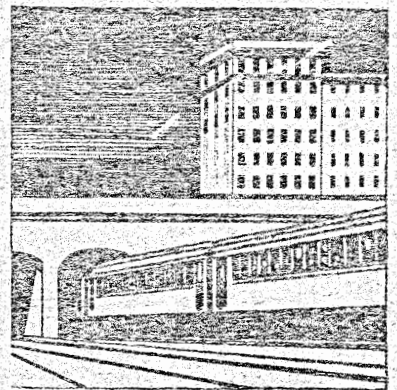
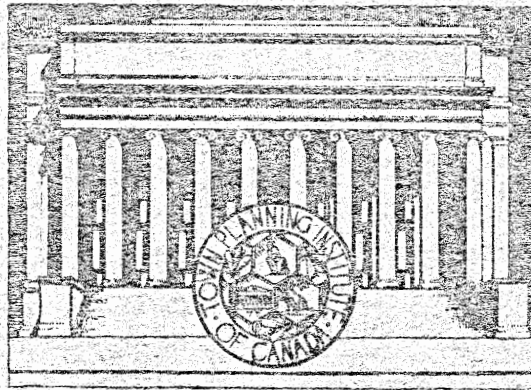


# TOWN PLANNING



## THE JOURNAL OF THE TOWN PLANNING INSTITUTE OF CANADA

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FEBRUARY, 1930

VOLUME IX.

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# TOWN PLANNING

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

## PACIFIC COAST PLANNERS EXCHANGE IDEAS

Some time ago a Canadian journalist explained to the American *New Republic* why Canadians do not like Americans and "damn that country up and down", and the *New Republic* called the article, "As a Canadian Sees Us". There was no evidence that the writer had canvassed intelligent Canadian opinion on the main assertion and there must have been some Canadian readers who regarded the article as mischievous nonsense. Shall the Canadian locate all poor qualities of character below the line and not look at home? Shall he receive great books that turn his darkness into light and his chaos into order and hug his crude prejudices forever? Shall any man get drunk on nationalism any more, after the lesson of the Great War? and so on . . .

The Pacific Coast Planners know nothing of any such sentiment and are building a brotherhood of planning enthusiasts called The Pacific Northwest Association of Planning Commissions. The commissions represented include five from the Vancouver region and extend as far as Calgary and Edmonton, and embrace eleven commissions from the States of Washington and Oregon. On December 6 and 7 they met for their second Annual Conference.

Major General Robert Alexander, President of the Tacoma Planning Commission, Washington, was elected as President of the Association and in accepting the position pointed out that the planning movement must remain largely advisory and educational and must not aspire to extra-governmental functions. Some of the mistakes of past planning, such as the bad grades of Seattle and Tacoma, would have to be accepted as irreparable and vested interests in many cases could not be uprooted. The Association could exercise useful functions in building up public opinion on the Pacific Coast in favor of intelligent planning.

### VANCOUVER'S "GOOD BOOK"

Mr. R. Rowe Holland, Vancouver barrister, Parks Commissioner, and active worker in many public causes in Vancouver during the last 10 years, addressed the assembly at the Convention dinner. The choice of speaker was happy for the assembly, since the speaker, Mr. Holland, could look back on earlier

efforts towards the planning of Vancouver, which had collapsed before the stony indifference of various city councils, and could now discourse on the "good book", meaning thereby not the Bible but the published Plan of Vancouver. Said Mr. Holland: "Have I not read your good book?"

He commenced to read it one evening at 8.15 p.m. and finished it at 4.30 a.m., and then borrowed from Galileo the reflection that the world does really move. Mr. Holland recalled the early days of the century, the high-wheeled bicycle and the horse-drawn street cars lined with straw, and, looking at the "book" called up Omar and Tennyson and Wordsworth . . . "The moving finger writes"; "God fulfils Himself in many ways lest one good custom should corrupt the whole"; "But to be young was very heaven".

There had been town planners for centuries, said Mr. Holland, some of whom astonished their fellows with great ideas and wonderful dreams; but "civilization" had moved too fast for them and they had been thrust aside. He omitted to say that some had been thrust into prison; some had been decapitated and some had taken holidays where their contemporaries could not find them. Now the stone which had been rejected had become the head stone of the corner. All classes and communities pay tribute now to the town planner because they need him, said Mr. Holland (universalizing his experience and leaping a little ahead of his times, as poets mostly do). The cities, he said, are dragging him forth from his retreat and dusting away his modesty. The town planner is an integral and necessary part of our community government. He is here to stay for his work continueth greater than his knowing.

It must have been good for the Vancouver branch to hear all this before they were dead. Now they should be able to persuade the British Columbia government to establish a provincial planning bureau and send some of them as missionaries to the towns that are still growing at the bidding of a predatory civilization and destroying some of the lovely town-sites in British Columbia. And some of them may now surely hope to get paid for their work on a

scale, say commensurate with that of ice-cutters and hardware dealers. Many of them have worked for nothing at all, or next to nothing for quite a long time. It is astonishing how much money is saved on the salaries, and by the voluntary labours of town planners.

The town planner should not be called a town planner, said Mr. Holland, but a town builder. The plan is not everything. The town planner should lead the work of carrying out the plan; not be content to pocket his cheque, we gather, and allow his authorities to "file" the plan. His great obstacle was the inertia of the public. Thought must be turned into action and latent power be converted into energy. This is your responsibility, said Mr. Holland to his hearers, who, perhaps, under his spell, decided forthwith that the latent power of the city council must be converted into energy. Wisdom consists in knowing what to do, skill consists in knowing how to do it, and virtue lies in doing it. You have wisdom, said Mr. Holland, you have skill, but whether or not you have virtue has yet to be proved. Perhaps Mr. Holland was talking a little indirectly here to the city council, since the last word, after all, as to whether the plans shall be carried out rests with that important body.

But, like another Savonarola, he did not intend to let the planners think they could forsake the job until it was done, even if the city alderman should forget all about it. They should go abroad daily and hourly and from year to year in the highways and byways and preach and teach and educate the people. They should tear away the veil which separates today and tomorrow and refuse to worship the Great God Immediate Expediency. Unless they were prepared to do this (they have done quite a bit) their excellent work would be pigeon-holed under the head of impracticable idealism. Mr. Holland knows city councils.

We submit to the fascination of this address and here reproduce some *ipsissima verba*. The sincerity of it reminds us of some great addresses of 1914 but the call now is not to the appalling waste of life and money which we call the world war. We had almost ceased to believe in noble oratory. If that frightful waste had been applied to the better building of towns! to the abolition of slums and those shack dwellings which so constantly leave the charred bodies of little children in their train! If the noble speech of the future is to be a call to the younger generation to *live* for their country and take some part in the building of finer towns and cities, then perhaps town planning will be glad to welcome its benign assistance. Said Mr. Holland:

Did you say, it should be an easy thing to teach our people that an additional Bridge across False Creek is not only a crying need of today but a screaming requisite of tomorrow; that the longer we put off the building thereof the more costly it is going to become and the more fear-

somely our traffic problems are going to pile up? It should be an easy thing to tell them that if we build a park in the places where a park is necessary and where hitherto no flowers bloomed, that the taxable value of all the land surrounding it will increase, and that if we straighten out a street the whole City will benefit and particularly the property in the immediate vicinity. It should not be hard to inspire the ratepayers with the significance of that practical phase of the problem, but the inertia I have referred to is inherent in the psychology of our people. They would very much sooner spend a dollar in the immediate interests of today than invest that dollar on behalf of the years that are to come. Posterity interests them only as something that has never done anything for them. The town planners or builders must exercise this spirit. We must teach our citizens to be unselfish for ourselves but greedy for their children. We must impress upon them that if they are going to make anything out of this City of Vancouver that they must face the problem over a period of years with far sighted magnanimity and not in the spirit of good enough expediency. We have got to teach them to dream and not make dreams their master, as we have got to help them to think and not make thoughts their aim. In the mirror which you, as town planners, set up, they have got to be taught to see the problem of today in its relationship with their tomorrows. They have got to be taught to look upward and forward and yours is the obligation. Do not let me discourage you; do not let me deter you. The task is an inspiring one and its accomplishment a source of soul satisfaction. When you go out to tell them the story do not forget to impress upon them that the assets of a great City are measured not so much by its material gains as by the spiritual standard of its citizenship, and while you are impressing upon them the immediate material benefits of a plan and its step by step development, do not forget to tell them that a man is unworthy of the name of citizen unless he be willing to make some small sacrifice today for those who are to succeed him and come after.

