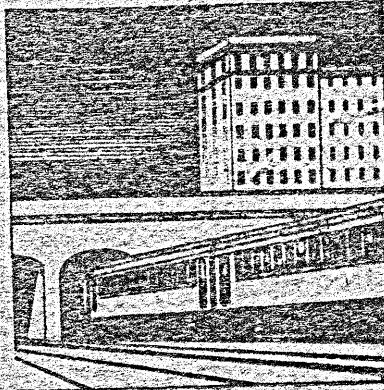
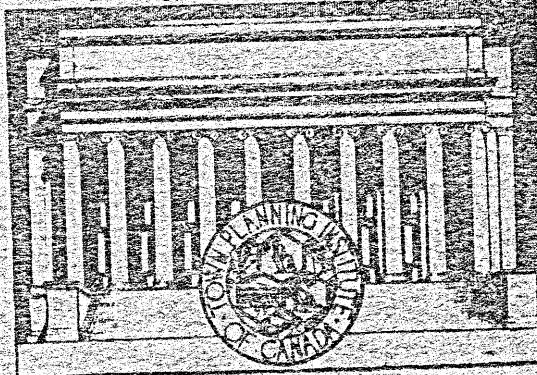


# TOWN PLANNING



## THE JOURNAL OF THE TOWN PLANNING INSTITUTE OF CANADA

FEBRUARY 1929

VOLUME VIII.

NO. 1

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# TOWN PLANNING

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## THE RETURN TO HOUSING

The distinctive feature of the British modern Town Planning movement was its close connection between housing and town planning. It may be said that the manifest need for the scientific treatment of the problem of housing for low-paid wage earners was the chief inspiration of the Town Planning movement in England. There has been some kind of town planning from the early stages of civilization. Everybody knows the story of Haussmann's work in Paris. In Germany town planning was well under way before the inception of the British movement. But the British movement distinctly began with the housing problem for families of very limited income. The housing conditions of low-paid wage earners in the United Kingdom—the heritage of the Industrial Revolution of the 18th & 19th centuries—were distressing beyond measure to men and women of social intelligence and social sympathy. Ebenezer Howard realized that something more fundamental was required than anything that had so far been done to eradicate a national evil that was bringing disastrous consequences to the fibre of national life. He wrote a shilling booklet advocating an entirely new method of building new towns and formed an educational association to convince the nation that his ideas were sound and practical. He gathered about him men of high technical qualifications such as Raymond Unwin and Barry Parker, and the direct issue of the movement was the development of a plan for a new town to be built on agricultural land costing not more than a thousand dollars an acre. The objective was a new town, providing facilities for all the activities of normal life but especially providing decent housing accommodation for families of limited income.

This objective has been attained in the two English Garden Cities where comfortable and modern cottages can be secured at a rental of ten shilling a week, or, say, ten dollars a month. This, of course, is the real problem. So many thousands of families have no margin to their income that the purchase of a house of any kind is absolutely beyond their means. They can consider nothing but a renting proposition.

On this continent the town planning side of the work has attracted most attention while the housing part of it has been largely neglected. It looks now as though this divorce between the two partners of the movement were to be adjusted in the City Planning Domestic Relations Court of this continent as our pages will show. There

is a strong movement in the United States to concentrate attention on better housing for low-paid wage earners. The Philadelphia Housing and Town Planning Conference, called for January 28-30, is presenting a program on which all subjects for dealing with the American problem are to be considered and no subject is to be regarded as heresy. The method adopted in Europe almost universally of utilizing national credit for the solution of the problem is to be given more hospitality at the Philadelphia Conference and there are tendencies, as will be seen by the data collected in the following pages, to experiment in the European method in the American field.

In Canada during the war period the Federal Government initiated a government housing scheme by which \$25,000,000 was advanced to the provinces for the building of houses for working families. It was to be expected that the outcome of such an unprecedented enterprise would not escape without some kind of building jobbery and in some few cases there was evidence of indifferent accomplishments by builders and contractors at very high prices. But something more than six thousand houses were erected and there are no evidences that any loss will accrue to the government. Money was loaned at five per cent spread over a period of 20 years. For the most part excellent houses were constructed that are standing the test of time; business was provided for builders and contractors who do not seem to have suffered any loss. Work was found for wage earners and some pleasant homes were provided to make family life possible. It is admitted that there was some jobbery and some default in payments, which irritated the authorities and led to the closing of the experiment when the fund was exhausted. The scheme however was something new and possibly it required something new in the science of management. In any case it did provide some new houses for an important section of the community. This was not being done by any other agency and it may be said that it is not being done at the present time. It may very well be that Canadian municipal and provincial authorities will decide that the lead given by the Federal Government was a wise lead and that the early difficulties in a scheme of national housing may be surmounted by better and more scientific management of such a project. In at least one province it is suggested that the immigration problem and the housing of immigrants are closely connected and that something will have to be done on a larger scale to provide houses for incoming residents as well as for the native population who cannot find decent housing accommodation at present within their means.

This question has been discussed at various annual conferences of the Town Planning Institute. There is promised that during the coming year a committee of the Vancouver branch of the Institute will present a report on the subject. We have therefore collected considerable data in the following pages describing the tendencies in the American Town Planning field in regard to this important subject. It will be seen that there are signs of breaking away from the American doctrine of Private Enterprise Alone, chiefly because private enterprise has failed to provide a solution of the problem.

# The Vancouver Civic Centre and English Bay Development Scheme

By J. F. D. TANQUERAY

Office of Vancouver Town Planning Commission

Vancouver possesses unsurpassed natural beauty in the proximity of mountains and of naturally beautiful water prospects—These should be incorporated in the design for a Civic Centre.

—Harland Bartholomew.

How important is the Civic Centre and what part does it play in the comprehensive City Plan? Technically the Civic Centre presents a minor problem in comparison with the other phases of the Plan, but as a medium by which Community interest in the Plan can be aroused, and subsequent investigation of the more technical aspects secured, its utility and importance should not be underestimated. The Civic Centre is good Planning Publicity.

To the orderly grouping of the buildings and arrangement of the grounds at the Chicago World's Fair in 1893 can be attributed the conception and realization of the tremendous Chicago Plan. Indeed the whole planning movement on this continent is traceable to that outstanding example of effective arrangement and design.

The Civic Centre is a gauge of citizen realization of the communal nature of the civic organism, and is indicative of civic ideals, culture and progress. It is the hall mark of the attainment of metropolitan status. Any development of this nature will cost money, but money so spent will be fully justified by the returns rendered in the consequent fostering of civic pride and community consciousness. The City too, may expect to benefit materially from the convenience engendered by the concentration of its public buildings in one locality, sufficiently extensive to permit of future additions and making adequate provision for their display, thereby adding dignity to the city and producing a favourable impression upon visitors and tourists. San Francisco, Denver and Los Angeles are synonymous with the term "Civic Centre" and much desirable press notice has been accorded these cities on this account.

Vancouver has been no exception in its experience of civic indifference and even opposition to the projects recommended by the Planning Commission, an attitude directly traceable to a lack of knowledge of the benefits and economies which will be achieved by the adoption of the Vancouver Plan.

A great deal of time and trouble has been taken by members of the Commission and their consultants in educating citizens and civic officials and there is no doubt that there are to-day abundant signs of an awakening interest on the part of the Community.

Planning publicity has consisted of talks on planning subjects to service clubs and citizen organizations, a constructive and energetic campaign in support of planning on the part of the local press and the enlistment of the interest of prominent individuals

by demonstration of the consultant's plans and methods.

The Civic Centre is no new project to Vancouver. Several sites have been suggested and, in the case of one, the so-called Central School site, competitive plans were prepared prior to the Great War. But it remained for Mr. Harland Bartholomew, the Commission's consultant, to realize the possibilities of a site situated north of False Creek, immediately west of Burrard Street. Mr. Bartholomew, in a report to the Town Planning Commission, recommended the adoption of this site for Civic Centre purposes and that recommendation has since been endorsed by the Commission. The Central School site had become fixed in the popular mind as the ultimate location for the Civic Centre, and a feeling that Burrard Street was too far removed from the centre of the city was intensified by the unfortunate reference to the new site as the "English Bay" site, this name being popularly used to designate the municipal beach, located several blocks further west. For these reasons mediocre public support was at first accorded this recommendation.

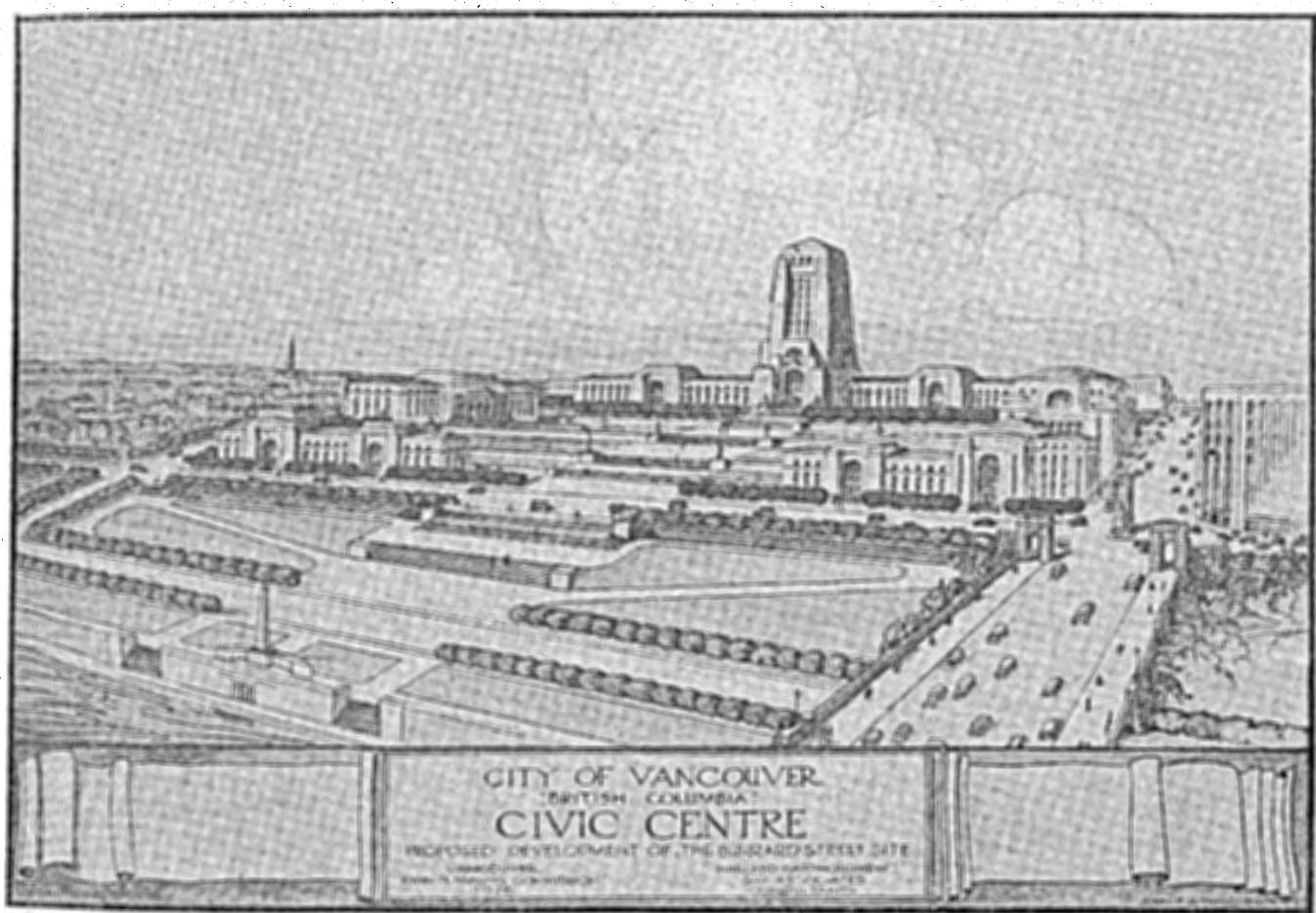
At the instance of the Commission from time to time, illustrations of the proposed site have been published in the press, together with articles stressing the advantages of a location "adjacent to, but not within the central business district." A site convenient of access to tourists and convention crowds and immune from interference with major street traffic (the Central School site was intersected by one of the proposed main traffic arteries), the parrying of the individualistic claims of different sections for other locations, and last but not least the changing of the name of English Bay to Burrard Street Site, have gradually changed the tenor of public opinion in favour of Mr. Bartholomew's recommendation. To-day, Burrard Street is established in the minds of citizens as the logical location.

