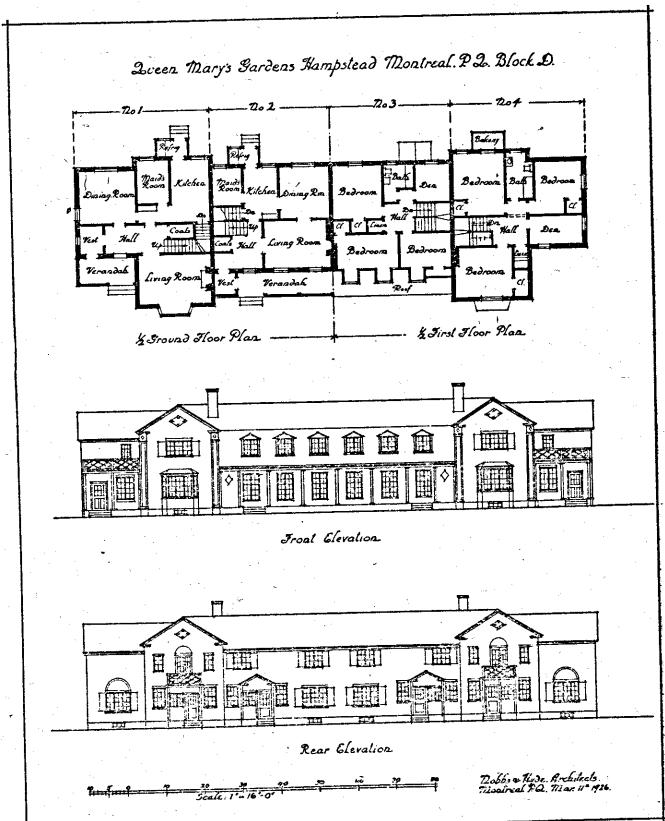
We have seen how a scheme of this kind would work out in current speculative practice and may infer that success or failure would depend on the finished houses being disposed of within say 18 months. We have also noted that there is a substantial saving in building forty houses together, as against forty houses one by one.



II.

Co-partnership

Under the alternative of copartnership, there would be two difficulties in floating such a scheme. The first, that of finding here forty householders imbued with enough companionable spirit, we must assume as overcome. The second would be the lack here of that central organization which in England facilitates the financing of co-partnership ventures and economizes in the professional services involved. We must assume an institution able and willing to lend the money to the co-partners.



In a co-partnership scheme for such a project, no person would at first hold more than say \$2,000.00, so that assuming \$600,000.00 to be necessary, \$400,000.00 of which could be borrowed, one hundred original shareholders would be required. These would elect a board of management to purchase the land and approve a layout providing playing grounds, architectural grouping, heating and garaging services, and these things, as far as the example before us is concerned, are assumed to have been already adequately studied. These one hundred shareholders would then erect and let the houses to pay six per cent on shares and the same on loans. After paying maintenance and running expenses, they would divide the profits or losses. (But apparently they don't have losses in co-partnership schemes, because groups of houses are so much better as renting propositions than mere isolated houses that do not support each other in value.) These profits then would be divided not among the shareholders, but between the tenants in proportion to their rents, and credited to them as capital until such time as a tenant's holdings equalled the cost of his house. After that the tenant receives his dividends in cash; that is to say, he pays rent to himself for a house he had every advantage in building cheaply by co-operation and which he can dispose of through the company. Now, in the present case, with houses averaging, say \$12,000.00 to build with land and renting at say \$1,720.00 per year or \$144.00 a month, (including heating and other services), the tenant would own his house in the co-partnership sense, that is to say,

begin to pay himself rent in twenty-four years time.

By taking scrip for shares, instead of a deed for a particular house and lot, the tenant averages the risk of removal with his co-partners. The value of his accumulated savings is thus kept up and is readily transferable—an excellent thing for a professor or the servant of a company doing business in a dozen cities, for such people are liable to transfer or to be transferred.

It is nearly twenty years since the writer predicted that in this country we would sooner or later have to sacrifice our individualism on a common altar—the community heating plant, with advantage to be taken of \$7.00 per ton slack coal, as against \$17.00 a ton for a mixture of slate and anthracite. That time is visibly nearer.

三

A third rather obvious way of handling a scheme of this nature would be to deal with the whole thing as if it were an apartment house spread out over a garden, renting the average house at the average rental of—

Cost of \$12,000.00—Interest at 7%....	\$840.00
Maintenance	240.00
Service	270.00
Taxes	250.00
	<hr/>
	\$1,600.00

or about \$135.00 per month.

With the first method, speculative building and sale, the difficulty is to deal equitably and sanely with the services and the common land at that time, probably fifty years hence, when the houses become obsolescent, and the whole block of land may possibly be put to better and therefore more profitable use.

In the case of co-partnership the Society or Company can be trusted to know very well how long the advantages of mutual support of values within the group can counterbalance change in the character of neighbouring blocks, and when they no longer do so, can wind up and cash in.

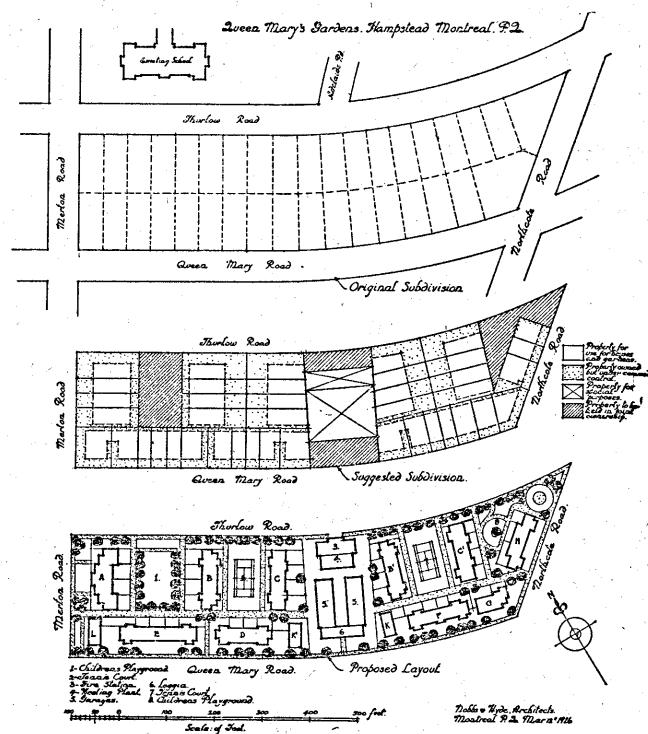
If run on apartment house lines, it is obvious that the company owning the block might have a good thing if it so arranges matters that the block was dealt with as a whole, after a period of years, and if the group of houses are never allowed to become a slum.

IV

A fourth method presents certain advantages. If the owning company rented on a fifty year basis with ten year renewals thereafter, the danger of disintegration and changes within the group, through the idiosyncrasies of individual ownership would be avoided, the right time could be seized for putting the land to a different use and the problem of the common land and of the sites for the heating and garage services would solve themselves.

In closing, a word on the maintenance of community land and services.

The playgrounds and services of a scheme, such as we have been considering, present certain difficulties.



ties as to finance, maintenance and ultimate disposal, simply because we are not educated in the use of common land and its ownership, as our forebears in Western Europe have been from time out of mind.

The squares, crescents and gardens of London, Edinburgh and Bath, and many Spa towns, constitute, not public parks, but community gardens, shared by the owners of property fronting on the square, crescent or garden across the street. Hard by Hyde Park there is a block of land surrounded by self-contained five-storey houses in contact. Each has a tiny back yard or garden, but they share use and maintenance of a considerable park, presumably under the blessings or ninety-nine year lease.

Again, many of the crescents and gardens of XVIIIth and XIXth Century origin in English Spas and seaside resorts are maintained by the towns, but charged against the adjoining householders who enjoy them.

It seems right that the community as a whole, which profits by grass and trees adjoining a highway, should pay part at least of the cost of such grass and trees, while the bulk is charged against those people who derive the advantage of a set back from the thoroughfare for their houses and more or less exclusive use.

It is immaterial whether the conservatives among us stress the "semi-private", or the liberals among us the "semi-public" character of the common elements of a community plan, so long as they agree as to the virtue and place of such expedients in the amelioration of the city dwellers' wife's and children's lot, and the possibilities of obtaining them by co-partnership and otherwise.

CORRECTIVE PLANNING METHODS

By JAMES EWING, M.E.I.C.

Vice-President Town Planning Institute of Canada

The Jazz City

As youth aspires to manhood so does the modern village strive to grow into a town, the town to develop into a city, and the city to swell into the great metropolis.

Their comparative importance is rated by the largest population, the greatest aggregate in property values, the best showing in bank clearances, the most miles of streets, the grandest buildings and even the loftiest church spires and the greatest number of storeys in their tallest office structures.

The element of size seems to be the main criterion, size coupled with speed,—therefore the more hurry and bustle, turmoil and upheaval the better we like it, and the town that is growing fastest and making the most noise about it is the perfect specimen of the real live up-to-date burg.

To question the advantage or the wisdom of this sort of thing or to suggest misdirected energy or unnecessary wasted effort would sound much like heresy.

It is a tendency which may be deplored, but it is useless to cavil at it; the tide is running too strong, so we may as well take it as an accepted fact characteristic of the feverish age we live in.

It is the age of Jazz, not only in our music or in the dance, but in almost every phase of our lives. So we are jazzing our cities, too,—in a disjointed, syncopated, hap-hazard, devil-may-care manner.