You know that Cities are man-made things. They were not made with the mountains. They are not one with the deep. Men, not gods, designed them. Men, not gods, must keep them and this City and the other Cities which you represent have been given over into your charge to mould and to fashion and to breathe into them by your inspiration the vital spark which is character and beauty and lasting strength. There is nothing that simply grows. As we are sure of a divine presence when we look about us and see the multifarious ramifications of nature so we see and are sure that everything is built in accordance with an obvious plan. Why should it be otherwise with a City.



How can you possibly hope to go forward through the years without the check and the balance and the inspiration of such a plan? You have laid out for yourselves in your plan for the City of Vancouver a period of thirty years. That thirty years is rushing down upon us like an avalanche. Before we realise the problems and the possibilities, it is going to be with us. Anything that we may do in accordance with your plan or any other man-made plan for that City at its best, must be a feeble thing. Outside of yourselves and a few inspired men and women like you the people of the City of Vancouver are as ostriches, their head buried in the sand. Sufficient unto the day be the evil thereof.

Insofar as you are able to compel men to think, to inspire them to see as you see, to that extent town planning, as such, is going to be effective; to that extent you are going to become builders and be able to build character into the City of Vancouver; to that extent you are going to build both utility and beauty into your parks, your play-grounds, your pleasure drives and your public buildings in this great City. You cannot make something beautiful to blossom under your hand unless you can conjure up that beauty in the minds and the souls of the people who are responsible. Our system of municipal government, as our whole so called democratic system of government, is not a perfect thing. Its weakness lies in the fact that even the least among us must have his vote; must be able to express his opinion. If Vancouver were governed by a ruling Czar you would have only him to win to conviction and to inspire to accomplish, but as it is we have a great many brakes set upon the wheels of progress. So the inertia which you must overcome is a heavy one.

If you make it your business, each and all of you, every day, in every way, to gain a new town planner, gradually that inertia will be broken down. Suddenly you will realise that the ball is rolling and from then on you may sit back and watch it roll to success. In that accomplishment you will be building for something that we need more than anything else here in Vancouver, a civic spirit; a spirit which is a reflection of the character and vision of our citizens; a spirit which is as solid and as soul-satisfying and as mighty as our mountains; a spirit which is as poignant and as powerful and as purposeful as our penetrating fiords, and a spirit as potent with shining promise as the sunsets over our Western sea.

When I was a boy any lads who were interested in music, in poetry, in anything that was fine and beautiful were laughed by their companions to scorn. It is regarded as an admission of weakness to find anything that is different and beautiful in the workaday things about you. Let us make it our business to teach our children to be

dreamers, not idle visionaries, but dreamers in respect to the City of Vancouver, dreamers whose dreams come true.

If the dreamer be dead, what profits it? Else earth is darkness at the core and dust and ashes all that is.

These, then, Mr. Chairman, are some of my reactions upon reading that inspiringly conceived book "A Plan for the City of Vancouver".

#### THE ALBERTA METHOD OF PROVINCIAL PLANNING

A paper was contributed by the Alberta Director of Planning, Mr. H. L. Seymour which took the form of a report on the Alberta experiment after one year's trial. The report was so well received that the Vancouver group immediately decided to make another appeal to their legislature to establish a provincial Town Planning Bureau as an active educational agency for planning in British Columbia both in town and country.

This is by no means a new idea to the Vancouver group. In 1925, when the British Columbia Town Planning Act was passed, a recommendation to this effect was rejected by the legislature on the principle that town planning in British Columbia must cost the government nothing at all. We ventured to state at the time that this decision was a sad mistake and the wiser enterprise of Alberta seems to prove this contention and may quickly cost British Columbia its leadership in Canadian town planning.

The Alberta method has been expounded in these columns on several occasions. Its purpose is, in a few words, to establish a town planning bureau as a provincial educational organization for the spread of town planning principles in town and country, and not as a mere court of appeal, and to staff the bureau properly and adequately and extend its services where they are manifestly needed in any part of the province and are manifestly useful and indispensable.

No one can yet pretend that local councils, speaking generally, in any province have begun to study the advantages of town and rural planning as understood by the Premier of Alberta.

At this time of writing the press cuttings bring the news that the authorities of Cloverdale, B.C. see nothing more in the proposal to appoint a director of planning for British Columbia than "another government job".

Town planners are fifty years ahead of the times, Reeve Tom Reid remarked at the council meeting on Saturday when a communication was received from the North Vancouver city council asking for endorsement of a resolution. The effect of the resolution is to ask the provincial government for an executive body to "render technical assistance and advice" on the question of town planning for the benefit of the smaller communities.

"Just another government job" was Councillor Joe Brown's interpretation.

No one seemed disposed to back up the request, and the letter was filed.

Strange that so many people should think that town planners are fifty years behind the times and that the Cloverdale leaders of public opinion should be satisfied that they are fifty years ahead of the times. Democracy may be quite as dangerous as anarchy if its leadership is not supported by a moderate amount of intelligence. One may hope that the new South Vancouver Report may reach Cloverdale but that will not guarantee the careful study which it deserves.

We re-print Mr. Seymour's address with a few omissions,

#### PROVINCIAL PLANNING IN ALBERTA

In the broader field of planning in which the Province of Alberta is interested there is a real endeavour to harmonize Urban Planning and Development with Rural Planning and Development. Advice and assistance are given to municipality or individual farmer on all planning matters that tend to make Alberta a better province in which to live as well as to work. And this is administered, not by separate departments— but from the Provincial Town Planning Office.

The Town and Rural Planning Advisory Board appointed under the Act consists of ten members with Mr. C. Lionel Gibbs, a Labor member of the Legislature as its Chairman. Premier, the Hon. J. E. Brownlee and the Hon. R. G. Reid, Minister of Municipal Affairs (under whose Department the actual work of Town Planning is being carried out) are the government members of the Board. Appointed from various parts of the province other members of the Board include a civil engineer, a farmer, a financier, a superintendent of a Dominion Experimental Farm and last but not least, two women members, representatives of the United Farm Women of Alberta and the Women's Institute. The Director of Town Planning is the executive member of the Board.

Twelve Town Planning Commissions have already been officially appointed and others have been named.

The twelve Commissions are from four of the six cities in the Province and include the two largest cities, Calgary and Edmonton. The other eight Commissions are from some of the larger towns. This means that over 65% of the urban population (centres of 300 or more) now live in communities where Town Planning Commissions have been regularly appointed.

The efforts of the Provincial Town Planning Office have not been merely to point out to Councils the advantages of appointing a Town Planning Commission, but they have been directed just as earnestly to the making effective of Commission activities. Beginning with a Bylaw for the appointment of Commissions there has followed from this office "model" Building Bylaws and "model" Zoning By-

laws for the consideration of Town Planning Commissions, as well as for all towns whether or not a Commission has been appointed.

#### Horticultural Societies

The Alberta Town Planning Act was drafted to encourage as well as permit Town Planning Commissions in cities and towns. Under the Act Commissions cannot be appointed in villages or other centres or districts, though under certain conditions two or more adjoining municipalities may appoint a "Regional Planning Commission". When Commissions in cities and towns have been successfully established, then the Regional Planning Commission can be given consideration. In the meantime the problem of the average village, static in population, can be solved by the passage of Building and Zoning By-laws and by the formation of a Horticultural Society that will take a real interest in public as well as private planning or "beautification". Such societies, of course have a place in all centres of population, city, town or village or even a district. But especially in the smaller places the Councils, for a number of reasons, do not spend public funds on public planting so much needed in some of the "prairie towns". Recognizing these conditions, there has been suggested for the consideration of the legislature a proposed Provincial Horticultural Societies Act, providing not only for grants, based as heretofore on amounts spent on prizes but also on public planting of streets, parks or other public areas.

#### Subdivisions

A subdivision has been and may be again the genesis of a city. Every subdivision as proposed deserves careful attention. A considerable number of subdivisions, many of proposed railway townsites, has been submitted for approval under the provisions of the Town Planning Act and the Regulations of the Department of Public Works in regard to subdivisions of land.

The imposition of rectangular subdivision upon any and every terrain without regard to topography, judging by most plans submitted, appears to be traditional in the Province and there must therefore be a considerable education of the surveyors before anything approaching "Site Planning" is attained.

Regulations in Regard to Subdivisions of Land include this provision: "All land to be subdivided shall be eminently suited for the purpose it is intended" and "should it appear that the whole or any part of the land proposed to be subdivided or offered for sale to the public is not in the public interest to be subdivided," the registration of such subdivision can be refused.