The writer has had as his special charge the preparation of plans and drawings of the development of this site and the accompanying plate showing a suggested treatment was prepared with the advice and enthusiastic co-operation of Mr. G. L. Thornton Sharp, Vancouver Architect and Chairman of the Civic Art Committee of the Town Planning Commission. It should be emphasized that this drawing does not purport to represent any definite scheme, but has as its objective the demonstration of the wonderful possibilities of the site.

Having regard to the publicity value of the Civic Centre and the necessity of securing further public interest in the Burrard Street scheme, the writer had for some time sought an opportunity for the exhibition of these drawings and plans. Recently, with

the courteous co-operation of two of Vancouver's largest Departmental Stores, window displays, featuring the Civic Centre drawing and several show cards emphasizing some advantages of Planning and Zoning were placed on exhibition over a period of ten days. The result was more than gratifying, the windows being thronged by interested spectators, both by day and night and this often in spite of exceptionally inclement weather. It was noticeable that the majority stopped to read carefully the entire collection of show cards. These displays were coincident with the closing days of a keenly contested election campaign in which the issue was between the

erection of the buildings comprising the Civic Centre group. The scheme provides for the complete encirclement of English Bay by park development. Stanley Park, the English Bay Beach, Kitsilano Park and the two blocks immediately west of the reserve, recently acquired through the munificence of Mr. Harvey Haddon of London, England, are already city property. The acquisition of the northern foreshore, south of Beach and Pacific Avenues, between the English Bay Beach and Burrard Street, the Civic Centre site and the entire Kitsilano Reserve remain to be accomplished. The experience of Camden, N.J., in purchasing property for Civic Centre purposes is



old unordered civic policy and one of progressiveness, the Civic Centre and its early construction being one of the planks of the latter party. It should be a source of satisfaction to local planners that the latter policy was victorious. Comment on these displays has been flattering and there can be no doubt that planning interest has received considerable stimulation as a result.

The Vancouver Civic Centre scheme in its entirety is a project of very considerable magnitude, involving as it does the acquisition of considerable property and the construction of a bridge in which aesthetic considerations rival the utilitarian, as well as the

worthy of note. The Commissioners purchased, in addition to thirty-five acres required for the Civic Centre, seventeen acres of adjacent property. Two years later, three of these seventeen acres were disposed of at four times the amount of the original purchased price, with the important proviso that buildings erected thereon must meet with the approval of planning consultants in respect to their architecture. At this rate of sale the remaining surplus land is expected to pay for the entire Civic Centre and the harmonious character of surrounding development is assured.

The establishment of a Civic Centre is bound to

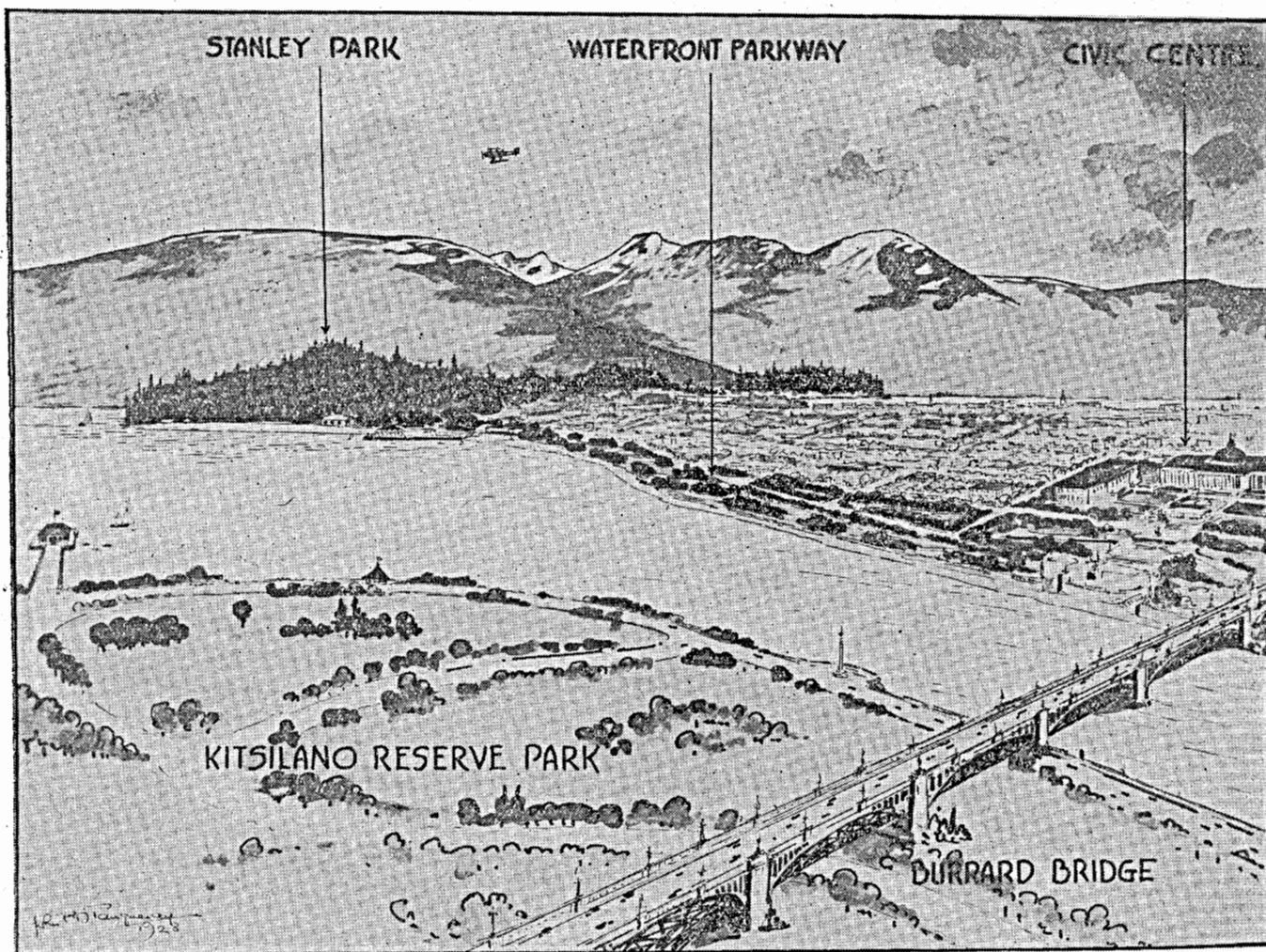
give rise to a substantial increase in property values in its vicinity and the purchase of adjoining blocks, as an investment, and in order to make possible the architectural control of abutting buildings should commend itself to the earnest consideration of the authorities.

The trend of the property market indicates a steady rise in property values in the area affected by these proposals and immediate negotiation for the acquisition of the property required, or, as has been suggested by some of the owners, the securing of options at existing favourable prices is of first

Nelson P. Lewis in his book "The Planning of the Modern City" says,

There are no structures other than the great public buildings, which attract more attention and the location and design of which are of greater importance than bridges.

The importance of the Burrard Bridge to the success of the scheme cannot be too emphatically stressed. The bridge will be the most conspicuous unit in the entire project and by acting as a screen will cut off the disfiguring industrial development to the east. It is not too much to say that the treat-



importance. Delay in this respect will jeopardize the full realization of the scheme and may even force its abandonment. A little vision to-day is capable of securing for Vancouver an asset, surpassing by far anything of the kind on the Pacific Coast. It has been suggested that this development is fifteen years in advance of its time. Mr. Bartholomew made his recommendations less than two years ago, and, in that time portions of the property affected have increased in value by more than fifty percent. Without question the time for action is now.

ment of this feature can make or mar the whole development. Mr. Bartholomew indicates his views on this point in no uncertain way in his report when he says,

If this Bridge is designed in a monumental manner and the shores of English Bay are acquired for Park and boulevard purposes, as they unquestionably should be, a group of public buildings could be designed in a setting probably unsurpassed in this or any other country. The early construction of the Burrard Bridge

seems assured. Once built, correctly or incorrectly located, beautiful or hideous, harmonious or otherwise, it is going to stay. Can the bridge location and design be properly decided without the preparation of plans to determine the general layout and architectural style of the entire scheme, of which the bridge is an integral part? It is the duty of the Town Planning Commission to find an answer to this question and to advise the City Council accordingly.

Considerations which are trivial, viewed in the light of the Ultimate scheme, should not be permitted to influence either the location or design of the bridge. The grant of \$200,000 by the Canadian Pacific Railway towards the cost of a bridge carrying a lower railway deck, upon which the Railway Company will have running rights over a long period of years, does not appear to warrant the erection of a bridge, at once unsightly and costly; nor does the avoiding of the British Columbia Electric Railway's temporary development on the Canadian Pacific Railway owned property within the Reserve excuse an unnecessarily long and awkward location for a single deck structure.

Mr. L. D. Tilton, Landscape Architect of the Bartholomew Organization, has condemned any scheme locating the bridge other than in direct line from end to end. Mr. Baynes, Chairman of the Vancouver Parks Board, holds similar opinions. It seems inexcusable too, that the eighty acres of proposed park on the Kitsilano Reserve should be traversed and divided in all directions by a multiplicity of Bridge approaches, rights of way and an isolated section of industrial development.

The two transportation companies concerned have been fortunate at the hands of Vancouver and her citizens and on this account might be expected to give favourable consideration to the abandonment of their properties on the Reserve in favour of the City. The retention by the Canadian Pacific Railway of their right of way may be presumed to be in anticipation of some future port and industrial development along the Kitsilano or Point Grey waterfront.