I am aware that to those get-busy and get-rich-quick people who have eyes for nothing but the quick turnover, the profit and advantage of the moment, the Town Planning idea makes scanty appeal and is regarded as a wild extravagant dream bordering on lunacy.

It may be madness but there is method in it, while the most notable thing about our present day ways of doing things is the entire absence of method and design.

The result is that instead of harmonious structural development along rational organic lines, most of our modern cities present a chaotic and conflicting jumble that resembles nothing so much as a patchwork quilt.

Looking Backwards

When the early French settlers started their first colony at Old Place Royale, nearly three hundred years ago, tradition reports one of the Jesuit Fathers to have declared "Out of this seed shall grow a mighty tree."

These words were wonderfully prophetic, yet it can scarcely be thought that he or those with him had any clear conception of the manner and extent to which it would grow.

Neither had they who came after him for about a couple of centuries. It was not until the first

railroad train came thundering in between 60 and 70 years ago that Montreal began to show any exceptional signs of development.

Even then its growth was not amazing. It is just forty years since I saw the first transcontinental train steam out of the old Quebec Gate Barracks Station, bound for the Pacific.

That may be taken as the beginning of Montreal's progressive era. The population in those days was not much over 150,000. Now it has reached a million.

It is barely thirty-five years since the old horse car in summer and the big box sleigh in winter gave place to the electric tramways, and people predicted they could not possibly outlast the winter's snows.

Only a quarter of a century has passed since the first automobile was seen in the streets and we know what it is like to-day.

We know what it is like to-day but can hardly do more than venture a guess as to what it will be twenty-five years from now, or what new device may complicate or revolutionize the situation.

One thing is clear—that Montreal is increasing and expanding at an astonishing rate, and also that by far the greater proportion of this growth has taken place within the short space of one generation.

This remarkable development could not possibly be conjectured in the early days of the city, and could but barely and dimly be foreseen less than fifty years ago.

The Makeshift City

It is therefore conclusive that whatever troubles we now have and whatever more may be in store for us are almost entirely of our own making.

Streets are not elastic. The market place of three quarters of a century ago soon becomes out of reach and out of touch for a population that has been driven away to the outskirts.

The stately homes of one generation are swallowed up in the grim storage warehouse, the dingy factory walls and the "blighted" streets of another.

We know that Montreal is growing and will continue to grow, yet we fail to realize the inevitable consequences of that growth and are vainly and gropingly trying to adapt ourselves to existing conditions and limitations, instead of taking steps to make these conditions meet the necessities of the present day.

We retain the streets that were laid out as suitable for primitive times, but which are now out of proportion and out of scale to the buildings we are putting up or to the traffic which these buildings themselves give rise to.

With admirable enterprise and daring the merchants and manufacturers of Montreal are trying

to run an up-to-date Metropolitan City at the old stand but with inadequate accommodation, obsolete plant and on lines and premises of the beginning of last century.

It is precisely like the shopkeeper attempting to conduct a big business with insufficient floorspace and with the same result of needless extra labour, confusion, makeshift and waste.

Shifting Centres—No Plan

Unfortunately, Montreal seems deficient in the necessary vision and courage to scrap the things that are outworn, but we have only to look at its downtown district to observe that with the exception of the flourishing financial centre on St. James Street, older Montreal is scrapping itself.

Everybody knows the great bulk of the retail trade and all that goes with it, including light manufacturing, has moved uptown and is now centreing along St. Catherine Street,—but, will it stop there?

Quite evidently it is being squeezed off the main thoroughfare into the numerous but rather unprofitable side streets, and the point is debatable whether or not St. Catherine Street has already overreached its zenith.

Where will this retail business extend next? for trade is like the flood tide that must somehow or other find vent, and, if we fail to provide channels for it, will dig channels of its own regardless of our convenience or our desires.

For some reason or other a golden opportunity was neglected of making effective provision and securing relief by the widening and straightening of Burnside Avenue which since then at its westerly end has been practically blocked, with far-reaching results.

Sherbrooke Street in Danger

Now the inexorable finger of fate is pointing towards Sherbrooke Street as the next commercial exploitation,—our one main through thoroughfare, our principal show and institutional street with its palatial apartment houses and its splendid avenue of trees, the growth and culture of many decades. Must all these go by the board?

Things like that do not happen overnight or at one fell swoop, but by gradual penetration; and it is plainly to be seen that in despite of civic by-laws, already there are inroads of undesirable nature that should be sufficient to sound the alarm.

Our splendid and noble institutions are no match in open warfare with the garage, the corner grocery and the ice cream parlour, and sooner or later must inevitably succumb to their blighting influence.

Of course Sherbrooke Street as a great traffic artery must perforce be widened in its central portion. There seems to be no way of side-stepping that, but it should be done with deep concern and a clear eye to conservation, and with wholesome dread of desecration.

The foremost step to be taken should be settling once for all the nature of development that is most

appropriate and desirable thereon, and so be governed accordingly.

It has been said in civic circles that the cost of thus widening Sherbrooke Street will amount to about thirty million dollars. The figures are not mine and I cannot vouch for them, but if they are nearly correct, it is hard to resist the temptation of pointing out that not so many years ago it could have been carried out for less than half that sum.

The Cost of Not Planning

So when we are figuring up the supposed terrible and much dreaded cost of City Planning it might be well to enter on the debit side the difference of so many millions as a small item in the cost of Not Planning. And there is a whole lot more.

But supposing the rather difficult operation of preventing Sherbrooke Street being commercialized can somehow or other be accomplished, the question arises as to what may be done with the overflow trade from St. Catherine Street, because it must find vent in some way.

And since Old McGill stands in the way of any further cross-town traffic above Sherbrooke Street up to the foot of the Mountain, what will become of this trade? Will it take a slant in a Northerly direction and then perhaps another hop-skip-and-jump landing possibly on the other side of the Mountain?

All this is more or less problematical, but it is a question we will leave the St. Catherine Street shopkeepers to ponder over. And it all goes to show the necessity and advantage of intensive study and intelligent guidance and control.

It proves moreover that the main idea of judicious City Planning is security, protection and enhancement of existing individual and corporate investment, and for the general public interest and benefit as well.

The fact that Montreal has a traffic problem of first class magnitude on its hands needs no emphasizing. It is apparent to all with eyes to see. And it is keenly and particularly appreciated by those who have to drive a car, and by those trying to keep out of their way. Nor need we dwell too long in attempting to figure out the tremendous monetary cost of congestion, obstruction and delay, the loss of life and property, the hindrance to trade and the general raising of the high cost of living. All that is simply incalculable, and of itself will never grow better but always worse.

No Forward Looking

Montreal's experience is no exception to the common fate of other unplanned cities of inordinate growth. It is exceptional however and unlike all the others of comparable size and importance in that hitherto no serious or sustained effort has been made to deal with the difficulty and mitigate the attendant evils.

It is true that in recent times very commendable endeavour in the line of traffic regulation, restriction

and control with the aid of police power has been made, but that after all is hardly more than the merest palliative; has practically reached the limit of effectiveness and is almost like trying to hold back the Atlantic tides with a broom.

Of course when any particular street becomes overcrowded and congested with traffic, the most obvious thing to do is to widen said street. Such recourse however is seldom considered and never done until absolute necessity demands and by that time the cost of land and buildings has mounted to a figure which should make the project practically prohibitive.

We have spent many millions of dollars that way in years gone by, with inappreciable results, and at such a cost as makes the mere mention of the word "expropriation" a veritable nightmare.

Too often it is like a long deferred surgical operation made upon a patient whose strength has been overtaxed and vitality reduced to an extent that even should the operation be so called "successful" the patient only partially recovers and is "never the same."

Moreover, several of the city's streets have already been widened, and rewidened, and now they are ripe for re-re-widening, so we do not seem to be able to see very far ahead.

The street widening process is one that requires the utmost careful consideration, should never be undertaken without a clear understanding of consequences, and is only permissible when the cost of land and buildings is so low as to warrant a reasonable return in increased valuation to meet the expenditure.

In matters like these there are usually some people with preconceived and fixed ideas who are always ready to present their particular favourite panaceas, their veritable cure-alls guaranteed to perform the whole trick.

Then Burrow Underground?

And so a prevailing opinion has arisen that an underground railway system along the routes of our principal thoroughfares is the only solution of the trouble, worth considering.

The Underground Railway is one of those things "that comes high but we must have it", something like five or six million a mile, so we can gauge how many miles at a figure like that a city like Montreal can afford.

It would probably not be difficult to get private enterprise to undertake the operation of these lines, provided the city would foot the initial expense of construction, but it is extremely doubtful if any company, able to give proper guarantee, would be prepared to shoulder the risk of the whole.

After all we must remember that a subway system is merely an express passenger service and the most that it accomplishes is to permit the average commuters to stay ten or twenty minutes longer in bed in the morning and possibly enable them to get home for their mid-day meal, instead of crowding the quick lunch counter.

It should be borne in mind that the Underground Railway will not render any appreciable relief to the congestion of surface motor or truck traffic, excepting in a small degree on the few miles of streets where it would be laid, an inconsiderable percentage of the whole.

Yet it can scarcely be questioned that the Underground system would be other than a splendid thing and a great boon, *provided those who received the most benefit would pay the cost.*

It would help the extension of real estate development at one end of the line, and enable the erection of more huge and lofty buildings at the other, but those receiving the greatest advantage are more in the class of profiteers than contributors.