With certain exceptions 10% of the total area of a subdivision being registered is to be set aside for public or park purposes. In the case of residential subdivisions bordering on railroads a 150 foot park strip is required between the nearest street and the railroad right of way.

For areas outside cities, towns and villages, and where there are no zoning regulations then there must be registered with that subdivision a caveat which is in effect a simple form of zoning by-law, to protect such subdivision until such time as it becomes an organized municipality and can make its own zoning regulations.

Redivisions, transfers, etc., of land that are not in accordance with original subdivisions must also have the approval of the Town Planning Board and housing development is not intended to be ordinarily permitted except in a duly registered subdivision. As administered the earnest endeavour to carry out the provisions of the Act and Regulations should result in better housing conditions throughout the Province.

The powers conferred by the Town Planning Act of Alberta in regard to replotting of subdivisions are similar to the Town Planning Act of British Columbia; and are already found useful in the case of a resubdivision in the City of Edmonton. If the consents of owners of 60% of the parcels of land and of 60% of the assessed value of the land affected are obtained such replotting scheme can be made effective. As distinguished from the British Columbia legislation "owner" does not refer to private owner only but includes all owners and the municipality itself,—therefore, making it generally easier to get consents if there be a public urge for such improvement.

#### RURAL AND SUBURBAN PLANNING

##### Maintaining the Scenic Advantages of Alberta Highways.

Regulations prepared by the Board and made effective September 30th, 1929, should not only directly benefit the rural areas of the Province especially in years to come but will be appreciated by city and town dwellers and by the ever-increasing-in-number-tourist.

In a recent survey in the State of California there were found on twenty-five hundred miles of major highways, 46,000 signs besides those in cities and towns. In Alberta the mileage of main highways is just about the same amount, but according to the recent regulations there would be permitted on such highways—only within two miles of a city or town and then at least one thousand feet apart—considerably less than 3000 signs which was the number found within 50 miles of Los Angeles on the Valley Boulevard.

##### Tree Planting along the Highways

Certain information has been collected and a committee of the Board appointed to consider this important matter.

##### Farmstead Planning

The term Farmstead is used to include that part of the farm that takes in the home and its grounds, barnyard and buildings. Planning for such an area has become an important part of the work of the

Provincial Town Planning Office; over 60 inspections or surveys have been made this year since the spring, with assistance from some of the District Agriculturists of the Province.

General principles of Farmstead Planning are illustrated by the "typical" diagrams and include such matters as placing and grouping of buildings, sanitation and planting of trees, shrubs and flowers—a plan for any one location that might take ten or more years to become fully effective but one that can be worked to.

Individual plans are prepared for particular locations where as a rule some permanent buildings have already been erected and the suggested layout is consequently influenced thereby.

As a service to the farmer interested in planning there has been prepared a list of hardy trees and shrubs, etc., suitable for planting in most parts of Alberta, together with information as to the approximate cost if supplied by commercial nurseries, height of planting material when put in and height it can ordinarily be expected to reach.

In general, for any farmer who requests the assistance of the Provincial Town Planning Office there is undertaken as soon as practicable an inspection or survey of his farm and a plan of development is supplied him—or her would very often be more accurate.

##### Provincial and Municipal District Parks

On the Parks Committee appointed by the government for the purpose of investigating the possibility of park development in the Province the Board is represented by its Director. Of a maximum yearly appropriation of \$25,000, already \$20,000 has been authorized and several park sites or additions are being acquired. If the present policy is followed out eventually there may be some eight or ten large provincial parks at approximate—(very approximate of course on account of topography and other conditions)—distances apart of one hundred miles. This Provincial Park system should appropriately supplement the recreational facilities offered by the Federal Parks which include the internationally known Rocky Mountains, Jasper and Waterton Lakes Parks.

Several municipal districts (municipal units of about nine townships) have acquired or leased park areas and plans of proposed development have been prepared in some cases.

To preserve objects of historic, archaeological and geological interest a proposed Act has been drafted along the lines of British Columbia legislation in this regard.

The endeavor of the Provincial Town Planning Office is to advise all rural school authorities to make provision in old schools for inside toilets; to enlarge if necessary, the school grounds to provide adequately for recreational facilities and then logically, last if not least, to consider a planting or "beautification"

program. It is found always necessary to stress the fact that beauty must be founded on order and to urge that planning is necessary for effective planting which should not be merely used to cover the mistakes of bad planning.

#### Planning in Peace River Country.

To those who have watched with some concern the operation of the present policy of homestead development however successful it may have been so far in

the Peace River country, there seems to be an opportunity for something better. In a recent address Premier Brownlee is reported as saying: "One of the questions we must face when we get our resources is whether or not we should abandon our present settlement scheme and the free homestead plan and try to settle people in compact bodies, and thus minimize the present difficulty of wide-spread settlement."

## A PLAN FOR SOUTH VANCOUVER

With the amalgamation of Vancouver, South Vancouver and Point Grey, at the beginning of 1929, the necessity for extending the Plan of Vancouver over the fourteen square miles of South Vancouver became manifest and the firm of Bartholomew and Associates was requested to undertake the work. With admirable promptitude the necessary studies were taken in hand and within nine months a Plan for South Vancouver was prepared, which is now in course of printing.

The Vancouver Plan contained a Regional survey of the surrounding districts and covered some phases of a Town Plan for South Vancouver. The present report, however, embraces detailed studies of such matters as roads and streets, transportation and recreation and a comprehensive zoning plan and by-law, fashioned after and coordinated with the zoning scheme for the City of Vancouver.

#### A BUSINESS PLAN

Vancouver is setting a standard for business promptitude in town planning matters and should do something to shorten the ten year period which has been the incubation habit of Canadian cities in their approach to town planning necessities. Not that Vancouver has escaped the long incubation period, but since practical men took hold of the job (meaning the Vancouver planning group, formerly regarded as the most impractical visionaries of the body politic, and a competent planning firm) no time has been lost in the evolution of an admirable Plan for the big city. The planners of Point Grey municipality should have the credit for all time of showing Vancouver how planning could be done and how much worth while it was to do it, since they were the pioneers on the peninsula and were well on the way to a plan of their own before Vancouver cleared for action in 1925. Now the three chief areas of that fascinating peninsula have been surveyed, not by land-chopping exploiters chiefly concerned with the quickest sale of 33ft. lots destitute of public utilities, but by scientific sociologists, economists and humanists concerned about public welfare, both of the present and the future, and trained to project the civilized order of their own thinking on to the terrain

where millions of men and women will pass their lives.

#### THE TOWN PLANNING COMMISSION

Suppose now that the amalgamated city council will appreciate the work of the planners and do their share to pass the plans and get the project into operation. Is it to be supposed that the work of the Town Planning Commission is finished and that the commission may be abolished? Far from it. Their advice to steady and inform the successive city councils concerning possible modifications of the plan will be needed for many years to come. Otherwise the plan may be ruined at a hundred points by the Great God Expediency—just as the building heights regulations of Toronto have been shattered at the call of wealthy builders who wanted a few storeys higher than their competitors. Everybody knows that an aldermanic seat may be sought for the specific purpose of breaking a zoning bylaw in the interests of some wealthy client and may be justified—in argument—on the plea of increased public revenue. The Quebec City plan heralded and eulogized all over the world, is already falling to pieces on the plea that builders who make public revenue should be allowed to build where they like and how they like.

#### THE VANCOUVER BRANCH

And the Vancouver branch of the Institute—is their work finished? We are confident they will be the last to think so. They are aware, without the assurance of the British Ministry of Health, that the most living concept at present in the planning world is regional planning. The British Minister of Health has said that town planning is already out of date, but this is reaching a little beyond our Canadian experience.

But with these three areas of the Vancouver region provided for, the Institute Branch (which has been the practical agency for initiating all the town planning projects of the Vancouver region and that at immense sacrifice of their time and energy) will not think of resting until North Vancouver, Burnaby, New Westminster and other surrounding towns are



brought into a great Regional Plan of Vancouver and environs.

Never was such an opportunity for making thrilling history in the Vancouver region! A first class Regional Plan, legally authorized and financed and properly guarded from interference by nonconforming interests, would crown magnificently the work of planning in the Vancouver region. It would pay for itself a hundred fold by bringing into economic and social order the rural as well as the urban centres of the region and it would set a scientific standard for regional planning throughout the whole Dominion. And it would get ahead of Alberta, once more! Already the North Vancouver Commission, chairmanned by a member of the Institute Council, has passed an interim zoning bylaw, though it has been beaten, by vote of property owners and not by citizen vote, on a plan for the waterfront, which should have been tackled thirty years ago. No finer chance for a magnificent esplanade was ever so tragically wasted.