Public opinion and Zoning regulations make any such development something less than a remote possibility. The very character of the buildings, which house the British Columbia Electric Railway repair shops, proclaim their temporary nature. Expansion of the Transit Company with the growing city will necessitate their re-location on a more spacious site at no distant date. It is doubtful whether either the Canadian Pacific Railway or the British Columbia Electric Railway have any idea of what is proposed by the Commission for English Bay and its surroundings, and it is therefore not undue optimism to express an opinion that amicable negotiations between the Town Planning Commission and these two companies might have a result, the benefits of which, to the future Vancouver, are scarcely capable of estimation.

A study of the negotiations between the Chicago

Plan Commission and the Illinois Central Railroad, resulting in the relinquishment of riparian rights along Lake Michigan by that Company and the subsequent erection of the Field Museum, Soldiers' Field Stadium and the creation of more than 1500 acres of parks on the property so obtained, is worthy of the Commission's attention. This fine achievement should function as an inspiring and instructive precedent for that body in the institution of similar negotiations on behalf of the citizens of Greater Vancouver.

To some the achievement of so immense a scheme as that which has been discussed in the foregoing pages may seem impossible of attainment. It will be costly, but it will pay dividends as long as Vancouver stands. As has been shown it may even be made to pay for itself. It will bring Vancouver fame, a fame not excelled by our magnificent harbour, our position in the grain export world, or indeed by any one item in our City's long list of attractions. An immediate beginning should be made now. Delay will not only imperil the complete realization of the scheme, but may even prevent its eventual accomplishment. Can we afford to let this magnificent opportunity pass?

#### REGIONAL PLANNING FOR 357 MUNICIPAL UNITS

The Regional Planning Federation of the Philadelphia Tri-State District publishes a bulletin in which appears the following announcement:

Regional planning is a workable program for the orderly physical growth and progress of a large group of governmentally independent communities, which are inter-dependent when viewed from a social and economic standpoint.

The Regional Planning Federation of the Philadelphia Tri-State District was evolved in answer to the need of such a program. Through the voluntary co-operation of leading citizens, it came into being to help solve common regional problems in the 3850 square miles encompassed by the District.

Within this area are 357 separate governmental units, apportioned among the State of Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Delaware. These communities form a distinct social and economic unit. So interwoven are their welfare and progress, because of common transportation, park, water and numerous other problems, that unified action on the part of the entire group is essential to general accessibility and livability.

The Federation is at work upon a Regional Plan. It will be a guide for the co-ordinated improvement of the region as a whole. The Plan's producers must be sensitive to the real needs of the people whose environment it aims to improve.

## Fort Garry Town Planning Scheme

Canadian town planning is making slow but steady progress. The reasonableness of orderly planning bids fair to triumph over that primitive and reactionary obscurantism which will see nothing on a broad social—not to say patriotic and national—scale, but only the narrow interests of industrial lot-owners, isolated and divorced from the common good.

Every Canadian town planning project wisely launched and successfully started—we do not say completed because completion must be the work of many years—becomes a powerful educational influence, not only local but Dominion-wide. There is no argument comparable in potency to the simple statement "Others are doing it." If others are doing it there must be something in it—such is the logic of democratic movement.

We welcome therefore the following description of the Fort Garry town planning project from the pen of Mr. H. A. Bayne, who has been retained as consultant on the plan. Here is a community project that is being dealt with on scientific lines by socially-minded and scientifically-minded men. The objective is the orderly development of the community's domain as a contribution to local prosperity. People will not go to live in a place that is deadly dull and ugly as sin if they can help it. They are asking more of life than work and pay-day. They want to live where life is interesting, for themselves and their families. The modern planning movement is seeking to meet this new demand on life as it is seeking to give industry and commerce better opportunities of success.

### FORT GARRY TOWN PLANNING SCHEME, 1928

The Municipality of Fort Garry adjoins the City of Winnipeg on the South, and that portion of the Municipality lying between the Red River and the Pembina Highway (being the principal artery from the South into Winnipeg).

During the preparation of this Scheme every effort was exerted to interest the residents of the area. This was accomplished by the holding of public meetings to discuss certain aspects, the appointment of a committee consisting of one member from each street, whose duty it was to get the views of the residents on his street on certain items set out in a questionnaire.

The Council of the Municipality appointed a Commission to conduct the preparation of the Scheme, and the writer was retained by this commission to assist and advise in the preparation thereof.

The area was surveyed to locate all existing buildings, and also to determine the limits of a portion of the area that was subject to flooding in the spring owing to the rise in the Red River. This latter area has been set aside as

an Agricultural Area, in which no residences are allowed. The Municipality are prepared to exchange lots in the R. Districts for those owned privately in the A. District, and several of these exchanges have already been made. When the Municipality has title to all the land in the Agricultural District it might be converted into a park, for which purpose it is admirably fitted.

No changes in lay-out have been included in the Scheme but we intend to apply in the near future to the Municipal Public Utility Board of the Province to order certain plans that we propose to prepare to be substituted for the present plans of subdivision in certain areas.

By the Act under which the Board was created, powers were given it to cancel or amend registered plans, and "the Board may make such order as to the re-vesting of any land included in such plan of survey as it sees fit." "Any vesting order of the Board shall on registration operate as a transfer under the Real Property Act, of the lands under said act therein ordered vested." "The Board shall fix the amount of compensation payable therefor to the owner thereof, or may require such owner to accept by way of entire or partial compensation therefor, any other parcel of land, or any right or interest therein, whether in that subdivision or not, and may vest the same in such owner."

The above extracts from the Act will give an idea of the powers that have been conferred on the Board, and we propose to apply to have certain lots owned by the Municipality exchanged for other lots to enable certain improvements in the lay out to be made. The details of these will of course have to be gone into at the close of the building season as we do not wish to interfere with any plans of building that are to be carried out this summer.

The lots fronting on the Pembina Highway have been made the only portion of the area set aside for business, and to make this as attractive as possible we stipulate that the front wall of the commercial buildings shall be parallel to the Highway, this is to get away from the sawtooth effect that would result if the front wall were made at right angles to the side line of the lots. On the corner lots along the Highway nothing shall be built to a greater height than three feet above the sidewalk level on the triangle formed by the limits of the Highway and the intersecting street lines and a line drawn through points in same ten feet from their intersection. This is to improve the visibility for vehicles approaching the Highway.

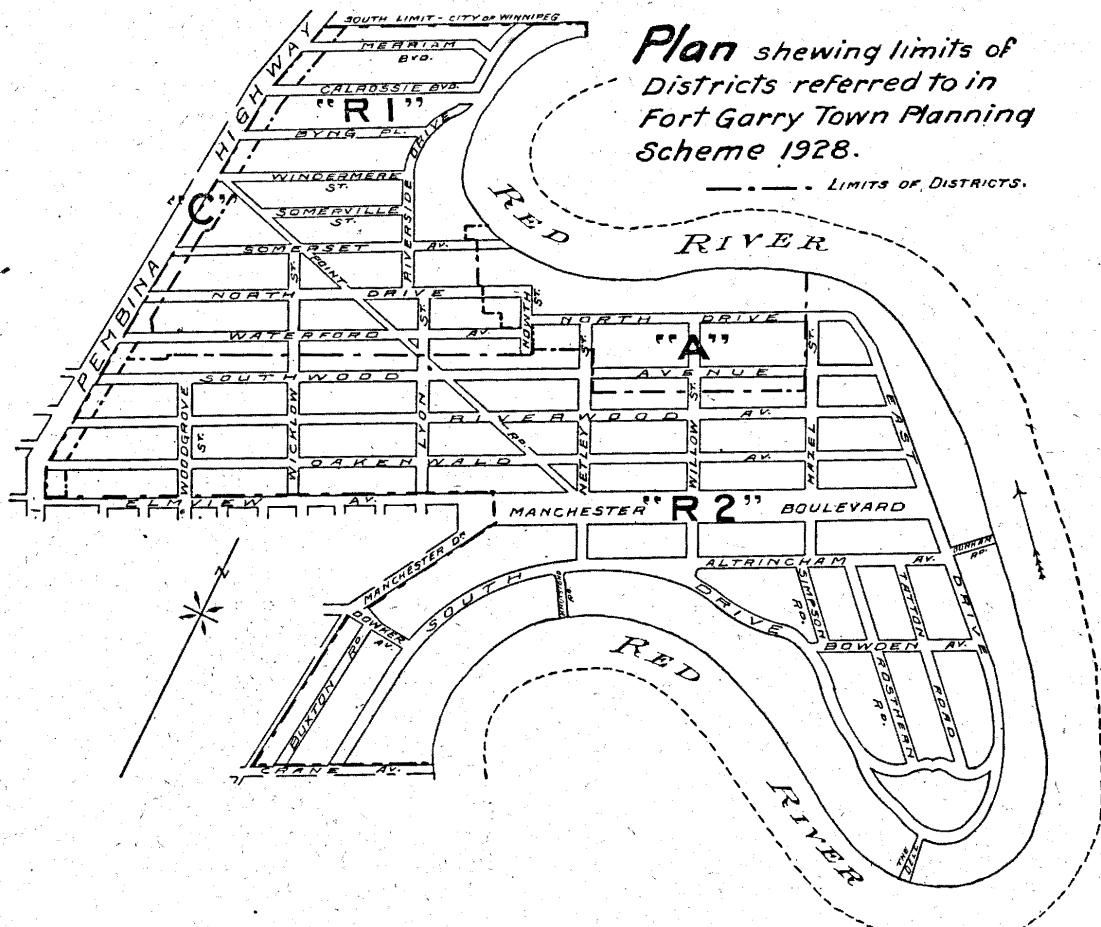
In the Residential Districts side building

lines have been fixed on the northerly or easterly side of the building site three feet from the limit and on the westerly or southerly side ten feet or fifteen feet in the R1 district and R2 districts respectively. This is done with the idea that each property will have sufficient light and air and will have the lawn on the sunny side of the house.

To insure that the fluctuations in the value of the dollar will not affect the kind of a residence that may be erected, the definition of Value has been made to read as follows: "Value means the cost of construction, based on the Index figure 147.8 of the wholesale prices of build-

the existence of this scheme, this information is to be stamped on the face of tax certificates issued on all properties situate within the area affected. Almost invariably a tax certificate is procured by the solicitor before closing out a deal.

There is also a clause that prevents the dividing of land into smaller parcels unless made in conformity with the provisions of the scheme, and allowing the Municipality to assess and collect taxes from the whole parcel disregarding any division that is not so made. This will prevent a person after building a residence on a parcel of land from disposing of a small portion



ing and construction materials for the month of January 1928, as shown in the Labour Gazette, published by the Department of Labour, Ottawa. This value for any year, shall vary according to the fluctuations of such Index figures for the month of January of the year of Construction."

This has been included on the suggestion of Mr. W. E. Hobbs who has advocated this method of controlling the minimum building value for some years past.

To secure as far as possible that purchasers of property within the area are made aware of

to a "straw man" from whom no taxes could be collected.

Most of the provisions of this Scheme are along the same lines as the schemes already in operation in other suburbs of Winnipeg, synopses of some of which have appeared in past numbers of the Journal.

It is possible in these limited areas to make zoning more complete than would be the case in a more built up area such as the City proper.

To enable builders and others interested to become familiar with the provisions of this scheme it has been printed together with a plan of the area included.