It is safe to say that without the subways the famous "sky line" of lower New York would never have entered into the realms of possibility.

The Vicious Cycle

And here we enter a vicious and interminable cycle, like a dog chasing its tail, for with the subways the more skyscrapers can be built, and with the skyscrapers the more subways are needed.

Indeed next to the skyscrapers, themselves one of the greatest show features of new York, is the subway jam at six o'clock. So it would be foolish to pretend that the underground system can offer any effective solution of the general traffic problems.

Or Elevated Railways?

But if subways are supposed to be rather too expensive a luxury for Montreal, what about the Elevated Railway which has been mooted and would only cost half as much?

Yes, about half as much in the beginning but probably five or six times more in the end, for they are the greatest obstructive factors towards all kinds of surface traffic, and the worst slum creators and destructive influences over all property values in the immediate neighbourhood.

They are only permissible on streets of extraordinary width, say not less than 120 feet, in the open country or through possibly a factory district, and then should be built not of steel, but as a reinforced concrete viaduct which would greatly enhance the appearance and reduce the nerve racking noise.

There is hardly a city that has adopted elevated railways but is clamouring to get rid of them.

Detroit, which is a city comparable in many respects with our own, except that in the first place it was very much better planned, seems determined on putting up a valiant fight against anything other than surface transit.

It is the automobile city par excellence, both as regards manufacture and operation, and since there is about one automobile to every five of the population, from the bank president with his limousine down to the char-lady with her flivver, the inhabitants may be said to have abandoned the use of their legs and are moving about on wheels.

In Detroit they have one of the most formidable

traffic problems in the world to master and are projecting a system of enormous arteries 100, 200 and even 400 feet wide. In particular they have evolved the Super Highway idea, debarring crossings at less than half-mile intervals, thus ensuring expeditious transit at less than a quarter of the cost of subways.

Montreal Must Plan

So far as Montreal is concerned the whole problem is one for the most earnest, profound and concentrated study based upon accurate information and data. It should be entered upon in the spirit of an open mind and without preconceived or prejudiced notions.

Superficially speaking, the idea that appears to have most to offer us at the present time is that of a general loosening up of the street system by means of radial or diagonal thoroughfares.

They must however be carefully planned and selected so as to avoid existing costly construction and pass through land of such low value as offers the greatest opportunity to pay for the cost of construction by increasing property valuation through the improvement.

The diagonal is moreover the only effective means of reducing the grades on our steep slopes, which is one of the heaviest and most costly handicaps to city traffic more especially horse-drawn. It would relieve both uptown and crosstown streets of their overburden of traffic.

In addition, considerable saving in distance would be effected on all traffic which has its destination on streets other than that of its origin. And if ultimate recourse should require to be made to double deck streets, these diagonals would mean just so much saving in reduced length of costly construction, amounting to many millions of dollars.

It should however be clearly and definitely understood that our salvation, in a traffic sense, does not and can not lie in any single panacea that can be put forward, nor in any piecemeal attempt that may be made for improvement here and there, but in the well-weighed and studied mobilizing and marshalling of any or a combination of all these

into a system whose component factors will work together with the greatest ease, harmony and efficiency.

Even then we are forcibly driven to the conclusion that the most we can hope for is a partial solution of our difficulties and the saving of a certain percentage of the total loss we are daily undergoing. That total loss however is so terrible in its extent and so constant, that even a certain percentage of saving may amount to an astonishing aggregate.

Decentralization and the Satellite City

At best the Mammoth City of modern times is more or less of a Monstrosity, cumbersome, unwieldy and only partially efficient, and the only radical and effective measure of redress is in carefully planned and regulated Decentralization.

As already stated, Montreal is growing and will continue to grow either laterally or vertically.

Let us suppose for a moment that every land-owner in the central district in the city should avail himself of the privilege which is his by law, and build up to the ten storey limit, or higher still with a setback.

It is inconceivable that the traffic in our streets could be other than a densely packed, seething, weltering mass in which all the traffic regulations in the world would fail to effect movement or extrication.

Again, if Montreal is to continue to spread in the same way as at present more or less evenly and thickly all over, this can have but one effect of intensification and congestion towards the core and the gradually clogging up of the machine.

Our only sanctuary therefore lies in the nearby, well planned Garden or Satellite City politically and socially independent, but economically linked with the parent stem.

There perhaps the human element, no longer merely a cog in the wheel, but amidst pleasant, congenial and wholesome surroundings, with plenty of fresh air and sunlight can find some realization of its aspirations and the fullest measure of health, happiness and vigour.

Wretched Housing Conditions in Nova Scotia Mining Areas

The Report of the Royal Commission appointed by the Nova Scotia Government to investigate the coal industry in that province has been published, and reveals, as was expected, such wretched living conditions among the miners and their families as must inevitably breed social discontent and industrial rebellion. Everywhere is exhibited failure on the part of the coal companies, the municipalities and the province to realize that human beings, many of them fathers of families, "housed" in wretched two-roomed shacks (some of them fifty years old), on dirty, rutted roads, without proper

sanitary conveniences or adequate and proper water supplies must become social rebels as inevitably as the night follows the day.

What has been revealed by the Commission cannot be dismissed as sentimental vaporizing on the part of social reformers. One of the witnesses at the inquiry stated that he had lived in several industrial communities and believed that the living conditions in Glace Bay were the worst of any place in which he had ever been.

The official Report states:

We would direct the attention of the Pro-

vincial Government to the need for an immediate consideration on their part in conjunction with the local authorities, of the roads, the sanitary conditions, and amenities generally of the mining communities, particularly in Cape Breton and at Thorburn.

From the evidence we received as well as from our own observation on the spot, we are satisfied that the responsibilities that ought to devolve upon Municipal or Town authorities in these respects, as well as in respect of attendance of children at school, are not being discharged, and that the general conditions in which miners and their families have to live—quite apart from the internal state of their homes—are not such as they are entitled to expect. The ordinary relationships between operators and employees are, in our view, being seriously prejudiced by reason of the very reasonable discontent which the miners feel at this condition of affairs. We think also that the "policing" requirements of the districts should be reviewed. We deprecate the direct employment of policemen by the operators. The authority of the law, should not, in our opinion be allowed to reside in private hands.

We were struck with the absence of community spirit and community enterprise generally, and we are strongly of the opinion that the responsibilities in this connection, as well as the responsibility for the protection of property, do not rest, and should not rest, upon operators, but are a matter for the Municipal or Town authorities.

We do not feel that such improvements as the constituted authorities can effect are enough to create speedily the environment which these mining communities need, and we very strongly recommend the constitution of a fund which can be administered for purposes connected with the social well-being, recreation, and conditions of living of the workers in or about the coal mines, and with mining education and research.

This fund should be constituted by contributions from all the operators of coal mines to the extent of 1 cent per ton of coal raised, and by contributions from the Province from the royalties which they receive in respect of the ownership of the mines, to the extent also of 1 cent per ton of coal raised. If these contributions were continued for a period of five years, a fund would be constituted which would go a long way to improve very materially the surroundings in which the miners live and to afford the miners and their families reasonable opportunities for social, physical and intellectual development.

Speaking of Cape Breton particularly the Commission says:

Many of these houses are old—some of them having been erected by the General Mining

Association more than fifty years ago. Others were built for the purpose of housing men engaged on the erecting of portions of the operators' plant, or in opening up new mines; the latter are little better than temporary shelters and are known and properly described as "shacks." Many families occupy houses that are much too small for their needs. The houses generally have no kitchen or cellar, and in certain districts, in default of waterworks, water is either delivered by the operators in carts or has to be carried from a distance. Where water is piped into a house, there is an almost total absence of bathrooms or water-closets, due, we were informed, to the lack of sewers. There is much complaint of the leaky condition of the roofs, of ill-fitting doors and windows, of doors that are rotted or badly worn, and of walls on which paper and plaster are in shreds and patches.

With the exception of a limited number of dwellings—and these usually of the oldest type built in rows—the houses stand on lots that are amply large enough to permit of cultivation. We were struck with the general absence of any attempt on the part of the tenants to make any use of the land that is at their disposal.

The badly rutted streets, the straggling fences, and the outside privies add to the unattractiveness of the general picture.

There is here recognized by what must be considered a conservative committee, whose chairman, being British, confessedly hesitated to pronounce too drastically on Canadian conditions, that the responsibility for living conditions rests ultimately neither with an industrial company nor with its workers, but with the municipality and the province. This is nothing new, of course, in modern social science. It has been accepted in Great Britain and all over Europe and is now being advanced by the Governor of New York State. But it is not so readily admitted in Canada, and all provinces have receded from the war-time experiments in municipal housing, largely because of the difficulty of keeping them free from corrupt practices. Great Britain has had its troubles here but has become expert in detecting the "rake-offs" and reducing the extent of their mischief. And Great Britain is coming to recognize, is indeed recognizing by its 90 per cent State credit granted to Public Utility limited dividend housing companies, that there is something more effective than Municipal housing and that is Copartnership Tenant housing, because here the tenant owners do the administrative work themselves as partners in the concern, watch every avenue of waste, plan for higher standards and take pride in caring for something that was not imposed upon them from the outside but was the result of their own planning and thinking, under expert advice of their own choosing.

The Commission suggests the creation of a fund

by taxing the companies to the extent of 1 cent per ton of coal raised and the province to the same extent on their royalties, to improve the living conditions of the miners.