Another project to which the Branch has pledged itself is persuading the legislature to establish a provincial Planning Bureau to assist in extending planning activity throughout the whole province. Their tools are, of course, merely reason and persuasion—not pneumatic drills, and it has not yet been decided whether all men are reasoning animals.

#### THE MORAL OF THE PLAN

There are city councils deciding to take no action in town planning until they have seen what other cities do with it. Well, the newspapers circulate and town planning has now become a subject for eloquent leading articles. The moral of Vancouver, so far, would seem to be obvious: appoint a well-selected town planning commission, that is men who are not sticking somewhere in the last century; appoint a competent firm to do the job over a contract period, and a plan will be created. Its value, as with other jobs such as engineering, will depend upon the quality of the men selected to do the work and the carrying out of the plan will depend a great deal on the quality of the city council in power.

The Vancouver moral, of course, is not yet completely in favor of town planning and may still go on the rocks if the city council says that the whole thing is impractical and impossible and “file” the plan. The moral then will be that Vancouver spent a lot of money on city planning and the whole thing came to nothing. Then the next generation will have to do the work again, and the waiting cities will say: “I told you so.” We see the newspapers in Vancouver, now a valuable auxiliary to town planning, are already asking when the actual work on the Vancouver plan is to begin. We should hardly think the Vancouver authorities will let slip the kudos they have already won. It may be, too, that the time has come in Vancouver when that mystical entity called Public Opinion will find a way of

insisting that a plan which has cost \$40,000 must not be scrapped by any temporary authority.

#### HISTORICAL APOLOGIA

The South Vancouver report covers a brief history of the district, with its many tribulations, from the year 1892. It is the work of a benevolent apologist and is written in a spirit of high Christian charity. At one point it reaches the conclusion that “throughout it all each individual gave his all for what he thought was the best for the community.” This is indeed a blanket amnesty and while it is possible to appreciate the excellent motive of the writer it seems to us that a valuable opportunity has been missed of telling the story of the speculative orgies which brought South Vancouver into a morass of difficulty, with simple historical veracity. This would surely have been a greater service to the town planning cause. We cannot think that the sensitiveness of the land speculators who led South Vancouver into its tangle of difficulties should count in the scale with a straightforward scientific account of what really happened and that should not happen again in any part of Canada. After all the report is supposed to be a scientific document and scientific documents are not written like church history.

So far back as 1918 our President, Mr. A. G. Dalzell, showed to the members of the engineering profession in Vancouver (See *Journal of the Engineering Institute of Canada*, Nov. 1918) that a small area of land developed similar to South Vancouver, and sandwiched in between the municipality and the city of Vancouver, was not furnished with municipal improvements and public necessities solely from the revenue obtained in the area, though it was heavily taxed. He also showed that the cost of developing this area was far greater than the cost of developing a similar area in Shaughnessy Heights, the high class residential district controlled by the Canadian Pacific Railway Co. He predicted that if a community, settled with a density of 12 persons to the acre on 400 acres, could not furnish the revenue necessary to supply the communal needs, then it was impossible for a similar and adjacent community scattered over 9,000 acres, with a density of 4 persons to the acre, to develop without financial troubles. The same conclusions were reached, after similar studies, by Mr. W. H. Hobbs, another member of the Institute, in a government investigation into the development of the suburban municipalities adjoining the city of Winnipeg.

The story of the useless and senseless subdivision of land in the South Vancouver area, into 33 ft. lots, decades ahead of need, should have appeared in any true history of the development of the municipality. How serious this land speculation has been, and what a handicap it has placed on the economic development of the area can be gathered from a consideration of the municipal assessment, and all that it implies. In the year 1919, after the war was over,



and after five years of deflation, the municipal assessment shows that every acre of the 9,200 in municipal limits carried an average value of \$1664.00. This is however less than half of the peak value when taken into the city last year. A price per acre for municipal land, including the streets, is seldom used, and difficult to appreciate. But if it is remembered that the standard subdivision of urban land requires approximately one-third of the area for streets, the amount to be added to the original cost of land to compensate for the land taken for streets is 50 per cent. Thus at the figure given for the value of land within the municipal area, the value of the land actually available for building would be \$2,500.00 an acre. It should also be remembered that practically all this land has been forest land, which requires an expenditure of from \$350 to \$500 an acre to clear for building purposes. But taking only the gross value of \$1,664 an acre into consideration, and remembering that this is the value of land for residential purposes of a working class population, part of a population of 250,000 people, in a province of vast area with a total population little over half a million, note how it compares with land in the very heart of the British Empire. Since the end of the war the London County Council has purchased over 3,900 acres of agricultural or cultivated land within eleven miles of Charing Cross for housing purposes, and the average cost has been \$1,290 an acre, though the land is surrounded by eight million urban residents. The British immigrant in the outskirts of Vancouver in his search for a homesite has to overcome a greater obstacle in land value than the citizen of the metropolis of the Empire! No! this part of the Report should have been written with calm, critical independence, irrespective of local sensibilities, as an outstanding example of the need for intelligent planning in all new areas in Canada. As it is, it is worse than useless because it does not deal with the main and significant facts and so is seriously misleading.

#### THE FACTS EMERGE

Fortunately the Introduction proper does not slide over the facts so easily. On page 3 we read;

The South Vancouver Area, although it has large undeveloped tracts, has been practically all subdivided. In the so-called boom days, land speculation was rife, and there is probably no more striking example of the ills of uncontrolled and haphazard subdivision of land on the Continent than there is here. The most appreciable consequences of this bad planning are the lack of continuity both of alignment and width of streets and the want of uniformity relative to the layout of the blocks. There is now a choice opportunity to rectify, through the agency of replotting, several large undeveloped tracts of poorly subdivided lands. If this advantage is not grasped

within the near future, the chance will be gone forever.

But there are other still more serious consequences as we have pointed out.

There is also a paragraph on the sporadic character of the early industrial development, when any piece of land was appropriated for industry irrespective of residential districts around it, but we do not find anything about the building of sewers on muskeg and rock and the subsequent destruction of them and of adjoining property by subsidence.

#### AN ADMIRABLE PLAN

But from this point on, the Report takes on the admirable character of the Vancouver Plan and presents a program of development for the next 40 or 50 years which will do much to correct early mistakes, so far as these are now possible, and guide future progress on scientific lines. The section on Major Streets illustrates the forward looking attitude of the planners and might well be selected to answer the rural intelligentsia who are postponing town planning till 1980. It states that main and arterial thoroughfares should be at least 99 feet in width, accommodating 8 lines of traffic and thus have 72-foot roadways. Secondary highways should be 80 feet in width with 54-foot roadways and minor streets of a residential nature, not less than 50 feet with a 26-foot roadway. Where there is any likelihood of a minor street being more congested eventually, provision by way of building lines should be made whereby dwellings would be kept back and tree planting carried out along the street lines. Its recommendations should indicate that somebody is aware that motor traffic has revolutionized the whole concept of highway necessities and that methods are being studied of preventing the deplorable congestion of traffic which now obtains in the thoroughfares laid out half a century ago.

A few of the recommendations with regard to major street widenings maybe quoted. Figures are here placed side by side to indicate the present width and the proposed widening. Kingsway, 66-120; School Road, 33-120; 18th and 19th Avenues, 66-80; King Edward Avenue, 132 feet boulevard; Cambie to Ontario, 80-132; Knight to Dumbfries, 66-132.

It would seem too elementary to state—if the philosophy of planning were a subject of serious study by all rural and civic authorities—that the immense development of motor traffic could not have been anticipated when these streets were laid out and that the present cost of widening can only be regarded as misfortune, but that now, when it is perfectly obvious to what uses main thoroughfares will be subjected in the future, all planning of these thoroughfares should be undertaken with a view to real economy in the future, which means providing adequate accommodation so that buildings will not

have to be torn down to secure an easy flow of traffic.

With respect to certain lands adjoining the highways, replotting schemes are recommended by which widening projects would be facilitated. Means are suggested for the abolition of awkward jogs, of which there are many in the area consequent on original defects of planning.

The section on Major Streets is a masterly document, forecasting a plan of orderly development for the immediate as well as the remote future. It replaces the hand-to-mouth and terribly expensive system of the past, by the prophetic science of the present, and this science is "applied" and deliberately economic science, and not the merely heroic groping into undiscovered regions with which pure science is identified.