## TOWN PLANNING SITUATION IN QUEBEC CITY

The town planning situation in Quebec City is unique in Canada and practically on this continent. Unfortunate building conditions had developed concerning which a long succession of city councils had shown themselves indifferent. Quebec City, as the ancient capital of Canada, was the repository of building relics of historic value not only to the province of Quebec but also to the whole of Canada. But Quebec City could not live on its traditions alone. Modern life, business and commerce and modern building had to be provided for. This fact should have been recognized years ago and scientific planning should have been inaugurated with the purpose first of preserving historic buildings and other relics. These should have been given room to show themselves, should have been given the right to honorable and untroubled existence. And, on the other hand, provision should have been made for modern needs. Conservation of historic relics should have been adopted as a definite policy, but better street planning should also have been considered, and definite districts should have been set apart for modern buildings, residential, commercial and industrial.

These things were not done. A policy of *laissez-faire* and *laisser-aller* was adopted. Jumble building was the result. A spare piece of ground anywhere that could be turned into currency was sold and occupied by building "enterprise."

There came a revolt—from two sides from those who possessed historic sense and patriotic sentiment and saw their ancient city drifting to ruin and confusion and from those who wanted business efficiency and knew something of the value of modern town planning.

Quebec City is the seat of the provincial government. The provincial government decided that the ruin of Quebec City was not a matter that concerned the city council alone. An Act was passed appointing a Town Planning Commission to take in hand the improvement and preservation of Quebec City. The Commission was to be composed of five members—three appointed by the provincial government and two by the city of Quebec. With the appointment of the Commission immediate conflict arose as to the relative powers of the Commission and the City Council. Certain members of the council wished the council to be supreme, whatever happened to a "cause," and passed a motion limiting the powers of the Commission. The Commission announced their intention to resign. The City Council rescinded their resolution and the Commission held its first official meeting on January 2.

What happened was reported in the Quebec local papers. The accounts before us—from *The Chronicle Telegraph* and *Le Soleil*—seem to be models of careful newspaper writing. We quote from the English version as a matter of convenience:

Yesterday afternoon, for the first time since the extension of its powers to the whole of Champlain, St. Jean-Baptiste and Belvedere wards, the Quebec Town-Planning and Embellishment Commission met under the presidency of Senator P. J. Paradis and arrived at some important decisions concerning the work which it is just starting in the Ancient Capital. Four requests for building permits were given a cold reception by the Commission. Two of them were refused, a third was left over for further consideration, while in the case of the fourth, the Commission simply refused to give it their consideration because it was for a building which was started three or four weeks ago.

The meeting was attended by Commissioners Paradis, Lt.-Col. William Wood, A. R. Decary, J. E. Tanguay and alderman W. Lacroix and City Clerk F. X. Chouinard, secretary of the Commission. It was decided that in future, as far as possible, the Commission will meet every Monday to dispose of the work which may have accumulated during the previous week. Three members will form a quorum.

### Must Be Supplied

The building inspectors' department at the City Hall has been notified by the Commission that henceforth copies of the complete plans of all building projects must be supplied to the Commission along with each request for a permit, while similar copies must be placed in the hands of the city archivist. Each request for a building permit must be accompanied by the written report of the building inspector, showing whether the plans are in accordance with the building regulations of the city.

Regarding the four building permits that the Commission was called upon to consider yesterday, two of them, for Belvedere ward, were not in accordance with the by-laws regarding the distance of buildings from the sidewalk. They were consequently refused. Action on another permit was suspended pending further study, while in the fourth case, the Commission not only refused to give the demand their consideration, but recommended that, should the work already done on the project be found to be contrary to the building regulations, action be taken against the builder to force him to remove the structure.

In the case of the permit on which a final decision was deferred, the builder sought permission to construct an outside stairway on the front of the house. The feature of the proposed new building did not meet with the approval of the Commission and the applicant was advised to alter his plans accordingly.

**Not Their Fault.**

Cognizance was taken of the adoption by the City Council of by-law 115-B, regarding the territorial jurisdiction of the Commission and an entry was made in the minutes of the meeting to record that if the Commission had been delayed in entering upon its duties, this was due to the embroilment that had occurred in the City Council regarding its power. The note also records that it was at the personal request of Mayor Auger, that the Commission did not resign en block as a result of the embroilment already referred to.

*Le Soleil* concludes its accounts as follows:

Ont le voit, la première séance de la Commission d'Urbanisme n'a pas été tenue en vain. Beaucoup de travail défini a été accompli et tout indique que les experts qui la composent solutionneront une foule de problèmes importants, tant dans le domaine de la construction que dans celui de la conservation du cachet historique de la vieille Capitale.

The time seems to have come in Quebec city, as it is coming in other cities, when the city council is asked to realize that if it will not take proper steps to control disorderly building and to preserve values for all building the community must find some other means to achieve these ends.

**VANCOUVER BRANCH ANNUAL MEETING**

The Annual Meeting of the Vancouver Branch of the Town Planning Institute of Canada was held at the University Club, 810 Robson Street, on Monday evening, 17th December, 1928, preceded by the Annual Dinner in the Club dining room.

The dinner was presided over by the Branch chairman, Mr. W. H. Powell and the following members were present:—Messrs. J. W. Allan, W. E. Bland, H. A. E. Browne, F. E. Buck, W. A. Clark, E. A. Cleveland, H. S. Cowper, J. Davidson, A. E. Foreman, G. F. Fountain, A. G. Harvey, E. B. Hermon, H. L. McPherson, R. Martin, J. C. Oliver, J. A. Paton, H. L. Seymour, G. L. T. Sharp, A. G. Smith, Mrs. Steeves, W. G. Swan, J. F. D. Tanquerry, J. T. Underhill, J. A. Walker and A. S. Wootton.

The following guests were also present, either at the dinner or at the discussion immediately following:—His Worship Mayor-Elect, W. H. Malkin, Mr. T. Kirk, M.L.A., Alderman-Elect W. C. Atherton, H. J. DeGraves, Dr. R. N. Fraser, W. H. Lembke, W. Loat, G. C. Miller and Messrs. T. V. Berry, Hawkins and C. Sangster, together with members of the press.

The main topic of the evening was introduced by Mr. E. A. Cleveland, who gave a *résumé* of what Town Planning has done in some of the cities of the Old World, particularly in Paris and Vienna. Coming to the New World, he told, among other things, of the work in Chicago in transforming an otherwise monotonous gridiron of brick and stone into an at-

tractive city by the judicious use of parks and boulevards.

Mr. W. E. Bland carried on the subject by telling what Town Planning is doing for the City of Vancouver. He showed how the three essentials—health, happiness and prosperity are assured the community if a properly executed plan is carried out.

Following Mr. Bland, Mr. A. E. Foreman spoke on the value of a comprehensive plan, one of them being that in the near future the Pacific Coast cities will be rivals for the trade of the Orient. The most efficient city, he said, will be the most successful in this rivalry, and the most efficient city will be the one which is best planned. Mr. H. L. Seymour, Mr. A. G. Smith, Mr. G. L. T. Sharp, Mr. T. Kirk and Reeve Lambke, of Point Grey, also made short addresses.

The Mayor-Elect, Mr. W. H. Malkin, congratulated the Vancouver Town Planning Commission on the splendid work which was now nearing completion and promised sympathetic cooperation with all those civic organizations which were striving for the betterment of the city. He also told of the feeling of himself and his council that it was urgently necessary to build a new City Hall as soon as possible, and gave his considered reasons why it should be erected on the Central School Site instead of in the proposed Civic Centre on Burrard Street.

The retiring Chairman, Mr. Powell, outlined the work accomplished during the past year.

The following officers were declared elected for the present year: Chairman, Mr. J. Davidson; Vice-Chairman, Mr. H. L. McPherson; Secy-Treasurer, Mr. G. F. Fountain; Directors, Mr. A. G. Harvey, Mr. J. A. Paton.

The suggestion was made that interest in the subject of "Housing" should be revived and an endeavour made to have a report ready for presentation at the next Annual Conference of the Institute.

It was further suggested that the Branch might get in communication with the American National Conference on Housing and City Planning, with a view to holding its annual meeting in Vancouver.

The presence of the Mayor and six members of the City Council was regarded as a good omen for future sympathetic cooperation in town planning activities between the City Council and the Town Planning group. There is no doubt that the educational struggle for town planning method has been won in Greater Vancouver. The function of the local Branch of the Town Planning Institute in bringing about this happy achievement may well be noted by other Canadian cities.

**DIRECTOR OF TOWN PLANNING FOR NEW ZEALAND**

Mr. J. W. Mawson, son of T. H. Mawson, whose planning work in Canada will be known to many of our readers, has been appointed Director of Town Planning for New Zealand. For some years during the earlier part of the war, Mr. J. W. Mawson maintained an office in Vancouver and was associated with his father in town planning work in Greece.

## Tendencies in American Housing

### IMPORTANT HOUSING AND CITY PLANNING CONFERENCE AT PHILADELPHIA

At this time of writing the American Housing and City Planning Conference at Philadelphia—dated for January 28-30—is in the future and we can only comment on the unusually interesting program prepared for the delegates. In this program there is a commendable attempt to get away from academic form and to achieve something “brighter” in the way of a bill-of-fare. We note the hospitality to ideas that are European rather than American in such topics as “Is Government Aid Necessary in House Financing?” which probably means house financing for low-paid wage-earners or such families as were described at the International Conference in Paris as “the very poor.” European nations with practical unanimity have answered this question in the affirmative and England, with a conservative government in power, has provided more than a million houses for working families in response to a manifest human need which could not be met and was not being met in any other way. According to the American author of “The New Day in Housing” housing for American working families is still “the unsolved problem of the American city” and achievements so far are described as “a pitiful record for the richest country in the world.”

The fact seems to be that the doctrine of private enterprise as a solution for the American housing problem is being punctured from within. The Michigan Housing Association of Detroit has declared that “there is no way of solving this problem except through public credits” and its organizers believe that by “eliminating the high cost of financing and taking advantage of quantity buying and mass production we shall produce homes at a cost not exceeding 40% of present selling prices on the deferred payment plan. Figures from bids are available to substantiate this conclusion.” It is also interesting to note that so long ago as 1920 the Philadelphia Chapter of the American Institute of Architects declared that houses for those who earn low wages can no longer be built anywhere in the world at a cost which will permit them to be sold or rented without loss. At that time we borrowed the following paragraph from *The Canadian Engineer*:

The Philadelphia Chapter of the American Institute of Architects, a body to which no taint of radicalism has ever attached, has lately declared that houses for those who earn low wages can no longer be built anywhere in the world at a cost which will permit them to be sold or rented without loss, and that it is unquestionably true that an industrial system, or even any particular industry, which fails to make possible adequate shelter, food, clothing and recreation for all of its operatives is unworthy to exist.

## for Low-Paid Wage-earners

The Chapter proposes that housing for those earning low wages or salaries be legalized as a public utility; that the manufacture of this class of homes as a profitable industry should cease in theory as it has already ceased in fact; and that the Government, national and local, should at once adopt measures making possible the supply of this prime necessity of life.