The Neglected Town Planning Act

Meanwhile the Commission makes no reference to the fact—and are obviously unaware of it—that the province has a neglected Town Planning Act on its statute book which, if set into operation under a qualified executive could solve the problem.

Under the powers of its Town Planning Act of 1915, the province of Nova Scotia can call upon municipalities to prepare a town planning scheme for their areas. The municipalities are at present under obligation—and have been for seven years—to appoint Town Planning Commissions, consisting of the Mayor or Warden and two other members of the City Council and at least two ratepayers, with the City Engineer as chief officer, to draw up town plans which shall embody all the elements of decent living, enforce them by law and assess the cost, which would be very small when compared with the present cost of social anarchy, upon the municipality.

If the municipality will not take action, the province has the power to prescribe a set of town planning by-laws and enforce them as provincial law.

If the province had appointed a qualified executive to carry out their Act the probability is that by this time town planning schemes with decent roads, sewerage and water supply and doubtless a civilized housing movement would have been in operation in these areas. The report shows that the coal companies have made a complete failure of their housing provision, even from a financial point of view. The cost of repairs has been enormous. Naturally where there is no pride in a dwelling, there is no care of it. In the few cases where miners own modern homes, there is every evidence of care and decency—so far as the actual houses are concerned.

All the evidence shows that the problem of housing the miners and their families in these areas is not being dealt with in a scientific and humanistic spirit. Yet the province and the municipality have the machinery for doing this in the neglected Town Planning Act. If the province would supply credit for limited dividend housing companies, on the lines suggested by Governor Smith for New York State housing of working families—which is also the British method of Public Utility housing—and put in operation its Town Planning Act, the whole problem of housing the miners could be taken out of the hands of obviously unwilling coal companies. New towns would arise where families could live among the amenities of civilization and the major part of industrial unrest would come to an end. There is no industrial unrest at Bournville Garden Village nor at the English Garden Cities.

These are Nova Scotia housing conditions but they are also Canadian and are being pointed at, with Glasgow and New York, as representing some

of the worst housing conditions in the world. Saints and angels are not bred in rotten, two-roomed shacks. Glasgow has been the home of social anarchy for decades. Can anyone wonder, with one-fifth of the population of one of the richest cities in the world living in "homes" of one room and over 60 per cent in dwellings of not more than two rooms? When the Conservative British Prime Minister visited Glasgow last September, he described these conditions as "damnable." Sometimes the right words get themselves used; though the causes of human misery, invariably connected with some form of money-making tyranny, seldom get an airing.

The British Liberal Party are putting forward their town planning policy "in order to counteract revolutionary violence." When Lincoln was asked concerning the financial standing of one of his neighbors he said that the man had a wife and child who should be worth \$500,000 to any man. Sometimes "imagination" is the only "practical" thing for purposes of revelation and there seems to be precious little of this divine magic in housing the miners and their families in Nova Scotia.

The Geneva World Committee of the Y.M.C.A. seems to know that there are thoughts abroad concerning social conditions that cannot be put in jail or suppressed by policemen. Here is its exordium to a long questionnaire as to what should be done:

In a world that is moving today through turmoil to an unknown goal of either tragedy or triumph a hundred issues are thrown up for each of us that our fathers never had to face. Things that for them seemed to be settled and secure for ever, are for us either challenged or actually tottering to a fall.

Nova Scotia mining conditions have already run to the inevitable goal of social tragedy.

A Great Journal behind Town Planning

"Mr. Trevelyan Thomson, who opened a useful debate on housing in the House of Commons on Friday, made a remark which has a wider significance and scope than that which he gave to it. He said that if the time spent on safeguarding industry had been spent on safeguarding the homes of the nation it would have been spent to much greater advantage. That criticism is true, not for a year but for a century. If a little filth had been taken out of the Augean stable every day, said Southey nearly a hundred years ago, it would not have needed a Hercules to clean it. Unfortunately we let confusion and squalor go on without making any serious attempt to put an end to them. Consequently two acute problems are combined today in a manner that makes the solution of each of them infinitely difficult. We have at one and the same time to get rid of our slums and to provide houses for our immediate needs. We did not begin on the first problem till nearly the end of the century, and not really intelligently until we passed a Town Planning Act in 1919."—*Manchester Guardian*.

SHOULD SHACK - TOWNS BE ENCOURAGED ?

A Consideration of Some of the Problems of Urban Development in Canada—Housing Conditions in the West—Over Development of Western Cities—Evil Results from Haphazard Development of Urban Lands—Improvement of Shack - Towns Areas is Costly

By A. G. DAILZELL *

Consulting Engineer, Toronto

Rural and Urban Settlement

It is frequently stated by those whose opinion is worthy of serious consideration that the greatest need of Canada to-day is an increase of population by means of immigration. Some would restrict this immigration to those who are prepared to live and work on the land, but others contend that the country would benefit by the coming of the mechanic, the artisan, and the professional classes. Those in favour of securing all classes sometimes qualify the invitation by asking that only the British, or at least the Nordic races should be welcomed, whilst those who favour only the immigration of rural workers say that for the development of the prairies and the north country those who come from the countries of Southern Europe make the best settlers. Rural settlement has always been one of the greatest problems of Canada. In this article it is desired to draw attention to some of the problems that arise in urban development, and that must be seriously faced if ever the tide of immigration should again reach the heights that prevailed in the decade 1904-1913.

Influence of the Modern Highway

In a paper on the "Influence of the Modern Highway" presented at the general professional meeting of the Engineering Institute of Canada, in Toronto, on January 29 last, the author, W. A. McLean, consulting engineer, Toronto, suggested that when the history of the present epoch is written it will be known as the age of transportation. He drew attention to the wonderful development that has taken place within the last century in the means of transportation of the human race, and the products of their hands and brains. People, goods, sounds and thoughts, are now transmitted at a pace that would have seemed impossible only a few years ago. One of the greatest factors in transportation during the last quarter of a century he showed had been the motor vehicle. It had compelled the building of new and the improvement of old highways and had many

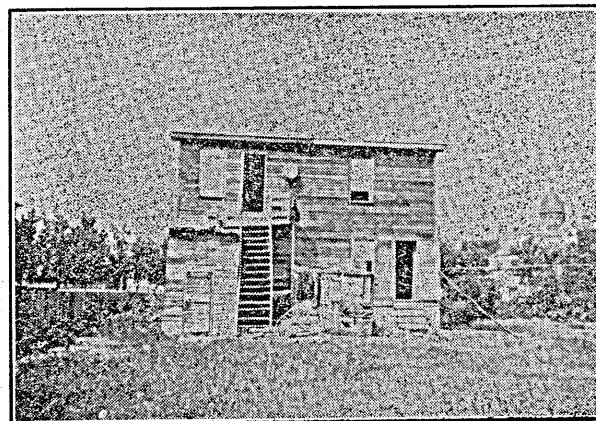


Fig. 1—This Duplex Shack on a Paved Street Paid an Annual Tax of \$118.85

far reaching influences. Mr. McLean thus described its influence on the distribution of population:

Lo ! the Shack-Town !

"The combined influence of the motor vehicle and radial electric railway of recent years has tended to the wider distribution of city population in suburban districts, and to the growth of satellite towns surrounding large cities. Men of wealth, by means of the motor car, have been enabled to adopt a rural method of living in well appointed country homes. Their offices and places of business are often in congested 'sky-scraper' areas, but the distance from office to home is traversed night and morning in a motor car."

"A more striking manifestation of this influence, however, is to be seen in the number of small houses which gradually dot the countryside around large centres of population, which, as they accumulate, are gradually grouped under the term of 'shack-town.' This is a form of modern pioneering which is deserving of all encouragement. Working men who take their families into the suburbs of a city

under such conditions, are not devoid of ambition, nor are they willing to live permanently in a shack. Rather they are men of courage who are willing to accept the inconvenience of a pioneer shack for a time, in order that they may ultimately own a good home. By thrift they become able to pay for the land, and then by their own labor are able to commence the building of the house that ultimately takes the place of the shack. Soon they are owners of a home and garden in open air surroundings, a home that tends to the well-being of a sturdy family. The history of 'shack-towns' as a rule is that they develop into districts of comfortable homes for labouring men.

"The laboring man employed in the city can do this because of the facilities of a radial line within easy reach; or because he can buy a second-hand car for \$100 to carry him to and from work. Shack-town and its tendencies are part of the problem of town planning."

Should Shack-Towns Be Encouraged?

The writer of this article wishes to draw attention to some of the tendencies and problems of "shack-towns," and to ask his readers to consider whether "this is a form of modern pioneering which is deserving of all encouragement."

Since the early days of the nineteenth century, when the Marquis and Marchioness of Stafford deprived the crofters in the county of Sutherland in Scotland of their holdings, in order to convert them into sheepwalks, thus forcing the crofters to leave their native heath, Canada has been the promised land for many oppressed by feudal land systems. The English yeoman and the Irish peasant followed the Scotch crofter, and in later years people from all lands set their faces westward, attracted by the offer of free lands. It has been comparatively easy for a Ruthenian or a Pole to secure 160 acres of land on which to erect his home and earn his living, but their brothers who work as section hands on the railway, or laborers in the elevators, have not always found it so easy to secure a small homesite on which to erect a humble dwelling. It is for instance striking to recall that during the years of the war 1914-18 no less than 9,616 homestead entries were granted in the western provinces to Germans and Austro-Hungarians, and yet in 1919 many cities in the same provinces found it an insolvable problem to provide a free site for the home of a returned soldier, though financial aid was offered by the various governments.