#### REPLOTTING

This is shown by the section on Replotting, which has the valuable experience of Point Grey to justify it and prove its economic success, as it has the experience of Germany in its famous Lex Adikes. An amendment to the British Columbia Town Planning Act, based on Point Grey experiments, now permits the British Columbia Councils to undertake replotting schemes and provides means for carrying out such schemes when a certain percentage of the landowners are willing to adopt them. In the early experiments such schemes could be held up by a small group of recalcitrant owners. It is stated that replotting schemes in South Vancouver will be comparatively easy owing to the relatively sparse development and the large amount of tax sale land owned by the City. The City will be able to exchange its tax-sale land for affected private property and the city's revenue will be enhanced accordingly. There are many areas recommended for replotting "owing to the poor plotting of the early subdivisions".

#### TRANSPORTATION

The Transit Report covers a series of studies of new lines and new connections for the development of transit, and in many cases new bus lines are recommended, and the Transportation Report includes railway and harbor facilities, taking the north arm of the Fraser River as a connecting link with the whole area and a waterway of great economic value. There is also an interesting paragraph on the future of Marine Drive. The Industrial Survey tabulates the present industries and shows that 30% of the South Vancouver area is occupied with industry.

#### ZONING

The Zoning Report naturally occupies a large place in the general plan. The opening paragraph sets forth once more the rationale of zoning and is immediately followed by the statement of Vancouver's experience in zoning, which should do something to convince the unconverted as to the uses of zoning.

The principal purpose of zoning is to give stability and character to property so as to encourage development consistent with the highest community service which such property can render. A Zoning By-law provides three kinds of regulations which affect the uses of property and buildings, the height of buildings and the size and arrangement of buildings upon lots and of open spaces about such buildings. A Zoning by-law will encourage like types of structures within districts to be determined in accordance with their natural fitness.

Vancouver's experience in respect to the value of zoning is such that a reversion to the conditions obtaining before zoning restrictions were imposed, would be unthinkable. The good that came out of the interim zoning by-law only increased the desire to put in effect a comprehensive by-law. The experience of the former municipality of Point Grey is similar. The benefits of zoning in general are too obvious to need elaboration in this report but the conditions appertaining to the South Vancouver Area are deserving of discussion.

A Use Map has been compiled, showing the present use of each parcel of land and building thereon in the entire area, indicating by colours the location of fifteen different classifications of uses, including industries, railway lands, stores, etc. There is a map of city-owned property, duly classified. "No attempt was made to prepare a lot width map as most of the lots are 33 feet in width". The existing tendency to commercial development on the street car lines has created some difficulty for the planners, since there is little demand for stores except at strategic points, and the established character of such streets prejudices their development for single family residences. These streets have been zoned for three storey commercial and the balance for duplex residential classification.

The zoning subdivisions are One Family Districts, Two Family Districts, Three Storey Multiple Dwelling Districts, Local Commercial Districts, Three Storey Commercial Districts with admission of 6 storey light industrial, Heavy Industrial Districts. The zoning bylaw recognizes the prevailing types of development and is not retroactive in its provisions; but the nonconforming buildings may not be altered or reconstructed in any respect. Billboards are not admitted in residential districts. Provision is made for a Board of Appeal.

#### RECREATION

There is a valuable section on Public Recreation containing an urgent recommendation that in so large an area adequate consideration should be given to the recreational needs of all classes of the community. In the older settlements a deplorable lack of provision for the play needs of children is one of the commonplaces of bad planning. In this matter

developed thinking has moved far away from the idea that a large park, frequently miles away from the homes of the majority, is all that is needed. Vancouver has had to pay already for neglecting to supply necessary open spaces by land deals, extending in one case to more than \$40,000 an acre, when early consideration of such necessities might have secured such areas for next to nothing. It is pointed out that the drift toward apartment life increases congestion and accentuates the need for open spaces.

A remarkable example of the increase of property values due to the wise provision of a small park in the South Vancouver area shows that such a provision is far from uneconomic.

Prior to the establishment of MacDonald Park the municipality had scores of tax sale lots on the market in that district. The average price was \$150.00 per lot, with very few being sold at that figure. The park, 2.6 acres, was set aside from these municipal lands. Within a few months thereafter, all the lots facing the park were sold at prices averaging \$340.00 per lot. Now sales are being made in other blocks near the parks at prices correspondingly higher. The simple act of the Council in setting aside that 2.6 acre park changed the character of the district and made property in the neighborhood more desirable and more valuable.

It is recognized that within the last few years there has been a wholesome tendency to set aside tax-sale lands for park purposes in South Vancouver, but it is pointed out that the mere promiscuously setting aside of blocks of land and labelling them "park" does not always indicate the exercise of experienced and scientific judgement.

Small children, below school age, especially if home grounds are either too small or not available, should have small lots in each block, preferably near supervised playgrounds, in which they can play together in safety under the care of their elders. An acre of ground in one or two or three units should be set aside in every quarter of a square mile of residential districts for these small children.

Children of school age should have a supervised playground and the older ones should have swimming pools, camps and play fields and outlying large parks and reservations. It is true that such utilities were not considered necessary in pioneer days, but the present generation is accepting the view that the health, contentment, and useful employment of young life should be part of their common heritage, and even those who have no children of their own are seldom found to object to pay the citizens' share for the provision of these utilities. The planner is surely performing a valuable service to the community in studying ways and means of providing

these utilities at the least public cost; and when the argument of increased property values for that important section of the community who are inclined to judge progress and property in such terms is added to the general plea for increasing the happiness and efficiency of young life, a sufficiently convincing case is established for the new emphasis placed in this document on the alert and early selection of such valuable areas.

The program also draws attention to the value of large parks, pleasure drives, bathing facilities, look-out points over the water, parking areas for automobiles and outdoor theatres. The object of a well balanced recreational program, says the report, is to show how to provide play facilities for the different needs of these groups. It is admitted that at one time there was a deplorable dearth of parks and recreation grounds in South Vancouver, but credit is paid to the citizens in later years who have made some successful efforts to supply the need. A considerable table of selected but undeveloped recreational areas is included in the report and new areas are recommended for this purpose. The natural bathing facilities around Vancouver are so superb, and bathing takes so large a part in the recreation of all classes, that the recommendations in the report to develop this feature in South Vancouver will be accepted by all concerned.

#### CIVIC ART

Finally there is a section on Civic Art dealing with sites and settings for public and semi-public buildings, space for monuments, the architectural treatment of facades of stores and commercial buildings and factories, street design, street lighting and street control in general. It includes the regulation of overhead wiring and other objectionable features. The appointment of a well-trained city forester is recommended to attend to street planting.

#### A GREAT PUBLIC SERVICE

It seems to us that the time is at hand when the "service of one's country" will take on a new connotation and will be no longer specialized to the sacrifice of time, energy, education and even life in the barbaric business of legalized murder. On another page a highly respected citizen of Vancouver has set forth in noble speech his conception of the splendid public service given to Vancouver by the group of scientists responsible for the creation of the Vancouver Plan. The present Plan is an extension of that service, and the complete Plan for the amalgamated city, if the civic authorities do their part in carrying out the plan, will create a new concept of national service which must soon become the common property of the whole Dominion.

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#### COURTENAY LOOKS AT TOWN PLANNING

The city of Courtenay, Vancouver Island, has endorsed the principle of town planning and is to appoint a Town Planning Commission.



## CITIES THAT HAVE GONE BROKE

By A. G. DALZELL,

President of the Town Planning Institute of Canada.

In an article under this heading in a recent issue of *Saturday Night* reasons were given why some Canadian towns had got into financial difficulties. It would be indeed fortunate if the existing problems of some of the western Canadian cities could be attributed to nothing more serious than such examples of unwise expenditure as were cited in that article. The trouble, however, lies much deeper, and because the cause if really known is neglected the danger is great and may lead to other towns and cities falling in the same way, however economically they may be administered.

While at the present time the trouble is most pronounced in the western cities there are towns and cities in Ontario that are perilously situated. The problem throughout the entire Dominion demands not only the attention of those who lend money to the municipalities to enable them to carry on their development, but also the careful consideration of all provincial governments to whom both bond-holder and citizen appeal for aid when the day of reckoning comes.