The author of “The New Day in Housing,” Mr. Louis H. Pink, member of the New York State Housing Board, closes his book with a significant statement:

Knowing that typhoid and tuberculosis and infant mortality thrive on insanitary conditions, that children are deprived of a fair chance of health and happiness, that young men and women, with the urge of youth and adventure in their veins, are in greater danger and temptation, that of all the great nation-wide curses this almost alone has been passed by un-noticed, like the blind beggar with his cup—what are we going to do about it? The great City of New York, which has at last set out to meet the issue, has not a single department or official responsible for working out or carrying on a practical, constructive, continuous plan of operation. Every one does a little talking at opportune times, usually before elections, but no one is responsible for failure. Could water supply, or sewerage, or transportation, or education be successfully managed in such fashion? None of our other large cities are very different. There is no adequate machinery.

The removal of outworn and unfit areas—no one likes the expressive but misused word “slum”—is primarily the task of the cities in which they fester. If the cities are unable to do the job, the state must aid; and if the assistance given by the state is not sufficient, the nation must share the responsibility. In England the slum is considered a national menace. Parliament supervises and helps pay for its eradication. And this is the case in most European countries.

Apparently Mr. Pink is concentrating his hope of progress upon the New York State Housing Law of 1926 which is in essence an appeal to limited dividend housing companies to take the problem in hand. So far the response does not seem to have been very encouraging.

However, the Philadelphia Conference shows no disposition to muzzle discussion or penalize heresy in favor of a national doctrine of “private enterprise alone.” The program invites discussion of slum clearance policy, whether this can be done by private effort or must rely upon the powerful expedient of government machinery, national, state, or municipal; and the national service of building and loan associa-

tion is to be considered. Under "Building for the Motor Age" the interesting Radburn project will doubtless have the floor and Mr. Noulan Cauchon of Ottawa is to expound his doctrine of hexagonal planning, with its provision for interior playgrounds for children. The capacity of working men to pay for rooms at American prices,—\$14. per room per month according to a New York delegate at the Paris Conference (though \$9.00 a room has been achieved in certain cases)—and the rights of children to shelter and play are to be discussed under the title "Home and Its Problems." "The Re-planning of Great Cities" is a subject big enough for a whole program and the new subject, ventilated at the International Conference, "How shall Regional Plans be Made Efficient?" will challenge the ingenuity of the American group. New methods of building, in the shape of steel frame houses and the use of new materials intended to lower the cost of housing for the "very poor" are to be discussed, and in the ironical title "Let's Throw Away the Ultra-Violet Rays," some plea will emerge for sunshine rays, excluded it is said to the extent of 99% in much of the present-day housing for working people in large cities. Under the title "The City of Dreadful Height" the "glory" of New York, that is, the "skyscraper," is to be examined anew.

Altogether a quite fascinating program! Probably there will be some courageous delegates who will not quite agree with the author of "The New Day in Housing" who affirms on Page 8 of his new book on the housing situation in the United States: "with the worst housing in the world we have never had a slum population." Perhaps the next program may invite the shade of Jacob Riis to discuss the question "When is a slum not a slum?"

#### THE NEW DAY IN HOUSING

Mr. Louis H. Pink, member of the New York State Housing Board and practical student of the housing problem in the United States has published a volume entitled "The New Day in Housing." Mr. Pink, while professionally a lawyer feels the social urgency of the housing problem for low-paid wage-earners, in New York particularly, and, distressed by the slow progress in this movement in New York, has visited widely on the European continent to see what other countries are doing. He has lived in the east side tenement district of New York and has held, or is holding still, positions of responsibility in various organizations intended to provide lodging or housing accommodation for the social derelicts of New York or for families of very limited income. He is anxious that the New York State Housing law of 1926 shall be accepted and adopted by the housing reformers of New York and believes that if it were given a fair trial it would do for the State of New York at least something in the direction of better housing for working families. Mr. Pink has therefore for his equipment practical knowledge of the problem both

in his own country and abroad and has that best equipment of all, civilized sympathy with the victims of uncivilized housing and a conviction that the test of future civilization will be measured by its willingness and capacity to deal with this most serious problem of modern life.

His book will prove a valuable desk book for all who are concerned with this problem and will be very helpful and instructive to all open-minded persons who are willing to learn something from the experience of others. In the British Isles Mr. Pink seems to have concentrated most of his attention on the Garden Cities and the housing work of the London County Council. Some of his comments on the Garden City movement seem to us superficial and misleading and of the National Housing movement in England, which has resulted in the building of 1,150,000 houses, he gives virtually no information.

About one-third of the book is devoted to an itinerary of the housing projects in Belgium, Holland, Germany and Austria and this section, though by no means complete, will prove very useful to those students who have only time for a hurried glance at these significant endeavours to solve the problem. The knowledge that the term "Garden City" has a special and scientific connotation, implying public ownership of land and the agricultural belt, does not however prevent Mr. Pink from describing certain interesting American projects as Garden Cities, which he must know, is misleading.

Sometimes we find his logic rather unsatisfactory. "Next to nothing," he says, "has been done in the United States to meet the real problem of the housing of low-paid wage earners. How pitiful the record for the richest country in the world and in many respects the most advanced!" Yet on page 8 he declares that America has never had a slum problem. "With the worst housing in the world we have never had a slum problem." One is inclined to ask, with some knowledge of New York, When is a slum not a slum? Curiously Mr. Pink's last message is that:

The slum must be driven from its entrenchments. The task seems huge because we have never intelligently or even seriously grappled with it. Public interest is required, money is required, adequate legal machinery is required, leadership is required. When these are provided, the death-knell of a national curse, almost as black as that of slavery, will have been sounded.

He is profoundly impressed and disturbed by the fact that, in the richest country in the world, decent living accommodation is denied to vast multitudes of people and this disturbance, this sincere "social concern" we regard as the most potent influence destined to solve the American housing problem. It is surely a problem in humanism as well as in economics. So long as attention is concentrated upon the sacredness of profit for some unknown people who take no part in the work until the word "profit" is mentioned

ed the problem will never be solved. Says Mr. Pink:

The movement must be properly organized properly led, reasonably aided by city, state and nation. The sale of Liberty Bonds shows what can be done if public spirit and patriotism is properly appealed to. The trouble is that, on this side of the water, housing has always been a side issue, kicked about like the backyard cat. It has never been taken seriously. We have played at it but never taken up the task as a great patriotic and business obligation worthy of serious thought and endeavor.

With all the wealth and power and vigor of the United States we are woefully behind in providing decent, respectable, sanitary, cheerful, livable, dwellings for those who toil. The countries of Europe, painfully and slowly rising from the chaos and economic disarrangement of the World War, are leading the way, giving the challenge, accomplishing vastly, while we falter and fail to catch the great vision or clearly see the way.

Europe has found its way out. The formula is direct construction by the government, liberal long-term loans of public funds, and such subsidies as may be necessary to secure results. It is a costly remedy, but cheaper than neglect. It gets the job done. In the United States we are at sixes and sevens. We are still in the discussion stage. We would like to do something but don't know just what and don't want to pay the price whatever it is. Housing reformers are as far apart as the poles.

It is a problem in humanism, which is the real test of civilization.

Et ne dites point (says Anatole France) que les riches ne doivent rien aux pauvres. Je ne crois pas qu'un riche le pense. C'est sur l'étendue de la dette que commencent les incertitudes. Et l'on n'est pas pressé d'en sortir. On aime mieux rester dans le vague.

We find the chapter entitled "Labor Enters the Field" extremely interesting. While the plenipotentiaries are still discussing, labor groups in the United States are building large blocks of apartment houses; "tenements" seems scarcely adequate to express their excellence and efficiency.

One of the most interesting parts of the book is the account of the revolution in architectural form in some European countries as a consequence of the national housing movement.

But we find the psychology of the writer as interesting as any of the facts and documents provided. He is obviously hampered and distressed by the national doctrine of Private Enterprise Alone, while his real convictions break out, here, there and everywhere, and his real convictions seem to us overwhelmingly in favor of some form of state credit and scientific management as the only solution of this grave problem in the United States.

There is a vast fund of irony in this question.

Nothing is done by private enterprise to provide decent housing for low-paid wage earners. The difficult work is assumed by a group of public-spirited men and women and becomes a national movement, essentially due to public enterprise. Then private enterprise appears and at once begins to inflate the prices of everything so that, as in England, the whole scheme comes to the verge of ruin. In every European country where housing has been adopted as a national responsibility a vast amount of business has been created as a result of public enterprise, for which the trade beneficiaries have done practically nothing except sell their goods at the highest prices they could obtain.

But the experience of a group of nations should be instructive. If it is finally decided on this continent that private enterprise will not and cannot take this grave problem in hand and that state management of the problem is the only solution, the next great problem will be to see that the movement is not bled by business adventurers who have no social interest in the subject. This is a difficult task, for somebody will be sure to be found bawling the word "Socialism!" if it is dealt with in a business-like way. But it is not an impossible task. The cost of family dwellings in England has been reduced from \$5,000 to half that price within the course of two or three years. Before the National Housing Movement terminates, if it ever does terminate, it is likely that another million houses will be built. The seriousness with which it is treated may be gathered from the recent report of Sir George Newman, chief medical officer of the department of health. In commenting on this report *The Canadian Engineer* says:

In this latest report Sir George Newman shows how public health has now become one of the supreme tasks of government of every country. It is not, however, he states, merely a matter of instituting public health departments, centrally and locally, nor yet of establishing sanitation, though that is of primary importance. It is a problem of permeating the whole art of government with the established knowledge of science and inspiring it with humanism. "For this business, unlike the manufacture of a motor-car, is no mechanical enterprise, no rule-of-thumb method. It is a factor or instrument in the organic evolution of man; it is a biological process, and it demands all the faculties and powers of man's body and mind to its accomplishment. From Aristotle to Darwin two permanent truths lie always in the background, the inborn nature of living things, and their cultivation by nature."

Discussing sickness and invalidity, Sir George Newman gives significant details regarding the loss that sickness involves. He states that in England and Wales, there was lost to the nation in the year, among the insured population only and excluding the loss due to

sickness for which sickness or disablement benefit is not payable, the equivalent of twelve months' work of nearly 590,000 persons. Moreover, as he points out, it is not only the working equivalent of nearly 590,000 persons that was involved, but also the labor and expense entailed in their care during incapacitation.

#### STATE AIDED HOUSING PROPOSED FOR MICHIGAN

The September number of *Housing*, that excellent repository of world news on housing and town planning, published by the American National Housing Association and edited by Mr. Lawrence Veiller, gives an account of the organization of the Michigan Housing Association, whose object, we are informed, in plaintive tones, is definitely to secure the use of public credit for the financing of small homes. Everywhere it is admitted that small homes, that is, homes for families of small incomes, are not being provided by private enterprise to any extent, but *Housing* does not like any project for using public credit to supply the need and calls some of the propaganda connected with this movement "largeiy window dressing."

The movement is sponsored by Dr. S. J. Herman of Detroit, who obviously regards the matter as a public health measure. A medical man, with first class knowledge of the terrible effects of bad housing, who will throw himself into such an unpopular cause seems to us to merit very great respect indeed. *Housing* quotes from the Prospectus the following statements:

It is admitted that there is no way of solving this problem of financing except through public credits and establishing regional home loan funds, for which a constitutional amendment is required. Then, the legislature will provide for the creation of (1) Regional Home Loan Commissions and (2) Housing Corporations.