Faults of Urban Development

The country as a whole benefits by the settlement of rural lands, for a homestead is by no means a free gift. At the same time we think it can be shown that there is great need of new policies in urban development in Canada if a new immigrant population is to be satisfactorily settled, and made decent and law-abiding citizens. There is no doubt but that urban development in Canada in the past has been greatly influenced by the remembrance of its settlers of the faults of the land systems and customs of the older countries from which they came. Settlers from Great Britain, for instance, would say that some of the faults of urban development, and consequent bad housing in the home land arose from the following conditions:

Keeping land out of the market until the highest prices could be obtained.

Assisting landlords to do this by taxing for municipal revenue only on the rental value of the land not its capital or assessed value.

That the consequent high price of land forced intensive development; hence narrow streets and small building plots.

That through legal formalities land was difficult to purchase. It was seldom sold except for cash payments and loans on the security of land alone were not easy to obtain.

That before building could take place the municipal authorities required the roads to be graded

and partially improved, and sewers and watermains installed.

That building restrictions were unduly onerous. In the endeavor to avoid these faults in Canada it can be shown that:

Large areas of land were placed on the market well in advance of population.

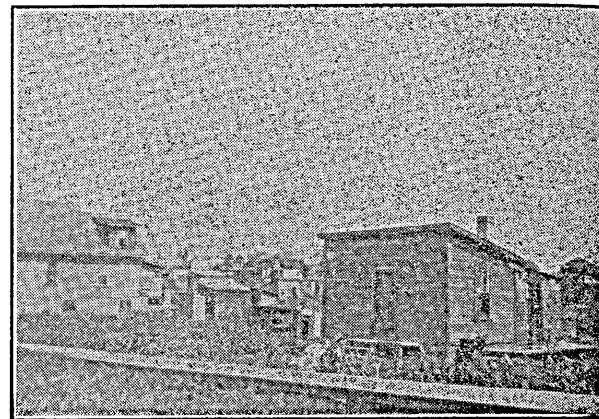


Fig. 2—This Shack on Unimproved Road Paid an Annual Tax of \$75.88

Taxation was generally based on the full value of the land, irrespective of its rental value and in some cases all improvements on the land were exempt from taxation.

Streets were made wide and of uniform width, and building plots much larger, seldom less than 100 feet in depth.

Provision was made for the sale of land on small cash payments and easy terms, conveyance and registration of title were simplified. Building was permitted before roads were graded or improved, and before any public utilities were installed, and building restrictions were seldom enforced until communities were well established.

Large Areas Opened Up

Examples of the large areas in Canada opened for building development are the cities of Calgary and Edmonton. These cities, each with a population of less than 60,000, have each more than 40 square miles of land very fully sub-divided, and to compensate for any land within the city limits not yet sub-divided there are large areas just outside the limits sub-divided into 25 ft. lots. Or consider the city of Vancouver and the four surrounding municipalities which with a population of less than 200,000 cover an area of 90 square miles, very fully sub-divided. This area for example is as great as that occupied by the following twelve cities of Ontario, with a present population of over a million people, and not one of them overcrowded; Ottawa, Kingston, Belleville, Peterborough, Toronto, Hamilton, Niagara Falls, Kitchener, Brantford, London, Windsor, Sarnia.

Were Cheap Homesites Secured?

Now with this abundant land on the market and

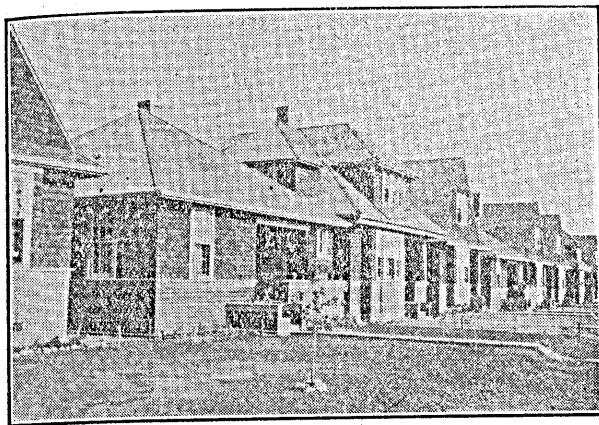


Fig. 3—Orderly Development in a Prairie City
Under Private Corporation Control

with taxation based on land values alone, was cheap land for urban development secured? No fair idea of land values can be secured by taking as a base for consideration individual lots. The only fair idea can be secured by considering large areas, and the assessed values of the taxing authorities, and all figures here given are from official sources.

In 1911 the city of Vancouver annexed an area of 414 acres of land, now known as Ward 8 of the city. Out of this area 255 acres was actual building land on which the assessment was based. It was essentially a working class district. Out of 2,373 lots, 901 were more or less improved, and 3,300 people had settled in the district, though it was without a water supply system or sewers. The assessed value of this land when taken into the city was equal to \$10,027 per building acre.

Over Development at Edmonton

In 1914 the area of the city of Edmonton in Alberta was 27,640 acres. Taxation was based on land values alone, and the assessed value for the whole city was \$191,283,970. This assessment was of course based on land that could be utilized for building or other development, and did not include land used for streets, parks, government and similar purposes. As the ordinary street development requires one-third of the area of the land, when parks, government property, waste land in river bottoms and banks is considered, it is probable that not more than 60 per cent. of the total area, or 16,584 acres was assessable. Thus the average land value for the whole city area was \$11,534 per acre. That this land did not escape taxation is proved by a statement from a government report which refers to a parcel of 186 acres lying half a mile from the westerly city limits, which though not sub-divided was assessed at an average price of \$2,500 an acre, and between the years 1913-20 had levied against it in taxes no less a sum than \$34,189.59, equivalent to an annual tax of \$23 per acre.

Western Canada Housing Conditions

In 1919 the writer personally investigated housing conditions in many of the cities of Western Can-

ada, paying special attention to those of the lowest paid working classes. In each city he made a personal inspection of the area, selecting two or more typical blocks, obtained the exact measurements of the land and the assessment from the municipal officials, and worked out the land value on the acre basis. As the proportion of street area to building area varies according to the width of the streets, the length of the blocks, and the provision of lanes, the term net acre is used to indicate the area available for building, the gross acre includes this, with the area devoted to streets and lanes. In these instances taxation was not based on land values only, as in all cases some taxation was obtained from some part of the value of the improvement on the land.

Place	Character of Settlement	Land Value	
		Gross Acre	Net Acre
Winnipeg	Foreign section, sewered	\$6,525	\$9,666
	British section, sewered	5,911	8,427
	Railway workers at city boundary, sewered	3,672	5,376
St. Boniface	French Canadians, sewered and paved streets	6,724	9,868
	Sewered and unpaved	4,929	7,170
Assiniboia	British working class, mostly working in Winnipeg	3,759	5,228
Kildonan	British working class, mostly working in Winnipeg	7,729	12,236
Regina	German Town—With sewers	7,922	12,038
	Without sewers	3,660	5,560
Fort William	Coal Dock Section Foreigners—with sewers	2,900	4,394
	Without sewers	1,910	2,890
	West End Foreigners—Without sewers	1,626	2,363
Port Arthur	Central Section, mostly foreigners, sewered	8,000	11,468
Vancouver	British, sewered	5,201	8,774

It may be pointed out that these assessed values are from 10 to 20 per cent. lower than those that prevailed in 1912 and 1913, when most of the land was sold and probably 25 per cent. lower than the actual purchase price. Also that in many cases the sewered sections immediately adjoined the unsewered sections, so that the owners not only paid for the installation of the sewers as a local improvement, but paid an additional tax by the increased assessment of the land.

Comparisons With Other Countries

In the same year that these figures were obtained Great Britain was struggling with a big housing problem in all its large towns and cities. The Ministry of Health had to come to the aid of municipalities by granting loans for the purchase of housing sites. An official report states that in 408 housing schemes which came before the Ministry of Health involving the purchase of 8,174 acres (an area 50 per cent. greater than that occupied by the city of Ottawa), the average cost of the land purchased was £188 or say, \$940.

If it is objected that no fair comparison can be made with Great Britain, it may be stated that at

the same time the United States also faced a post war housing problem. It is officially reported that the United States Housing Corporation bought, in the most part by "community valuation," over 4,400 acres of land in widely different parts of the States for working class housing at an average value of \$554.57 per acre.

Dr. Robert Murray Haig, Professor of Economics, Columbia University, has investigated land problems for some of the provincial governments of Canada and has stated:

"That the upward rush of realty values, based almost entirely upon the more or less unreasonable hope for future growth, was such that the point was reached where total land values, imputed on the basis of actual sales made, *probably exceeded in proportion to population the level obtaining in any other region of the world.*"

It is, therefore clear that, neither by placing large areas of land on the market, nor by taxing on land value alone, has Canada secured reasonably cheap land for urban development.

Townsites With Wide Streets

In the desire to avoid the narrow streets of the towns and cities of the old land, townsites were laid out in Canada with wide streets of uniform widths, but often with a total disregard of the topography of the land. Consider for instance the case of the city of Ladysmith, B.C., a small mining community. The area of the municipality is 220 acres, and every street in the area is 80 ft. or more in width, and every block has a 20-ft. lane. As a result the municipality owns 108 acres out of the 220, the area being thus divided: Building area, including school sites 114½ acres 52.05 per cent. Recreational areas 6 acres 2.74 per cent. Streets and Lanes 99½ acres 45.21 per cent.