When the transcontinental railways opened up for settlement, large sections of land previously inaccessible, villages, towns and cities, sprang into existence as fast as, and in some cases ahead of the agricultural development of the country. New settlers, both those who were Canadians by birth, and those of foreign origin whose knowledge of the English language was very limited, were enabled by the homestead regulations to acquire at least 160 acres of land for little more than the promise of some agricultural development. In many instances, as soon as a title to this land was acquired, farming was abandoned, the quarter section sub-divided into some 1,250 building lots and a townsite formed. The owners of the land had no interest in planning the land to serve the future community. Their only purpose was to divide up the land in such a manner as to secure the quickest sale at the greatest profit. In this way, section after section of land was divided up until to-day we find cities whose existing population is not above 60,000 that have within their city limits over 40 square miles every square mile of which is sub-divided into building lots that would accommodate 20,000 people. But because land within city limits is assessed and taxed at high figures, square mile after square mile all around the city was partially sub-divided in the same manner to accommodate thousands more.

Whilst this was taking place in the prairie provinces, where, generally speaking, land is level and easy to prepare for building sites, similar sub-division of land under different conditions was taking

place in British Columbia. In this province, however, much of the land laid out for townsites requires an expenditure of some five hundred dollars an acre to fit it for building purposes. The same disregard was shown in planning the land to serve the community. The topography of the country was ignored and streets set out for main thoroughfares in locations that would tax a mountain goat to climb.

Vancouver, considering its population, occupies one of the smallest areas of land of any of the larger western cities. It is, however, surrounded with other municipalities and cities all really tributary to it. The consequence is that within a radius of 20 miles in this area, sub-divisions have been planned and streets dedicated sufficient to serve a population equal to one-half of the present population of the entire dominion or ten times the population of the province.

The city of Toronto has begun to stagger at the cost of developing the most recent annexations, and has called a halt to the extension of the city limits. But if the present haphazard development continues, the community as a whole will pay just as dearly wherever the artificial boundaries of the city may be set. The so-called "clean up" of the street and radial railway franchises in the Toronto area was been hailed by some as a means of salvation by allowing the people access to cheap land. But it all depends upon the manner of development whether it is a blessing or a curse. It is not the cost of the land but the cost of *developing* the land that is the problem the municipalities have to face. When development of land is more wisely regulated, the price of land will be more equitably controlled. It is the uncertain use to which land may be put that gives it most of its fictitious and speculative value.

Investigation will show that in most cities the poorest people are living on the highly assessed and taxed land. The foreign immigrants who live in the city of 20,000 people in Northern Ontario, on what is without doubt the worst housing site in the whole dominion, paid more per square yard for their building lots without any improvements than was paid at the same time for the freehold of Hampstead Garden Suburbs, London, within 30 minutes' car ride of the very heart of the British metropolis. The reason was mainly because of an alleged value of the land for industrial purposes, but in all probability the settlement of the people in that area has postponed indefinitely, if not for ever, the use of the land for industrial purposes. The "Ward" in Toronto is another example of poor people living on highly assessed land and their very presence hindering the development of the land for purposes for which it is better suited.

The Canadian people do not desire that these things should really be. They do not want slums in the cities and by insisting on wide streets and lots of specified area in all new sub-divisions they think they have made slum conditions impossible. But standards have been set which are impossible of attainment under existing social and economic conditions. There are small towns in Canada that have a street area proportionate to that of Washington, D.C., the capital of the United States. The wide streets and boulevards, which are the pride and delight of the capital city, are the curse and the grievous burden of the Canadian mining community. Because width of streets and size of lots have been arbitrarily fixed in some cities the only possible solution of the housing of the working people is the erection of tenements. The cost of the land, fixed very largely by the width of the street, and the cost of local improvements, also largely determined in the same way, has made the erection of single family dwellings an economic impossibility. Slums as they are seen in Europe will never be seen in Canada, but slum conditions are already far too prevalent for a new country.

The real trouble is that not a single person knows what it costs a town or city to convert bare land into building land and to provide the roads, sidewalks, watermains, sewers and other essential utilities. As a consequence, money is spent without anyone knowing what is obtained for that money and who is really paying the cost. If the cost were really known, new methods of land sub-division and development would soon be evolved because the apportionment of the cost would bring it home to those who would have to pay.

The writer had ten years' experience as a municipal engineer in Canada and has therefore no hesitation in saying that the cost of municipal development is a dark secret despite all municipal audits. He has made several efforts to secure definite information in different parts of Canada, but because municipal book-keeping is so complex it is impossible to ascertain such facts as are well known to those who have to develop land under private auspices. One investigation that he made, however, is instructive, if incomplete, and the facts may be briefly stated.

An area of 145 acres, the most recent annexation of a western city, was selected for the investigation. The sub-division of the land was made some 25 years previous to annexation and 3,300 people were settled on the land when it became a part of the city. All public expenditures in this area previous to annexation were ignored, simply because they could not possibly be secured. Such expenditures can hardly have been insignificant nor is it likely that they were all paid for out of revenue obtained. With annexation came the usual demand for the area to be improved to the accepted city standards in accordance with the usual election promises. For seven years the work of improvement went on and is still going on. For

the most part, the work was done by day labour forces employed by the city at an average wage of three dollars per day and materials were purchased at pre-war prices. Sewers and water-mains were installed over about 90 per cent of the area. Two main roads were paved, the remainder more or less improved with macadam or planking. Two brick schools were built each on a site of a little less than 2½ acres, a public play-ground purchased on the same area, and a frame firehall erected on a site of about one-fifth of an acre. No cement sidewalks were laid, not even on the paved roads, and it should be distinctly understood that no expenditures were made that could be termed extravagant or absolutely unjustifiable, and the administration was as honest and as effective as that of any Canadian city.

At the end of seven years the population had increased to 4,400 people and the expenditure within the area during the seven years amounted to \$275 per capita. If divided amongst all the lots in the area it was equal to \$510 a lot. If divided up only amongst the improved lots it was equal to \$989, each improved lot. Taxation was based on land value alone and the average land value was \$24 per front foot, and the tax rate at the seventh year was 24 mills.

If the whole rate levied in the area had been collected it would have been insufficient to meet the fixed charges on the capital expenditure.

Those who favoured annexation of the area and urged the expenditure of so much public money did so no doubt in the belief that the land value would increase, and taxation being based on land value a corresponding increased revenue would be obtained. It is instructive to note, however, that when taken over by the city the total assessed land value divided up by the total building area gave an average land value of \$10,027 per building acre. That this assessment was justified by sale prices is vouched for by the fact that for the seven acres of land purchased the next year for public purposes the price averaged over \$19,000 per acre. However, after the city had made an expenditure of money which was equal to \$4,935 for every acre of building land, the assessed land value at the end of the seventh year had dropped to an average for the whole area of \$8,742.

This is surely proof that the want of control of the development of land increases the initial cost and may ultimately adversely affect the value. Before annexation all sorts of ideas prevailed as to the use to which the land would be put, fostered by those who were only interested in the sale of the land. Working people bought lots as a speculation. Because improvements were exempt from taxation, they were encouraged to put up cheap houses, expecting industries would later buy them out. The difficulty of purchasing any reasonable quantity of land except by dealing with a multitude of small owners who have no real conception of the value of the land is one of the main reasons why industries are driven out

of cities and forced into locations far removed from houses. The final result, as in this case, is cheap property on land continually decreasing in value, no one caring to spend money on improvements, and the worker compelled to travel enormous distances at loss of time and money in order to reach his place of employment.

This area of 415 acres is a compact community nowhere more than 2½ miles from the city centre. The density of population is equal to 11 persons to the acre. The capital expenditure enumerated above does not take into account any proportion that ought to be charged to the community for waterworks, trunk sewers, incinerators, isolation hospital, fire and police stations and other essentials of the community.

How then does the adjoining municipality, which has an area of twenty times as great, with a density of population of three to the acre and a land value of at least one-third of the city land value manage its development? The answer is that it does not, and it cannot, and the proof is that it was for some time in the hands of an administrator, but the only reasons assigned for its difficulties were unwise expenditures and bad financing by past councils.

The truth is, too much time is given to the study

of the symptoms of the disease and too little to the disease itself. The Canadian people have a national problem to face because they have been forced to buy extensive railway systems. The railway problem and the municipal problem are very much alike, and neither of them will be solved simply by placing financial watch dogs at the treasury doors.

To solve these problems we must study the root causes and devise our remedies to suit, and it is not likely that the remedies will be either simple or pleasant. There are certain physical diseases which affect the eyesight and if an honest oculist is consulted he will send the patient to a physician. A dishonest practitioner might prescribe coloured glasses. There are certain social disorders in the community which require radical treatment and the counsel of the cleverest men the country possesses. Those who advise that we wear rose-tinted glasses and "Forget your blues" are as dangerous as they are incapable of understanding. Not that there is any need to be disheartened. The troubles we suffer from are more akin to growing pains than chronic rheumatism, but growing pains are symptoms that demand attention.