1. The Power of said Commissions will be limited to:

- (a) Administration of home loan fund.
- (b) Issuing home loan bonds.
- (c) Loaning the proceeds to Housing Corporations.
- (d) Looking after security and repayment of said loans.

These Commissions will be legal instrumentalities of the regions creating them and will be permitted to pledge the faith and credit of the regions.

2. Housing corporations will be distinct corporate entities, the same as any other business corporation, and may do the following:

- (a) Buy land and develop same.

These corporations will be responsible for their own acts, and the communities in which they are located will not be responsible for their operations.

Officers of both Home Loan Commissions and Housing Corporations will be appointed by

proper public authority and will serve without compensation.

#### Development and Construction of Community

Housing Corporations will engage the executive personnel, who will purchase parcels of land of not less than 200 acres, and will build communities of not less than 1,000 homes each. All purchases will be made for cash and in large quantities, and construction will be on a mass production basis. By eliminating the high cost of financing and taking advantage of quantity buying and mass production, we shall produce homes at a cost not exceeding 40% of present selling price on deferred payment plan. Figures from bids are available to substantiate this conclusion.

The planning of the community will receive every practical and aesthetic consideration, both as to land and architecture. All houses will be finished in brick, stucco, or other permanent materials, and careful thought will be given to avoid duplication. Modern improvements, including bath and central heat, are provided—no house containing less than two bedrooms.

#### Administration

The local housing corporation will avoid interference with independent community management, but will stand ready to give helpful suggestion and co-operate to further the success of the community plan. Administration of the community will be entirely in the hands of its residents, who will select its own Board of Directors for various departmental duties.

While being subject to the laws and regulations of the city or country in which they are located, they will be encouraged as far as possible to develop a local association for all administrative purposes, in order to engender a spirit of neighborliness, co-operation and civic solidarity.

#### Provisions for Re-Payment

Assuming that some of the families will have no cash available for a down payment, a method has been devised which will enable the corporation to sell one-fourth of the homes without cash payments, one-fourth at 5%, one-fourth at 7½%, one-fourth at 10%, and those deficient in their payments to make up the 10% required by contributing their labor at odd hours within the community, and without interference with their normal occupation. Monthly payments will include interest, taxes, amortization, fire insurance, group-life, health and accident insurance, community expense for recreation, entertainment, park system, welfare, etc. In case of death or total disability of head of family, insurance policy will provide full pre-payment and transfer of property to beneficiary without encumbrance.

By giving the housing corporation wide discretionary power, it is hoped that the benefits accruing under this plan may be limited to the lower wage and salary earners (preference to families with children). A large waiting list is anticipated, and care will be required in choosing the personnel of the residents to assure a reasonable amalgamation of various racial and national stocks, and a smooth functioning of civic ideals and aspirations.

#### Practicality of Plan

To determine this point the plan was actually worked out in detail just as though building were to start on the morrow. A community was laid out from a given piece of land, the price of which was definitely established. Bids were obtained for all utilities, including the complete construction of the homes and the development of parks and playgrounds. These bids were bona fide, and each bidder agreed to furnish a surety bond for the completion of the project within two years. In this way a positive check-up on all phases of the undertaking was obtained, detailed results of which are available.

Mr. Veiller adds:

Whether the voters of the state of Michigan are ready to take this step of taxing themselves so that a limited group in the community may have the benefits of cheap home financing, remains to be seen.

It may be pointed out that practically all the European nations have agreed to tax themselves to a very low extent as the discharge of a debt to past social neglect of the housing of families with small income and that in Great Britain the tax on the community has been limited to a penny in the pound; that the beneficiaries of the million houses that have been provided do not receive a gift but a boon for which they pay in the course of time; that an immense amount of business and work has been provided in European countries in consequence of state housing, and that other public services such as 5 cent fares in New York and hospitals and schools are supported by taxation, in many cases of people who do not use these services. On one side is the argument for assistance in the provision of a great public need, which touches very intimately the health and happiness of millions of people and on the other side the argument that decent housing for working families must not be provided unless somebody makes a pot of money out of the job.

The irony is that if nothing is done by private enterprise no money is being made by private enterprise, while a good deal of money is made by industrialists in consequence of a public housing movement, and jobless men are found work to do.

A million decent houses with modern equipment for interior comfort, sunlight and air and play room for children do contribute to the social civil-

ization of perhaps 5 million people and do reduce the charges on the tax-payers that follow ill-health and social disorder. The European delegates at the International Conference found it difficult to understand the American attitude to this problem. Senator Vinck of Brussels, a distinguished student of the subject is reported as saying:

Most of us agree that intervention on behalf of the very poor is necessary, but I am astonished to find that the reporter from the United States does not share this opinion. Mr. Purdy advocates building for those who can afford new houses and letting the poor occupy the houses which thus become vacant. I think the Congress will agree that the community should regard the housing of the very poor as an obligation on their part in the same way as public health and education.

In Belgium we try to solve the problem in various ways: by gradually replacing slums by more sanitary dwellings, by making rents so low that even the poor can pay them and by numerous measures of public and private relief.

This problem will not be settled, here on this continent or elsewhere by *a priori* minds. Pragmatism, the doctrine that the test of a thing is in finding out how it works, is supposed to be an especially American doctrine in the sphere of philosophy. The American doctrine of Private Enterprise Alone does not seem to have produced any sensational result in the housing of poor families. An American writer says:

Our government has been and will continue to be compelled to pay in the impaired vitality and health of a large part of its people for the failure in coming to grips with this situation on a large scale.

#### MUNICIPAL HOUSING PROJECT AT NEWARK, N.J.

The City of Newark, N.J. is to embark on a municipal housing project for low-paid wage earners to be financed by the Prudential Insurance Company, if legislative authority can be obtained for such a procedure. The Prudential Insurance Company has signified its willingness to make an initial investment of from one million to three million dollars for the purpose provided the city will attend to the management of the project and that the right of condemnation of insanitary property—to meet the possibility of exorbitant compensation demands by the owners of such property—be conceded to the management. The Insurance Company has declared that if the project is properly safeguarded on these lines it will not expect a return on the investment of more than 5 or 6 per cent. The Mayor and City Commission of Newark appear to be interested in the project and have agreed to have the necessary legislative bills drafted for submission to the state legislature during the present year. It is suggested that the housing project take the form of low-priced apartments constructed around the 4 sides of a block, leaving room

for an interior playground. As our readers will remember, this idea of the interior playground is an important feature of Mr. Cauchon's scheme for hexagonal planning.

#### TENDENCIES IN AMERICAN WORKING-CLASS HOUSING

A meeting of American housing reformers, called by Mr. Harold Buttenheim, was held at Cincinnati in October, to promote a nation-wide study of the housing problem—by which we understand the housing problem for families of such limited income that houses for sale at present commercial prices are beyond their reach and decent accommodation in rented quarters equally out of the question. Mr. Buttenheim presented a statement to the meeting in which he defined the terms of his reference and suggested different means of approach. The following is a summary of his statement:

##### Away With The Slums

Believing that the time has come for a vigorous, nation-wide crusade to abolish the slums and to provide decent and adequate housing for every family in America, the following suggestions are offered for discussion as to specific objects to be achieved:

1. To arouse the American people to the magnitude and gravity of the housing problem for that large percentage of our working population for whom adequate and decent accommodations are not now available.
2. To stimulate local study and action to the end that each community may solve its problem by the methods best adaptable to local conditions.
3. To determine what can best be done to provide homes rather than slums for families whose earning power is too low to pay an economic rent for even the low-cost housing hereinafter suggested.
4. To bring about the complete demolishing of the worst of the slum areas and replacing by small parks or playgrounds, or by modern houses or tenements with adequate open space.
5. To stimulate the renovation of such existing bad housing as is worth remodeling or repairing.
6. To secure the enactment of state housing laws and other legislation, or constitutional amendments where needed, to set higher standards for housing or for such purposes as:

- a. To give the state or other governmental units the right to issue housing bonds and to loan such funds, with careful restrictions, to non-profit housing corporations.
- b. To give municipalities the right to condemn slum property, or land for low-cost housing, with or without the use of excess condemnation.

c. To permit partial exemption of taxation on all houses, or on houses meeting certain standards.

7. To improve local housing laws, building codes and zoning ordinances, so as to prevent needlessly intensive development and to promote safety from fire.

8. To study and encourage methods of wholesale production and low-cost financing of well-built workingmen's homes.

9. To strengthen municipal control over the layout and development of real estate subdivisions.

10. To promote the organization of local limited dividend housing corporations, and to encourage men of means to invest in low-cost housing enterprises.

11. To strengthen local building and loan associations.

12. To encourage new building of workingmen's homes in the fringes of cities to an extent which will help depopulate the slums.

13. To enlist the cooperation of women's clubs, garden clubs and other local groups which might promote the planting and beautification of home grounds.

14. To be ready in any period of serious business depression to stimulate new construction and building repairs as a means of providing employment.

The main discussion, as appears, turned on paragraph 6 with its suggestion of some form of state aid. It is significant however, that this idea, so sternly unwelcome for many years in the United States, is occupying the field of American discussion with much more persistency than in the past.

The meeting authorized Mr. Buttenheim to appoint a committee for the study of ways and means of which he himself was to be chairman. We believe that something more will be heard of this effort to deal with a serious problem in American social economy.

#### NEW YORK HOUSING

Associated Press by Direct Wire. New York, Jan. 16.—Six members of one family lost their lives in a fire that swept a five-storey tenement in East 112th street last night, a few hours after they had moved into the house.

Five other persons, one of them a fireman, suffered from smoke and burns. One hundred families were driven to the street from the burning building and two adjoining dwellings.

Three of the dead were identified as Mrs. Justina Martinez, 45 years old, and two young grandchildren. The three other bodies were not identified but the children's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Dionisio Esposito, and another child were missing.

The cause of the fire had not been determined.

The blaze started in a bloomer factory in the basement. Marcus Greenspan, owner of the factory,

had rigged up a burglar alarm on the second floor and the heat caused the alarm to ring. By the time firemen arrived the building was a mass of flames and persons on the top floors were cut off from escape. Members of five families were carried across roof tops and down ladders.

Only a few people knew that the new family had just moved into the building. The fact that they were tired from their labors in moving caused them to

sleep unusually sound, firemen believed, and they did not hear the alarm until it was too late.

The bodies of the two women were found near doorways. The body of one little girl was found clasped in her grandmother's arms. Police said the adults had undoubtedly died trying to save the children.

About 500 tenants were driven into the street in their night clothing.

## News and Notes

### SOUTH VANCOUVER TO BE PLANNED

Mr. Harland Bartholomew and Associates, City Planning experts, who have just completed the Plan of Vancouver, have been invited by the amalgamated City Council of Greater Vancouver, now comprising Vancouver, South Vancouver and Point Grey, to carry on their work for six months longer with a view to shaping a plan for South Vancouver. Conversations are also proceeding between the City Councils of Vancouver and North Vancouver tending to amalgamation at some future date. North Vancouver has already passed a Zoning bylaw.