This great proportion of street area has of course added to the cost of the building land, thus many of the lots are very narrow, and as no building lines are enforced every one builds as close to the street line as possible, so that buildings are congested together, and in spite of wide streets there is the appearance of crowding. Again some of these 80-ft. streets have a 20 per cent. grade, and are quite unsuitable for vehicular traffic, and the cost of improving and maintaining this great street area is so excessive that most of it remains unimproved. Compare with this a development of the same area carried out at Youngstown, Ohio, for workers in a steel plant. Here the streets are carefully planned to fit the site, varied in width to meet the requirements of traffic, and the 220 acres of land are thus divided up.

Building area	156 acres	71 per cent
Recreational	11 acres	5 per cent
Street area	53 acres	24 per cent

In this development building regulations insure the proper spacing of houses on the lots, so that with much narrower streets there is greater safety against the spread of fire, and much pleasanter outlook.

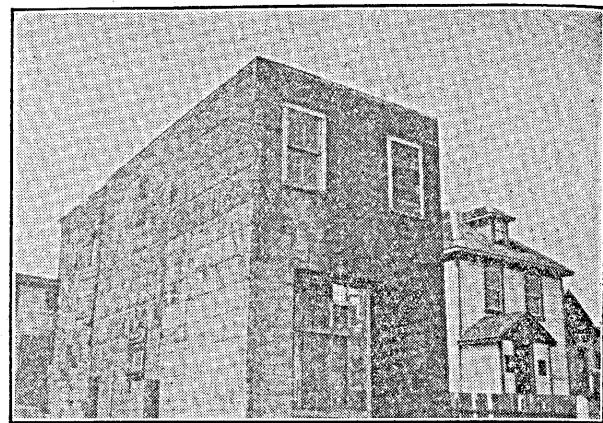


Fig. 4—Disorderly Development, Destroying Property Values Though Land Was Assessed at Over \$50.00 Per Front Foot

With the increase of motor traffic, and the high cost of street improvement to suit this traffic, great care must be taken in street lay out, or an excessive burden will be laid upon the small householder.

Street Improvements Are Costly

Very few realize what it costs to improve streets and make land suitable for building development and residential purposes. The writer was very directly connected with the development of Ward 8 in the city of Vancouver, which has already been referred to. Its history is very instructive, as it shows very clearly the folly of haphazard development of urban lands. To begin with the area was sub-divided and registered in 1885, before even the city of Vancouver was established. It was then covered with so dense a forest growth that the survey was made only by running the outside boundaries. When the land was cleared it was found that one-fifth of the area, or some 80 acres was a deep muskeg swamp, and yet lots had been sold in this swamp for as high a price as \$9 per front foot! The area was controlled and administered by the Provincial Government until annexed by the city in 1911. As already stated, 3,300 people had settled in the area and 856 houses had been built before there was a public water supply or a sewer system. Sanitary conditions were so serious in 1911 that the city was practically obliged to annex the area.

Cost of Bad Planning

Between 1911 and 1917 the city spent in this area of 414 acres in sewers, watermains, schools and other capital expenditures, no less than \$1,213,990, equivalent to \$511 for every lot, and 52 per cent of the total land valuation in 1917. It must be remembered that this expenditure was in the area alone, and nothing is included for the necessary trunk sewers and watermains outside of the area, or for any expenses of civic administration. And the expenditure was by no means completed, as up to that date not even a cement sidewalk had been laid. In 1917 the taxation was based on land values only, and dividing the valuation by the number of acres assessable gave an av-

verage valuation for the whole area of \$9,252 per building acre, much less than the land value before any improvements were undertaken. The city tax rate was 24 mills, and on the land value, and with the tax rate, even if all the taxes were paid the amount received would be insufficient to pay the fixed charges on the capital expenditure. Thus the cost of education, police and fire departments, scavenging and health and all civic administration of this area had

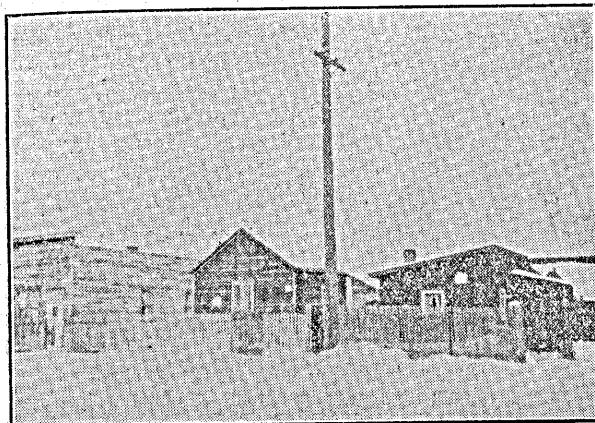


Fig. 5.—Part of a Shack-Town on Land Assessed at \$12 a Front Foot

to be provided for *out of moneys received from other parts of the city, a direct tax on business and industry.* A rather striking fact was that in this area in 1917 more electricity was consumed for the lighting of the streets, than was used for all domestic or industrial purposes within the area.

Development of Shaughnessy Heights

Whilst this development was going on in Ward 8, the Canadian Pacific Railway Co. was developing 400 acres of land just outside the city limits of Vancouver, but bounded by the same avenues on Ward 8, and a little to the west. This land was designed for high class residential purposes and is the well known Shaughnessy Heights area. The company cleared the site, graded and improved the streets, provided cement sidewalks over the whole area, planted and improved boulevards and parkways, installed sewers and watermains with connections to the lot lines, at a total cost 50 *per cent. less* than that of the street expenditure in Ward 8, because the street system was better designed and the work done in an orderly manner. When the Shaughnessy Heights area was well built up, and all improvements to streets practically completed, the land value of the area on the acre basis was assessed at a lower rate than that in the working class district of Ward 8, though it must of course be stated that the assessment was made by different authorities.

Ward 8 might in 1910 have been classed by some as a "shack-town" development. No one would so describe it to-day. It has within its boundaries many excellent homes, the sewers have drained the swamp, though only frame buildings can be erected in this area without pile foundations, as piles over

30 ft. long were driven for sewer construction. Here it is true that a "shack-town" has developed into a district of comfortable homes for laboring men but *at what cost!* At the end of 1917 ten per cent. of the houses in the area were empty, mainly because they were uninhabitable, though few had been built more than ten years. Even at the end of 1925 under vastly improved conditions, and after a continued expenditure of public money on improvements the city advertised 77 parcels of land in the area for sale for arrears of taxes, and as already pointed out the whole area would be bankrupt if it were not carried by the city as a whole.

Municipality of South Vancouver

Immediately to the south of Ward 8 is the municipality of South Vancouver covering an area of 9,000 acres, and developing much along the same lines as a working class settlement without any large business or industrial districts. When the writer realized what it cost to develop Ward 8, he asked himself the question: If a small development of 400 acres with a population of 12 to the acre is not self-sustaining, how can a development of 9,000 acres, with a population of 4 to the acre, pay its way? The answer seemed obvious that it could not, and the proof soon came that it did not, because the provincial government had to suspend municipal administration and place a commissioner in charge to protect the bondholders. South Vancouver has since recovered some of its loss, but to-day seeks annexation with the city of Vancouver and that it can exist as a separate entity is indeed very doubtful.

Adjacent to the city of Winnipeg are several suburban municipalities in most of which there has been much development which has been on "shack-town" lines. It is surely significant that at least four of these municipalities are in default with their bonds, and again the provincial government has had to step in and appoint a commission to take charge.

Coal Docks Section, Fort William

Apart from economic failures "shacktowns" may develop into serious menaces to social welfare and the public health. Bryce Stewart, a well known social service worker, has described the conditions that prevailed in the coal docks section of Fort William in 1913. Here is a brief summary:

"In one block there are 42 lots, 7 vacant. On the 35 lots there are 41 buildings of which 2 are stores and 4 empty dwellings. In 35 dwellings 238 persons are living, 158 men, 29 women, 28 girls, 23 boys. The following nationalities are represented: 141 Ruthenians, 36 Slovaks 19 Russians, 19 Poles, 11 Austrians, 6 Italians, 6 Bokowinians. In the 35 occupied dwellings there are 88 rooms, 131 beds. If one room is set aside in each house as a living room *four or five persons sleep in each of the other rooms.* Twenty-three families owned their homes, 12 paid rent. There are no bath tubs in any of the houses, no toilets and no sewers, 23 *dry closets have to serve 238 people.* Refuse and sink water are everywhere in evidence."



Fig. 6—A Prairie Shack-Town on Land Assessed at \$20 a Front Foot

Mr. Stewart stated that the average infant mortality for the city of Fort William at that period was 238 per 1,000 so that it is quite safe to say that in this slum area, *one infant out of every four died within the first year of life*. To those not acquainted with infant mortality statistics, it may be stated that the rate for the city of Toronto in 1925 was 71.9 per 1,000, or 1 in 14 dying within the first year.

The writer visited the coal docks section in 1919 and found conditions greatly improved. He visited it again in 1922 and found still greater improvement, and a nearer approach to normal Canadian standards. Here again it may be said is a "shack-town" developing into a district of comfortable homes for laboring men. *But again at what a cost* and at what tremendous disadvantages! In 1907 the foreigners who bought land in this section paid more, on the square foot basis, than was paid in the same year for land on which to found the well known Hampstead Garden Suburb, three quarters of an hour journey from the very heart of the British metropolis. But unlike the beautiful garden estate of England, this land was a treeless swamp, exposed to the full blast of the gales from Lake Superior, and only four feet above lake level. Sewer construction is extremely difficult, and as no basements can be dug, plumbing is very apt to be frozen solid, many householders forced by the city authorities to install plumbing, lost their whole investment in the first winter. No human habitation should ever have been permitted in the area, it is essentially a site for industrial and transportation purposes.