The nation waits for leadership, but every honest citizen may do his share by the study of civic problems and the wise exercise of his civic studies.

## VANCOUVER BRANCH ANNUAL MEETING

The Vancouver Branch of the Town Planning Institute of Canada held its annual meeting on December 6 and, aside from a routine business, concentrated on two matters of special interest.

The first dealt with the desirability of informing municipal and public bodies in Canada of the necessity of adopting town planning policy for the development of urban and rural areas. This has been an important part of the work of the Institute and its branches for the last 10 years and on several occasions copies of the Institute Journal, containing special articles of this character, have been distributed throughout Canada at the expense of the Institute members. Sympathetic help has also been given to this educational work by organizations outside of the Institute. Two years ago the Dominion Land Surveyors cooperated with the Institute in circulating a special appeal to the mayors throughout Canada, and women's organizations such as the Women's National Council have passed resolutions on these lines.

The Vancouver Branch, however, has more than theoretical justification for such advice to municipal bodies, since it has a platform of actual and excellent achievement to support its arguments. By years of hard work it has gradually removed the crude objections to town planning in the public mind in its own vicinity, and has promoted the creation of an

admirable Town Planning Act for British Columbia and the creation of a Plan for Greater Vancouver, now completed and only awaiting the cooperation of the city to become a program of work for the next 30 or 40 years.

But there are many municipal councils in British Columbia which do not seem aware that a new movement for the better development of the social and business life of towns and cities has been adopted, not only in Vancouver but all over the world.

So far, it must be said, the actual response to the appeals of the Institute have not been very encouraging, since it is rare to receive even the bald-est acknowledgement from the mayors of the municipal councils. It might have been expected that some mayors would have transmitted the traditional assurance that the communication would receive due consideration, but we do not remember a single case where this courtesy has been extended.

Ideas however have a way of keeping alive, like the seed blown across a rocky plateau, and there cannot be any doubt, if one judges from the increased interest in the subject in all responsible daily journals that Town Planning ideas are gradually making headway throughout the Dominion. The programs of the Unions of Municipalities are still very barren on town planning topics but once and again the subject emerges as an item worth consideration.



### THE CANADIAN PLANNER WANTS A CHANCE

A rider to this resolution sets forth another topic that needs bringing into public notice. The time is really due and overdue when municipal authorities should consider the fact that when new villages and towns need planning on more scientific lines than have been adopted in the past Canada has a body of competent town-planners ready to take on the work. There is a strange mentality manifest in such matters. Patriotism flares out in certain expected directions and newspapers occupy a great deal of space in assurances of national progress, present and future. But when some really vital work of scientific planning is to be done the astonishing attitude is taken that Canadian planners are looking for jobs and therefore the jobs must be given to foreign firms. As though there were anything disreputable in looking for work, after years of special and expensive training! Really, the town planners of Canada are not being treated fairly by their people. If there are competent men on the spot they are judged to be incompetent because they are on the spot. And if they are somewhere else in the Dominion they are suspected of looking for work.

The Vancouver branch is right in asking for a little reason and magnanimity from their compatriots. Everybody agrees that if engineering work is to be done an engineer must be appointed to do the work, because nobody else can do it, and there is by this time a wholesome habit of looking to the Canadian engineer when work is to be done. In the case of town planning however, civic authorities seem to ask first whether they cannot do the job themselves in their spare time and thus economize, and when they find they cannot, then to order their local engineers to do it in *their* spare time and without additional staff. When this also fails, because local engineers have no spare time from their regular duties and some have given no attention to town planning, then, sometimes, after much waste of time and energy, a planner is called in and the extraordinary conclusion is reached that the work cannot be given to Canadian planners. It is an astonishing situation, and meanwhile Canadian planners are having a worse time than in any other country. Students are asking what is the use of spending years in training in Canadian universities if there is no reasonable chance ahead of professional practice.

The situation has also its national repercussion since in the recent International Congress of town planners at Rome, Canada was the only civilized country that had no representation. Surely the time has come for civic authorities to realize that there is no economy, in the face of town planning need, in refusing to employ a competent planner of Canadian training.

### A PROVINCIAL BUREAU

A further resolution, on the necessity for a

Provincial Bureau of Town Planning, may be quoted:

Apparently the time has arrived when the direction of Town Planning in Canada should be controlled and fostered by a Governmental Department. This is evident by the increasing number of enquiries received by the Vancouver Town Planning Commission and by the Institute for advice on town planning matters. There is also a growing demand in the Province for some better form of control over the subdivision of land, particularly in unorganized districts, and further, the question of Regional Planning is one which is beyond the scope of the individual municipal planning commissions. Your Executive, therefore, have seriously considered the advisability of bringing before the Provincial Government the necessity of creating a Provincial Town Planning office. Certain preliminary steps have already been taken in this regard and there is reason to believe that if sufficient evidence is brought forward to substantiate our claim that the present government would give the question a sympathetic hearing.

This is by no means a new idea on the part of the branch. Such a provision was carefully embodied in the original draft of the British Columbia Town Planning Act of 1925, drawn up by the Branch, but it was sternly rejected by the Government of that day on the ground that town planning in British Columbia must cost the government nothing at all! The province of Alberta has now shown the comprehensive and urgent necessity for such a bureau and has already demonstrated its utility. It will be a great step forward in the history of town planning in British Columbia if the Branch should be able to persuade the present Government to establish a provincial town planning bureau.

### LA PRESSE TAKES A HAND

The great expansion of our towns with their hundreds of thousands and even millions of inhabitants, and with the accumulation of populations in restricted areas, makes town-planning a science of ever-growing importance. Towns which refuse to understand this are running the risk of grave losses and serious annoyances. The Province of Quebec and Montreal do not wish to compromise their progress, or their future by a lack of foresight, still less by an attitude of indifference. A town-planning law, carefully drafted on the model of those which exist in other American cities, has been submitted to the Legislature; the time has come to place town-planning on our provincial statutes.—*La Presse*.

## THE TORONTO DEBACLE

The logic of the Toronto débâcle would seem to be a great Regional Plan for Toronto and environs. The British Minister of Health, the Minister responsible for town planning in England, has recently said that town planning is already out of date, meaning, we surmise, that even if a group of towns plan their own areas there will be rural districts intervening drifting to disorder and piling up expensive problems of bad planning, which will spoil the countryside and make the worst preparation for urban life; not so much because such areas are managed by stupid men as because there are no funds to do any reasonable planning and no controlling intelligence. This is the story everywhere. England is deploring the ruin of the countryside as much as we are. But it has about 80 regional plans ready to meet the trouble, when the Government shall legalize the efforts of the planners.

Toronto has failed to carry a scheme for sectional planning, imperative though it was. In the clamour of newspaper and other "interests" it is useless to draw any sort of reasoned conclusion as to "what the people wanted". The majority of property owners—for intelligent citizens living in handsome apartments or rented houses were not allowed to vote in this triumphant democracy—obviously did not want what was offered to them, though whether their wants had anything to do with town planning is doubtful.

But from the new mayor down there seems to be agreement that town planning has had a "boost" and must be reckoned with. The new mayor has said that now town planning is to be replaced by city planning, which may or may not be something more than juggling with synonymous terms. The new mayor also seems inclined to place the future planning of Toronto in the hands of a permanent staff, which may work out all right, since there are very competent men on the ground, if it is understood that at present all permanent staffs are fully employed and additional work of high value and importance will necessitate relief of the best men from routine duties and additional assistance for the performance of ordinary tasks.

There was at least an argument "put up" that what Toronto needed was a complete plan, which sounds just as good as "comprehensive" plan, and when Vancouver was on the way to a comprehensive plan it discovered that a regional plan, at least in outline was logically necessary.

It is not impossible now that the next move in Vancouver will be to get legal authority, by grace of the Government and the adjoining municipalities and districts, for a complete and authorized Regional Plan for the whole Vancouver peninsula, so that the intervening areas, between town and town, will not drift to confusion; and this by the town planning

will of everybody and not by the least oppression or compulsion.

It seems to us that an inevitable logic is pressing Toronto—now thoroughly awakened to planning ideas—to the greater modern concept of a Regional Plan for Toronto and environs. Then indeed there will be a program for all the talent in Toronto and the mayor will be satisfied in watching Toronto men evolve a planning scheme for the whole region of which he may be justly proud. A mere zoning scheme for Toronto cannot be considered satisfactory, at this date, for so important a city.