### ZONING FOR THE DISTRICT OF NORTH VANCOUVER

Town Planning on the Pacific Coast is taking on the function of a test-mark of a progressive municipality. Notice is given in the North Vancouver press of a preparation of a zoning bylaw for the "District," by which is meant the suburban and still semi-rural area beyond the limits of the city of North Vancouver and more particularly the village of Lynn Valley, lying at the foot of a fine mountain range and watered by some beautiful rivers. The District of North Vancouver is responding to the doctrine that the planning of a town should begin before such mistakes have been made that the major areas are past redemption, from the planning point of view, or can only be redeemed at ruinous cost. It is so often said that rural areas, such as Lynn Valley, have not the local organization or funds to initiate planning projects that the action of the District of North Vancouver is specially significant and gratifying. If the zoning bylaw is passed there will be one object lesson in the Vancouver region to prove the oft repeated statement that the planning of a town, as such, is not a costly process and is just as much a necessity and a wise economy as the planning of a building. The District of North Vancouver has the advantage of intelligent leadership in the person of Reeve J. M. Fromme, who has been a benefactor at the mountain settlement since its foundation some thirty years ago.

the passing of a Town Planning by-law:

Raising glasses filled with grape juice, members of the Board of Trade . . . formally toasted the new City Planning By-Law which became effective on November 5. When called upon to explain the new planning by-law Mr. Westlake said it was a matter of great gratification to him; a culmination of years of effort in bringing the by-law to public recognition and effect: a consummation of dreams of many years before.

Mr. F. G. Westlake, we understand, is secretary of the Swift Current Board of Trade, and has worked finely in the town planning cause in Swift Current. The new by-law is intended to take the place of the zoning by-law passed about a decade ago and to serve as the foundation of a comprehensive plan of the city.

Town planning at Swift Current is not any longer to be a Cinderella of the civic, business, and social life of the city, but a promising young lady to be toasted in grape juice and charmingly complimented. Mr. Westlake, secretary of the Board of Trade, has apparently given the "kiss for Cinderella" or perhaps it was Dr. J. P. Whyte who asked the gathering "to rise and toast the by-law, something drastically needed for many years" Perhaps Mr. Westlake "brought out" Cinderella and Dr. Whyte administered the kiss.

In travelling in New England you sometimes strike a town or village without ragged edges and with a town or village centre, spaciously planned and surrounded with noble elms. If you stop to enquire how this beautiful thing happened you may be told: "We owe this to Mr. W." It was "the consummation of dreams."

There are patriots of order and beauty as well as patriots of exploration, trade and war. In their day and generation they are often called cranks, impractical men and the rest, as though there were anything more impractical than to expect an interesting, efficient, and beautiful town to grow at the mere call of trade egoism, or at the will of a multitude of lot-peddlers, with no considered design or orderly principle of development. Ragged towns are made by ragged minds, often in charge, unfortunately of the community's affairs. A new patriotism is due to take the place of the patriotism of war. It will spend itself not in "cheer-leading" or in chauvinistic

### A KISS FOR CINDERELLA

The Swift Current *Herald* of December 6th reports what seems to have been a sober though cheerful banquet called by the Board of Trade to celebrate

emotionalism, but in planning villages, towns and cities for the purposes of civilized living. Sunless dwellings and jumble building will come to be regarded as we now regard what are called "disorderly houses."

#### MR. CLARK KEITH'S REGIONAL PLANNING ADDRESS

Substantial extracts from Mr. J. Clark Keith's address on "Regional Planning" delivered at the September (1928) annual meetings of the Institute and reproduced in the December number of Town Planning were quoted by the *Welwyn Garden City Times* of January 3. Readers are advised to keep track of this address. More will yet be heard of regional planning in Canada—the cooperative planning of a group of municipal areas having common needs and problems through the voluntary association of a group of local authorities. Nothing will more surely get at the muddle and inefficiency of small-town management. England has more than fifty regional plans in course of development and Greater London is one of them. The United States has somewhere about a score, some of them publicly authorized and receiving official support. Mr. Clark Keith has developed the Canadian argument with much skill and moderation.

#### LEGAL STATUS FOR REGIONAL PLANNING

Regional planning attained legal status in the County of Los Angeles six years ago. In many parts of the world where regional planning has got beyond an idea and a doctrine it is still a voluntary movement dependent upon a good deal of voluntary service and private finance and necessarily subject to the suspension of activity which usually accompanies the voluntary service of busy professional men. Regional planning became a part of the county government in Los Angeles in 1923 and thus attained legal status for the first time on this continent. The regional planning commission of the County of Los Angeles has just published an interesting brochure explaining the organization, powers and duties of the commission. It has now an official staff comprising a director, chief engineer, secretary with three assistants, highway section with three officers, subdivision section with three officers, zoning section with four officers, landscape design section with three officers, statistical division with two officers, and a staff artist, altogether a paid staff, we understand, of twenty-two officers.

In explaining the organization, powers and duties of the commission the brochure states:

The Board of Supervisors of the County of Los Angeles in January, 1923 established the first official Regional Planning Commission in the United States. The powers and duties of this Commission, as set forth in the Ordinance creating it, are:

"A To make a study of the problems of the county with respect to residential and industrial districts, traffic conditions, public parks and boulevards, flood control subdivisions, and, in general, with respect to those matters affecting the orderly growth and development of the county as one large commonwealth and to make to the Board of Supervisors recommendations for the solution of the same.

"B To advise with the Board of Supervisors and other county officials with respect to their duties affecting any of the above matters.

"C To seek to interest the various municipalities and other political subdivisions of the county in a joint effort to understand and solve the common problems of development confronting them and the county."

The Commission consists of five appointed members, who serve without compensation, and three members ex-officio: namely, the director (who is in charge of the staff), the county surveyor, and the county road commissioner.

And further:

Regional Planning in the County of Los Angeles can be defined as the scientific study of the problems of physical growth of separate communities which have common interests; the reduction of these to a coordinated, sound, economic plan, with methods of procedure for its execution.

When the Regional Planning Commission was created by the Board of Supervisors of the County of Los Angeles, it became a part of the county government, the first of its kind in America.

By means of diagram, maps, sketches and articles written by the responsible officers of the various sections and divisions the scope and work of the Commission are exhibited in striking fashion. It is greatly to the credit of the Board of Supervisors, the responsible County authorities, that they have been able to see so clearly the importance of regional planning and to give their approval to the creation of a legal organization, without precedent in their own district or in any part of the United States, to initiate and develop this important work.

Canadian members who are confronted with the difficult task of getting recognition for regional planning in Canada should secure a copy of this brochure as an important landmark in the history of official regional planning and as an important exhibit to assist them in their advocacy. Doubtless Mr. Charles H. Diggs, the director of the technical staff, will respond to a reasonable number of applications for a copy from Canadian planners.

**VALUABLE DESK BOOK FOR TOWN PLANNERS**

Five years ago Mrs. Theodora Kimball Hubbard prepared and published with the Harvard University press a valuable "Manual of Information on City Planning and Zoning." The enormous development in town planning study and practice in the United States and throughout the world during the last five years has called for a supplement to the "Manual" of one hundred pages. By way of compliment we have called this work a desk book to indicate that once used it will be always within reach. For town planning students and workers in Canada—so dependent at present upon a larger field of experimentation in town planning ideas—it may be considered indispensable. All public libraries should certainly secure it. The articles that have been read and lost among a pile of literature will be found noted, indexed and dated in Mrs. Hubbard's book. The chief books on Town Planning that have been published during the last five years are carefully listed; the organizations active in promoting town planning in the United States, national, state and regional are given; the periodicals that are devoting increasing space to town planning subjects are noted; there is a new record of city planning progress in the United States; a list of technical plan reports and town planning activities in many parts of the world are reflected. If one is interested in those court decisions that have marked the progress of city planning philosophy in the judicial mind of the United States he will find a record in Mrs. Hubbard's book. National planning, state planning, rural planning, regional planning, parks, traffic regulations, air ports and many other subjects are listed for reference. The supplement is priced at \$2.00. Both volumes can be secured for \$4.50 post paid.

From the earlier volume we copy the following list of universities and colleges in the United States which had adopted city planning as a permanent subject for instruction five years ago. The Harvard University School of Architecture has been teaching city planning since 1910 and in 1923 announced a full technical course leading to a master's degree in the subject. A chair of civic design at the University of Illinois was founded in 1913.

The "Manual" of 1923 gave the following record:

Harvard University  
 University of Illinois  
 University of California  
 Columbia University  
 Cornell University  
 Dartmouth College  
 Iowa State College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts  
 Johns Hopkins University  
 Kansas State Agricultural College  
 University of Maryland  
 Massachusetts Institute of Technology  
 Massachusetts Agricultural College  
 University of Michigan

Ohio State University  
 Oregon State Agricultural College  
 University of Oregon  
 Pennsylvania State College  
 University of Pennsylvania  
 Purdue University  
 Syracuse University  
 Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas  
 Throop College of Technology  
 State College of Washington  
 University of Wisconsin.

A subsequent list, compiled by the National Conference on City Planning and the editors of *City Planning*, and printed in the January, 1929, number of *City Planning*, indicates that an almost sensational progress in city planning instruction in the United States College and universities during the last five years. The number has now extended from 24 to 87. The list, with its annotations of more or less complete instruction, is too long for quotation but the curious will find it in the January number of *City Planning*. In some cases the teaching is obviously slight but in all cases a beginning of instruction is indicated and an awakening to the need and reasonableness of town planning instruction in the universities. The old arguments that there is no "appropriation" and no room for another subject are being steadily overcome.

The first number of this journal set forth the argument for university instruction in town planning in Canadian universities. Some time ago the North Vancouver Town Planning Commission urged upon the University of British Columbia to institute a course in town planning. We cannot say that so far the action of the Canadian University authorities has been very encouraging.

**AMERICAN "SATELLITE" TOWNS**

In an interesting pamphlet published by the American National Conference on City Planning and written by John Nolen, entitled "Twenty Years of City Planning Progress in the United States" the following "New Towns" are listed. They have all been built *de nouveau* with deliberate intention of producing something different from and better than the fortuitous town of the past—thus denying the easy superstition that towns cannot be "made," that they must "grow" in response to some economic or industrial necessity or enterprise.

Modern planning enterprise is proving that industry can be "attracted" to a town that is built with some regard for the amenities of living. Letchworth, the First Garden City has 60 industries and Welwyn, the second Garden City is attracting such industries as the Shredded Wheat Co. and the British Film Co. each of which has selected the town for business on account of its clean air and unimpeded sunshine.

Mr. Nolen would probably admit that these new towns have all sprung up as the American response

to the Garden City achievement in England. Technically, they are not garden cities, as so far as land is alienated to private ownership and the agricultural belt is omitted, but in all cases the important principles of spaciousness—as against the congestion of the older towns—some form of architectural control, zoning for use, the provision of ample playroom for children and adults, and parks and gardens for use and beauty have been incorporated and doubtless their example has influenced the "improvement" movement in so many other towns founded on traditional lines.