Engineers and Surveyors' Contribution

It is extremely unfortunate that so few engineers have realized that one of the greatest contributions they can make to the happiness and welfare of the human race is to plan for, and direct and guide, the settlement of population, both rural and urban. In the early days of this country the surveyors blazed the trails through the forests, crossed wide prairies, scaled high mountain ranges, in order to open the way for settlement. They devised a wonderful system of land measurement, which for accuracy and completeness has not been surpassed, and by means

of this system made it easy to allot and sell land, and saved much strife that would have arisen if land boundaries could not so clearly have been defined.

Following the surveyors came the engineers who planned and constructed the railways, so that supplies could be taken into the settlers and their crops marketed with ease. Other engineers stopped the flow of mighty rivers, turned the energy of falling water into giant power, conveyed this power over miles of slender wire to towns and cities, where it is used to operate wonderful labor saving machinery in modern factories; and also forms the motive power to operate a train which conveys the working man from the factory to his home. Engineers working in other spheres sunk deep shafts to obtain water, pumped this water through miles of pipe so that it could be delivered pure at the door of every home. Sinking other shafts they brought up coal and saved the tremendous labor involved in each home-owner getting his own fuel. In later years they have sunk deep into the bowels of the earth to obtain oil, pumped this oil to the surface, refined and stored it, and then converted it into a gas, and devised a wonderful machine which converts this gas into a mighty power to turn the wheels of the machine so that again a new and rapid, and mobile method of transportation is available.

Thus engineers have done a great deal to improve the methods of transportation, and in devising means for supplying people with water, fuel and light; but as yet they have done next to nothing in devising better ways of urban development, or in improving the methods of house construction for the ordinary working man. Our cities are extending on lines no better than, often not as good as, those laid down by the original founders a century ago. Our house construction, except in the details of plumbing and lighting, shows little if any advance. Compared with the electric train, and the automobile, the home of the average laboring man is as inadequate and inefficient, as the old ox cart compared to these modern methods of transportation.

Working Men's Homes

Why should the engineer expect or encourage the average working man to construct his own home, when he has had no training in the art of building? He is not expected to make his own suits or his own boots. Even the custom tailor, or the custom boot-maker, seldom makes his own entirely, and never without using modern machinery. It is true that the pioneers of this country built themselves fairly comfortable homes out of logs, but they also ground their own corn, made their own candles, dug their own wells, marketed their crops with ox teams, because they could do no other. But with all the advancement of modern industry why encourage or expect laboring men to construct their own homes out of unseasoned lumber and tar paper with ill fitting windows and doors, which involve a tremendous waste of fuel and much discomfort in a severe

climate. It is true that many of them have been forced to do this because, as Professor Ford, of Harvard University, has said:

"The cost of suburban homes as generally constructed in America is prohibitive for the working classes. The houses are built singly at retail prices for material, labor and loans, often by men ill acquainted with the means of reducing construction costs, they are built on lots of ill adapted shape, purchased from land speculators at excessive prices and upon streets unnecessarily wide and expensive in their construction."

If it is the function of the engineer to use the right material in the right way and in the most economical manner it is surely his function to see that land is used in the best manner. He has done a great deal to assist the farmer to get the most out of the land and to raise the best crops, and the best herds, surely it is not beneath his notice to assist in raising the standards of human living, and elevating the human race, by devising ways for economical settlement.

For National Health

Far too many think that the scattered urban development, so common around Canadian cities, which has been fostered by modern methods of transportation, is both healthy and economical. It is, too often, neither the one nor the other. Individual means of water supply, individual means of sewage disposal, often the lack of a fresh milk supply, are all menaces to health. Expensive highway construction, the high cost of public utilities, buses to convey children to consolidated schools, lead to taxation quite as high as that of the cities, without many of the city advantages.

Great Britain and other countries have shown that working people can be comfortably housed within reasonable distance of their places of employment, in compact but not congested communities, at reasonable cost. But this can only be done when the development is carefully planned and likewise carefully controlled, but it is alas too often in the matter of control that orderly development fails on this continent, because, as one has said, "In the matter of realty holdings the average American citizen is satisfied with the most stringent laws in so far as they affect and regulate his neighbor's use of property, but he does not willingly recognize any law whatsoever relating to his own.

We think we have shown that the "go-as-you-please," "do-as-you-like," method of development of urban lands has not been economical. One would at least like to think that it had been such as to lead to contentment, even if costly. But the facts are again the opposite. In 1919 the Dominion Government, owing to the serious unrest amongst the laboring classes in Canada, appointed a Royal Commission on Industrial Relations. This commission travelled from coast to coast examining witnesses and taking evidence. Regarding housing conditions it reported as follows:

"Another cause of unrest which we met at practically every place we visited was the scarcity of houses and the poor quality of some which did exist. The existing condition of the worker is not only the absence of sufficient housing accommodation, but the inadequacy of those that are in existence. Poor sanitary conditions and insufficient rooms are the chief complaints. Some means should be adopted with as little delay as possible to remedy this defect."

Can we say that any constructive policy has followed this recommendation, can we say how much longer we can afford to delay?

NEWS AND NOTES

(Continued from page 9)

Sort of Argument that brought Zoning to Vancouver

Evidence of the need of a town planning act in the province continues to pile up. Vancouver city council is put to all sorts of expedients and subterfuges to protect the interests of citizens who have built or bought homes in certain desirable areas and do not wish to have their investments jeopardized. This sort of thing does not by any means accord with the dignity one expects from a city council. It is not satisfactory because it is not always successful. It wastes the time of the council, which is compelled to treat each case separately and cannot formulate general rules. Besides, it is unfair to builders who may have plans for the erection of apartment houses, terraces or groups of dwellings. At present these men are frequently compelled to delay their work while citizens protest, and sometimes they find it necessary to take legal action to protect their rights or what they regard as their rights.

If we had a town planning law with a proper zoning ordinance based on it, all these protests and counter protests and all this search for expedients would be unnecessary. There would be definite and well-defined zones in which buildings of certain types might be erected and citizens in areas set aside for separate dwellings would not have to be constantly on the alert to protect themselves against the encroachment of buildings they regard as undesirable. As for the builder, he would know quite well where he might or might not erect the building he had in mind and would not waste his time or money trying to invade forbidden districts.—Vancouver Province.

Baltimore could not afford to lose its Zoning Powers

Baltimore had a zoning ordinance. Somebody said it was invalid and the Court of Appeals agreed. The City Solicitor drew up another one. The City Council suspended its rules to pass it and the Mayor remained at the City Hall to sign it so that it might become effective at once. American cities know by this time that zoning pays a city for whatever time, trouble and money it costs.

Vancouver Town Planning By-law

"Providing the new Vancouver City Council passes a by-law now in course of preparation authorizing application of the Town Planning Act, introduced during the recent session of the legislature and passed, about \$5,000 will be included in the current year's budget to cover the cost of operations by the Town Planning Commission during 1926."

No obstacle is anticipated in the passing of the by-law which comes within the jurisdiction of the council without recourse to the ratepayers, and it is expected that at an early date appointment will be made of the commission. The latter body will include as ex-officio officers, the chairmen of the parks board, sewerage board, school board, harbor commission and mayor. Other offices will be chosen from the membership of the Town Planning Institute of Canada, the Engineering Institute, Architects' Association, and various service organizations of the city.

The commission will work in close co-operation with the city engineer and his department as most of the physical survey incidental to inauguration of the new system will fall upon that branch.

We believe that once the system is established it will result in a saving sufficiently large to cover its entire cost in a few years, said J. B. Williams, city solicitor. For instance, the engineering department will know exactly and will be able to anticipate years ahead the requirements of various districts in the way of sewers, pavements, sidewalks and other public works. Under the old system, various areas have outgrown works as originally built, and replacement costs have been very heavy."—*Vancouver Star*.

Half Bermondsey Wants To Migrate

The extent to which the idea of building entirely new towns in country districts on garden city lines—where all the sordid results of lot peddling and land sweating may be abolished once for all—is indicated by a statement in *The Manchester Guardian* that 4,000 families of Bermondsey, a congested district of London, have signified their willingness to move out to a "satellite" town should another garden city be established in the London region. This is their answer to the proposal to build ten storey flats to provide accommodation for families displaced by slum clearances. Bermondsey wishes to reduce its population by half and one-half is quite ready to go—not to Canada, but to a garden city. Mr. E. C. Culpin, one of the Letchworth group, has become an alderman of London, and here is doubtless some fruit of his statesmanlike "political economy"—revolutionary enough, though of the peaceful and intelligent order.

But how will they find their work? Doesn't settlement follow industry? The garden city has shown that neither need follow the other; that the two movements are so interdependent that intelligent, planning and real social science may bring the two movements together *ab initio* as partners in a new

social structure in which neither is predatory and both are self-respectingly content.

In this case, therefore, when the town planner has prepared the minds of 4,000 families to migrate literally to "fresh fields and pastures new," Major Guy Kindersley, M.P., comes forward with the proposal that the Trade Facilities Act might be utilized to guarantee interest on debentures or bank overdrafts in order to enable manufacturers to move out of London. The manufacturers will have more space, light, air, sunshine, cheap power and land and a settled contented labour supply which does not have to spend two hours a day to get to and from work or to have to issue from what Mr. Baldwin calls "damnable" slums.

France

France has 300 town planning schemes in operation or preparation and in 1924 passed an amended obligatory Town Planning Act applicable to all cities of 10,000 population. The Department of the Seine, which comprises Paris, has acquired a region of about forty square miles which is to be planned and which will be an example of magnificent planning under public authority and public ownership of land. France has also a University division devoted entirely to town planning or civic design. France has regional plans for Paris, Lille, Rheims and Strasbourg and for the French Riviera, where most of the towns and cities have agreed upon a combined plan which will include and co-ordinate local plans.

England

England, after passing an obligatory Town Planning Act, on all towns and cities with a population of 20,000 placed the administration of the Act under the Minister of Health. It has now 234 obligatory and 214 optional plans in course of development, and 32 regional schemes, including 450 local authorities. Most of the great industrial centres comparable with Montreal are now covered by joint Town Planning Committees, with planning schemes for areas of about 10,000 square miles. Two garden cities have been built upon the principle of public ownership of land and these promise to affect profoundly the national policy in the solution of the immense housing policy.

Wherefore Country Planning?

Mr. Frank A. Waugh, professor of landscape gardening, Massachusetts Agricultural College, tries to answer this question in *The American City* and though he does not get very far, or prove that he understands regional planning at all, he has some notes on city planning that will need to be repeated many times yet in Canada before Canadian town planning reaches the stability of orthodoxy.

"City Planning," he says, "is now fully recognized. New planning and constant replanning are absolute necessities to the growing city. Well-trained men calling themselves professional city planners are finding a life-work in this field."

Incidentally it may be noted the Canadian town planners are finding it necessary to leave their own country and find this "life-work" in other fields. Hospitality to the scientific town planner is not yet blossoming very profusely.

Says Mr. Waugh:

Every kind of intelligent planning is conservative and saving. If we look ahead and plan carefully how things are to be done, we shall always save money by that means. Especially is this true of public business, where many things are sure to be done haphazard. The great wastes of tax money come precisely from lack of planning. Any city planning, therefore, or any country planning at all worthy of the name, is the surest economy in the world. And the objector who tries to dismiss it by calling it some fool theorists' scheme for spending more money, simply proves that he cannot understand two times two.

When Mr. Waugh writes of regional planning he loses his way:

It has just been said that the genuine country planner would need a thorough knowledge of the requirements of farm life; also a warm love for the country. A city planner transplanted to the country will never turn the trick. Some of those same city planners have already entered upon what they call "regional planning." This means the planning of a whole group of cities and all the country in between. I have listened to their speeches and have read their books; and it seems as though the chief use they have for the country in the "regions" which they plan is to cut it up into city lots or to make it into play-grounds for factory children or into golf-links for factory owners.

With respect to certain localities, it might be said that unless the country planners capture them for country uses, the regional planners will appropriate them for city uses. It is just a question of beating them to it.

This is rubbish. Regional planners are scientists who have studied the interrelation of town and country life and many of them were born on farms and have so much a "warm love for the country" that they want to stop the drift to the town—if they can, by making country life interesting and profitable.

Two Distinct Conceptions of City Growth

The older nineteenth century conception is that of growth by accretion—the mechanical addition of blocks and avenues to the original centre, proceeding automatically and without limit, as in the "growth" of a crystal. The newer conception is that of organic growth or growth by fission; under this method, when a city grows to a point beyond which it can no longer perform its essential functions readily,—when open spaces are too dear, when housing quarters are too congested, when industrial operations become hampered and checked,—the city, in order to provide for additional quotas of people,

divides up, as a cell divides, and forms another city, with its own nucleus of civic institutions, and its own form of development.

The inorganic method of city growth is doubtless in harmony with our current mechanical and financial regime, and while the keener sort of planner does not always like its results, he accepts its inevitability. He may, of course, do lip-service to the ideal of garden cities, but in practice he is ready to foster mechanical growth, in spite of the wastes, dilapidations, and human discomfort that accompany it, and in spite of the fact that it nullifies many of the essential reasons for a city's existence. The organic method of growth is that advocated ceaselessly by the English garden-city group; they conceive of the parent city sending forth satellite towns, each of which shall have its own economic and social nucleus, its own peculiar relationship to the parent city and to the countryside.

Does a city exist to promote the life of its citizens? Or do the citizens exist in order to increase the size, the importance, and the commercial turnover of the city? That is the real question that lies in back of every city plan; there is no compromise between these points of view, for the inorganic is as different in quality and function from the organic as a cinder is from a flower.

—Lewis Mumford, in *The Journal of the American Institute of Architects*.

American Town Love

Mr. George H. Pepler, town planning expert of the British Ministry of Health, paid generous tribute in a recent address to the American growing appreciation of the business value of orderly development in the physical aspect of their towns and cities, that is, of town planning.

The American believes that it helps his business if he can claim that his town is laid out in tip-top fashion, with facilities for industry and with parks and amenities. Therefore, he will part with his dollars, not only to pay for the preparation of a first-class plan but also for its publication, with explanatory report, in popular form. In many cases, too, it is included in the curriculum of the local schools, so that the future citizens will grow up keen to help the fulfilment of the future that has been planned.

Mr. Pepler doubtless moved among town planning activities in the United States and was obviously impressed—if not a little startled by the extraordinary and extraordinarily effective publicity methods where something was being done. Certainly the belief is being established in the United States that order and beauty PAY, as a road tour from Ottawa to New York abundantly shows. The movement from Babbit's Zenith to orderliness and beauty surprises the traveller in scores of small towns of which he had never heard before. Building setbacks are observed as a kind of civic religion and houses vie with each other in beautiful gardens. Streets and roads

planted with trees and miniature forest reserves in the very centre of business areas delight the tourist again and again.

These small towns no longer seem to be gasping to be as big and ugly as New York. Their pride is no longer in bigness but in excellence and beauty and the things of which they boast are the things that add to the common joy: recreation facilities, beautiful places, bathing opportunities, open spaces, something like a French delight in the *joie de vivre*.

A Commitment of Six and a Half Thousand Million Dollars

Mr. Henry R. Aldridge, author of a "Guide to the Administration of the (British) Housing Acts, 1923 and 1924" says it is a matter of simple justice to recognize that the national housing program of Great Britain, as embodied in the Act of 1924, represents the greatest housing program ever launched in Britain or in any other country in the civilized world.

It is indeed an amazing program; nothing less than the building of 2,500,000 modern cottages during a period of fifteen years to house working-class families at a maximum charge on the national exchequer and the local taxes of £1,376,240,000 which is something like \$6,674,764,000, taking the exchange at 85.

If it is objected that the changing governments may change these plans Mr. Aldridge (who is secretary of the National Housing and Town Planning Council and has been one of the leading housing reformers in England for a quarter of a century) states very confidently that the British national housing movement will march forward to success whatever government is in power.

No clearer proof of the national desire to regard the achievement of great housing schemes as part of the national duty toward the poor of this country could be found than that given in the unanimous declarations made relative to housing in the election addresses of all candidates for parliament at the general election of November, 1924.

What he means is that no government could either get into power or stay there which repudiated the will of the people, now firmly set upon the provision of homes, and better homes for working-class families at the expense, in the first case, of the nation.

For the first time in the history of housing legislation we possess as a nation the first essential factor towards the success of a great national endeavor to solve the housing problem in the form of a policy involving steady action over a long series of years.

If this is so, then all nations are witness of a peaceful revolution in social and political economy and in political thinking. Once more a political

heresy has forged its way to orthodoxy; once more the "iron laws" of political economy have been bent and broken in the face of a great social need. In war time, of course, this is common enough, but experience has taught us that peace time tends to get rid as quickly as possible of the social and economic heresies that made victory practicable and restore a status quo that was eminently satisfactory to a few.

It may be that the politicians of Great Britain have heard the rumblings of another kind of revolution and have taken heed of the warnings. Six years of public discussion have apparently led to a national determination to provide decent and adequate housing accommodation for twelve and a half millions of people as the price to be paid for salvaging an industrial civilization. There was much urging on the part of the orthodox economists that the housing of the people was a matter for private enterprise. But private enterprise was not doing it and at last this plain fact had to be recognized. One third of the population of Glasgow were conducting family life in one or two rooms and Glasgow had become the home of social revolution. Similar conditions existed in other congested districts of other towns and cities. Politicians of all parties have had to listen to the appeals of housing reformers, made for the last quarter of a century with unceasing reiteration. It is all a sad comment on an industrial civilization that did not make possible decent home life for millions of workers. New York is also failing to provide decent homes for two-thirds of its population—according to its own social historians and the recent public "hearings" on the questions have filled large halls with thousands of "hearers" during the six days of the inquiry.

The urgency of the housing need in Britain led the authorities to build anywhere where vacant land could be acquired, but the town planning reformers followed closely in the wake of the movement and created a public opinion that insisted upon improved standards for working-class houses and site planning wherever possible. They also secured a provision in the act by which not more than twelve houses to the acre are allowed to be erected, a provision that will put an end to the land-sweating of the past and secure for the residents sunshine and air and garden amenities.

Mr. Aldridge is of opinion that it is inconceivable that the nation will permit the construction of two and a half million houses in the next fifteen years without giving full consideration to the possibilities of building up satellite towns and garden cities on the model of Letchworth and Welwyn. The government has already invested a million dollars in the Welwyn project. In these garden cities there is no private ownership in land. Land values and the profits from public utilities are looked to as the main source of revenue.