The list is as follows:

Babson Park, Wellesley, Massachusetts.  
 Beaver Lake, Asheville, North Carolina.  
 Belleair, Florida.  
 Billerica, Massachusetts.  
 Biltmore Forest, North Carolina.  
 Clewiston, Florida.  
 Coral Gables, Florida.  
 Corey, Alabama.  
 Country Club District, Kansas City, Missouri.  
 Fairhope, Alabama.  
 Forest Hill Gardens, Long Island.  
 Gary, Indiana.  
 Goodyear Heights, Akron, Ohio.  
 Hopedale, Massachusetts.  
 Kingsport, Tennessee.  
 Kistler, Mount Union, Pennsylvania.  
 Kohler, Wisconsin.  
 Lawrence Park, Erie, Pennsylvania.  
 Leclare, St. Louis, Missouri.  
 Longview, Washington.  
 Loveland Farms, Youngstown, Ohio.  
 Mariemont, Ohio.  
 Myers Park, Charlotte, North Carolina.  
 Overlook Colony, Claymont, Delaware.  
 Palos Verdes, California.  
 Pullman, Illinois.  
 Roland Park, Baltimore, Maryland.  
 San Jose Estates, Jacksonville, Florida.  
 Seneca Heights, Olean, New York.  
 St. Francis Wood, San Francisco, California.  
 Sunnyside, New York.  
 Venice, Florida.  
 Westerly Gardens, Bound Brook, New Jersey.  
 Windsor Farms, Richmond, Virginia.  
 Wyomissing Park, Wyomissing, Pennsylvania.

#### COURSES IN CITY PLANNING AT STANFORD UNIVERSITY

The Departments of Civil Engineering and Art of Stanford University have arranged for a course of lectures on City Planning to be given before the senior and graduate students of these two departments, during the present college year. Dr. Carol Aronovici, city planner, has been engaged to give this course, which will consist of a series of lectures and discussions, covering the field of city planning in relation to engineering work and the arts as applied to city development.

The subjects to be dealt with are as follows:

- Scientific Basis of City Planning
- Constructive Organization for Planning Work
- Costs and Profits of Planning
- Planning Facts and Planning Projects
- Principles of Land Subdivision and Control
- Zoning
- Traffic Distribution and Control
- Civic Art
- Architectural Control.

—*The American City.*

#### OBLIGATORY PLANNING COMMISSIONS IN MASSACHUSETTS STATE

Massachusetts is one of few states which have sought to make town planning obligatory. While European countries have largely adopted this method—as all countries have adopted obligatory sanitation—general feeling on this continent has been against obligatory planning. The State of Massachusetts has made the appointment of Planning Boards obligatory on towns of more than 10,000 population. How has this method worked out?

The legislature of Massachusetts knew that this method could not be expected to work well unless there were a state organization to carry on an educational campaign in its favor. They therefore appointed a division of Housing and Town Planning under the Department of Public Welfare with a state Consultant to Planning Boards.

Since 1923 Mr. E. T. Hartman has occupied this position and since he is not a mere *fonctionnaire* but a man with an enlightened social outlook he has taken his duties with great seriousness and has something to show for his five years of service. Since he took on the work the City Planning Boards have increased in number from 53 in 1923 to 105 at the end of 1927.

It is admitted that a few of these boards were established simply because the state had ordered that in all towns of 10,000 and more population a City Planning Board must be appointed. But there are now 59 towns or cities with some kind of zoning in operation and this number covers 82 per cent. of the population of Massachusetts. And the number of boards established since 1923 are doing signally good work. The whole process of zoning administration is arousing great interest throughout the state.

We quote the following passage from the report:

One hundred planning boards, with 4 more established in towns which will elect the membership at the 1928 annual town meetings, is the record to date. This is a gain of 9 boards during the past year. As the movement grows the number of new boards each year will decrease, mainly because of the conservatism of the more outlying towns. Their problems are not yet as acute as those of the towns nearer the greater population centers. But the universal verdict is that all places have problems due to the automobile alone, although there are

other conditions requiring attention in practically all places.

The town that can say it has no problems in connection with its growth does not exist in a state like Massachusetts, and it is doubtful whether there is such a town in the country. Such a condition is as impossible with a town as with a child. There may be lack of growth, arrested development, in either case. But arrested development in either case is usually admitted to be a problem needing consideration. In the case of children failure to act is usually credited to indifferent or incompetent parents. There are many towns receiving no attention, and when their people awaken to the situation they will generally find that they have only their own indifference to blame. Even this admission does not always solve the problem.

Establishing a planning board solves no problems. In at least two places it is admitted that the boards were established only to comply with the law. The boards were not expected to do any work. They have done no work. It is safe to say that twenty per cent of the present boards are doing nothing. But this leaves eighty boards that may be credited with one or more forms of activity. Some of them are barely alive, and from here the activity runs up to those doing excellent, even notable, work. An inactive board in a city or town may be credited to the same type of condition as where there is no board at all. No place has to be contented with a board in name only. The law does not require nor even anticipate such a condition.

The unfortunate facts of the situation are that failure to act is commonly due to fear of expense, while failure to act is always more expensive than to act properly at the right time. This is a mere truism which people commonly see in connection with their own affairs, and just as commonly fail to see in town affairs; which are also their affairs.

The report gives the argument for town planning, instances of success and failure and of causes thereof and is in fact an intimate educational document intended to show that there is ample justification for treating town planning as an obligation on the part of towns and cities, just as there is for dealing with public health and sanitation.

#### APPOINTMENT OF MR. J. ALEXANDER WALKER

We understand that Mr. J. Alex. Walker one of the pioneers in British Columbia town planning activity, has been appointed by Mr. Harland Bartholomew and Associates, the town planning consultants on the Vancouver Plan, as resident engineer on the Plan, in succession to Mr. H. L. Seymour. Our readers will know something of Mr. Walker's original work in the planning of new town sites and members of the Institute who are acquainted with his work as first secretary of the Vancouver Local Branch, secretary of the Vancouver Town Planning Commission and of much unselfish and unpaid work for the

general cause in British Columbia, will be sure to welcome the appointment. We understand that the appointment is entirely agreeable to the City Council of Vancouver.

#### MODEL BUILDING BYLAW FOR SASKATCHEWAN

Mr. Stewart Young, much worried in the course of his duties, as Town Planning Advisor to the Province of Saskatchewan, by municipal building bylaws badly conceived or badly constructed or out-of-date in view of changed attitude to town development following the spread of town planning philosophy, has drawn up, for the benefit of small towns particularly, "A suggested form of bylaw to control the erection, repair and removal of buildings in urban centres of a population of from 500 to 5000 with a view to increased fire protection and public safety."

It will be noted that the definition of purpose puts the building bylaw in its proper place, that is segregates its function from that of a zoning or town planning bylaw, but also, in view of the appalling loss of life and property through congested and non-fire-proof building, that it has a most serious social background that must appeal not only to the owners of property but also to the civilized humanism of all who have given thought to the question.

We are impressed by its simplicity and absence of legal jargon as well as by the assembly of modern ideas that must serve as effective preventives, wherever adopted, for the disasters that make the fire loss of the country an appalling national waste.

In view too, of the extreme difficulty of persuading provincial authorities to appoint qualified town planning directors to meet the new demand for town planning guidance manifest in all the provinces of Canada, it is of special importance to find such appointment abundantly justifying itself in Saskatchewan in the issue of so practical and useful a document for the guidance of small towns in the important matter of framing their local building bylaws. There are only three directors of town planning in the nine provinces and this is the chief cause of our general backwardness in Canadian town planning and of the continuance of dead town planning acts on the provincial statute books. The American States do better than this. They realise that what is anybody's business won't be done.

#### TOWN PLANNERS ON THE CITY COUNCIL

Professor C. J. Mackenzie, dean of engineering of the University of Saskatchewan, and Mr. J. E. Underwood, A.M.E.I.C. both members of the Town Planning Institute of Canada, have been elected aldermen at the recent municipal elections at Saskatoon, the University city of Saskatchewan. Professor Mackenzie was elected at the head of the poll.

It is scarcely necessary to moralize the importance of this event. Not only does it give assurance that the electors of Saskatoon are conscious of the practical value of town planning—since both these aldermen must have won their elections on a town planning program—but it must also bring the town planning cause to the city council table in some better form than in elaborate documents and memorials which are seldom read and much less seldom studied up to the limit of their value.

The election, also, of two men of technical education to the city council should do something to minimize that wearisome and wasteful conflict between city councils and town planning commissions, which is commonly due, not so much to ill-will or the hugging of prerogative as to the simple fact that aldermen frequently do not understand the problems presented and are too busy with detail administration or too indifferent to give the necessary time and thought involved. It is also of the first importance that men of such standing and intellectual freshness as Professor Mackenzie and Mr. Underwood should be willing to give their time and energy to the multitude of civic problems that must find some sort of solution at the table of the city council.

## DR. RAYMOND UNWIN

Dr. Raymond Unwin, F.R.I.B.A., designer, with Barry Parker, of the First Garden City at Letchworth, president of the International Federation for Housing and Town Planning and for some years chief architect to the British Ministry of Health, has recently been appointed as technical expert to the Greater London Regional Planning Committee. The new appointment will involve Dr. Unwin's retirement from Government housing work, a task that must have been beset with great difficulty since extreme economy in designing cottages for working families, the incidence of changing governments and changing government policy, the struggle against mounting costs—which at one period rose to double the normal and present cost of workmen's cottages—the struggle with a multitude of local authorities of differing views and in many cases ill-suppressed objection to government housing in any shape or form, and endless controversies with trade organizations—all these factors have been part of the wear and tear of Dr. Unwin's position as chief architect to the Ministry of Health.

The positive results of his work, and the work of his associates, during a period of ten difficult years, has been the building of more than a million cottages, with interior accommodation and comforts such as many of the tenants had never known before, the planning and grouping of cottages on modern lines—always limited in achievement by economic considerations, but an immense improvement on the interminable rows favoured by the industrial housing of the nineteenth century—achieved by an undaunted determination to provide for working families light, air and room to play and to prevent the drift to congestion and slum conditions, characteristic of an earlier age.

Such an achievement under such working conditions may be considered a great life work for a disciple and friend of William Morris and Ebenezer

Howard, and might well merit retirement at an age when many men decide they have done their share of the hard work of the world.

Dr. Unwin, however, is now undertaking another immense task—the regional planning and re-planning of Greater London, now, after many years of ardent advocacy, definitely inaugurated as a practical scheme. When the history of modern town planning is written, coming generations will be informed that at the side of Ebenezer Howard, supplying the technical skill to which Howard made no pretence, was Raymond Unwin, not only the efficient instrument for the carrying out of Howard's ideas but himself moved by a sincere humanism and an originality of purpose in no way second to that of Howard himself. When the International Federation for Housing and Town Planning lost its president, in the death of Sir Ebenezer Howard, Raymond Unwin was called, with practical unanimity, to be world leader of the movement.

## ELECTRIC POWER STANDARDS UNDERGROUND?

The British Regional Planning committees are seeking consultation with the electricity commissioners on the question of overhead cables carrying electric power. They are anxious to find some means of carrying these standards underground.

The *Manchester Guardian* gives sympathetic support to the argument, as follows:

On the aesthetic side it would be deplorable if electricity standards, however well designed, were erected at intervals across such English beauty spots as the Lake District. Surely it should not be impossible to come to an arrangement whereby the cost of placing the cables underground in districts of special beauty should be shared between the Commissioners and local residents who would benefit by the protection of the amenities.