We understand that orders have already been issued for a comprehensive plan of Toronto. We cannot think that such a plan can stop short at city limits. Local authorities for twenty miles round should be brought into immediate consultation.

### "FINANCIAL POST" SUMS UP THE TORONTO SITUATION

"In more than one metropolitan centre in Canada, the deepest attention is being given to questions involving the planning of those centres for their future development. The principles upon which these cities should base their planning policies are fundamentally the same. They are familiar to town planning engineers and community development experts. Briefly two important points may be emphasized here: first, that any civic development should be considered in its relation to the whole problem of the lines of future expansion of the city and its surrounding territory; second, that in civic planning the advice of experts should be obtained.

Toronto business men were disappointed that the electors, at the polls on New Year's day, declined to endorse what seemed to be an excellent plan for the opening up of needed streets and breathing areas for the downtown section of the city. But the "plan" faced a hard struggle from the start. It involved a gross expenditure of \$41,000,000 and such a vast undertaking will not be lightly undertaken by a city of even 800,000 people when the time allowed to the electors for consideration is a few scant weeks. Given a longer period in which to study the proposal before them, the citizens of Toronto would probably have voted for it by a small majority.

The spirited campaign of those who favored the downtown plan for Toronto was not in vain. It has served to stimulate interest in city planning in Toronto. There is now almost universal agreement that the city must be rebuilt in certain directions. In short, public opinion is sold on town planning. This is a forward step in itself. Those in control of the city's affairs now have before them the clear duty of going forward with town planning for Toronto.

The first requirement of the city is a regional town planning body, whether an advisory commission,

a commission composing representatives of civic officials of Toronto and its suburban communities, a permanent salaried board or a combination of these. Such a commission will study the needs of the Greater Toronto area as a whole and will attempt to fit every individual scheme into the larger plan for Toronto and its metropolitan area.

The second requirement is a larger expert advice. Town planning is an engineering science just as are architecture, civil engineering, and landscape gardening. The new body charged with planning the city should retain the services of a firm of consulting engineers. If a Toronto firm is chosen, as is proper, these consultants should not hesitate in turn to seek advice from the best town planning engineers in the world, and whether they are American, British or foreign is beside the point. The fee that would be paid for expert advice might be saved many times over. It would be a worth while insurance premium. No business man would spend a million dollars on a building without insuring that he had the best architecture and engineering advice available. Yet business men will often suggest civic works that may have been studied only by clever amateurs or by engineers whose knowledge is not specialized in character.

It may be that every item in the downtown programme rejected by the voters of Toronto on New Year's day will find a place in the final programme. Again it may be that not a single one could be adopted without some alteration.

Toronto should find out what it needs in town planning and make a start on the job without more delay than is needed for expert study and public understanding."

## News and Notes

### WINNIPEG AND REGINA

Winnipeg and Regina seem by way of submitting to the logic of necessity. They are recognizing that town planning is really a special job, needing trained men just bending to that job until it is done. They are considering such appointments. Their incubation periods have been very long. They have talked town planning for fifteen years. They have tried zoning schemes with no conspicuous success, for really, zoning schemes are not good enough for such considerable cities. They "have no magic to stir men's blood" as Daniel Burnham said. They are only little bits of town planning, timid little bits of town planning. They are not real "business." Regional planning is the "business" of 1930.

We recommend the Vancouver method: a very carefully selected group of citizens for a Town Planning Commission, men who have real interest in the subject and know something about it and are willing to spend their time on a special job, and do not date

from the last century; city council instructions to the commission to select a competent firm of consultants to prepare a plan of Greater Winnipeg and Greater Regina at a definite cost and under contract time, for the approval of the council. The councils will then be able to attend to the multitude of duties that come their way, knowing that a group of men, at least as wise as they are, are busy with one particular and important job and are likely to do it well because they have expert cooperation and guidance. We are all asked to worship at the shrine of the business man and yet it is amazing how long it takes some city council business men to see the obvious first steps to effective planning.

"The time has come" says the *Winnipeg Tribune* "for the creation of some other body than a committee composed of busy aldermen who can only give scant attention to the problems of planning that are bound to arise. The preparation of a good city plan requires skilful handling of details, clear vision into the future and good judgment in deciding what is practicable. Once formulated, the plan needs to be kept up to date, and its execution is never completed while the city is growing."

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### QUEBEC HAS MEN OF VISION

Mr. Oliver Asselin, vice-president of the Montreal City Improvement League gave a masterly exposition, in a recent public address, of the proposed Town Planning Act for the Province of Quebec, now before the legislature. He pointed out with much cogency and clearness, what needs lifting into light, that continuity of policy in the development of a city cannot be guaranteed by a succession of city councils and can only be secured by a scientific plan as a background to all civic activities, definitely created to provide for the future and to reach out to the surrounding districts beyond any city limits.

The Montreal papers have admirable reports of this address and the opportunity must here be utilized to register praise of the work of the reporters.

It must be seen, from the abstract of the address here quoted, that the Quebec legislature has been presented with a provincial Bill which will place the province in the forefront of Canadian town planning and profoundly affect its future development—if it should receive the approval of the legislature.

Mr. Asselin is quoted as follows:

Town planning and housing were the two great problems of any city, Mr. Asselin said. The Town Planning and Enabling Act had originated through conviction of a number of Montreal citizens that the time had come to get down to business. Anyone who had studied the city planning problem knew that practically every old city on the North American continent would have to be rebuilt within 20 years.

The first requirement of a town planning



scheme, Mr. Asselin said, was continuity of policy. City councils could not give this. Aldermen, elected for two years, had only begun to learn something of a city's problems when their term was up, and if they had devoted their attention to town planning instead of patronage they probably would not secure re-election.

The Town Planning and Enabling Act provided for the necessary continuity, Mr. Asselin said. The proposed act set up a central provincial board, which acted as a board of appeal, had certain positive duties such as codifying existing town planning statutes and acting in an advisory capacity, and received applications from cities and municipalities for town planning commissions.

A town planning commission when set up would make a master plan for the city. This master plan would show the outlines within which the growth of the city was supposed to take place. It would show projected bridges, railway stations and streets; and partial plans would show minor streets between the major streets indicated on the master plan.

The autonomy of the city was preserved, Mr. Asselin said, for the city itself would have to apply for a commission. A commission would consist of five or seven members and would include the mayor—a man who is supposed to be of superior ability—and sometimes is. The commission would be an emanation of the authority of the city itself.

The authority of a commission might extend beyond the jurisdiction of a single municipality, Mr. Asselin said. The interests of Montreal, for example, were bound up with the interests of many outlying cities and municipalities.

Mr. Asselin said that he often looked at that beautiful island known as Nun's Island and thought of the advantages there would be if only Montreal had foreseen 20 years ago the great city of Verdun and had secured the island as a park for Verdun. "If you want a great city you have to take care of the future."

A most important subject of the bill, Mr. Asselin said, was the subdivision of land, which at present was almost entirely inspired by the cupidity and greed of the land owner.

For this reason the town planning commission would have authority to re-divide land. This had been the case in Germany for many years, where instead of expropriation and mulcting of the city by landowners there was a sensible scheme.

Mr. Asselin said that though Montreal citizens did not realize it their interests were bound up with the interests of Longueuil, Montreal South and St. Lambert. The time would come when Montreal would have to study the city planning problems of these municipalities to avoid making the mess of them that had been of Montreal.

Members of the commission would hold power for six years and would consist of experts. Citizens would be entrusting the future of their city to experts instead of leaving it in the hands of amateurs.

In concluding, Mr. Asselin said that it was unfortunate that there had been no opportunity for citizens to study the bill before it went to the Legislature. Its provisions, however, were so clear and sane, that every well-meaning citizen should stand before it and help to enlist the support of the law-makers.

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#### THE MONTREAL SITUATION

"What is undoubtedly wanted in Montreal is a great master plan such as was designated for the City of Chicago by the eminent architect D. H. Burnham, and which after twenty-five years of magnificent labor on the part of the Chicago Planning Commission is still being worked out in detail—but all in accordance with the broad design of the original plan. Montreal has no such plan notwithstanding the fact that the city is in a much better position to prepare a comprehensive plan than Chicago was, for during the last few years the Technical Service Department of the City Hall, under the direction of George R. MacLeod and the general supervision of H. A. Terreault, Director of Public Works, has been making a detailed survey of every part of the city and district, and from these plans a complete comprehensive plan could be prepared in a few months. The Committee on Town Planning came to the unanimous conclusion that before any general plan could be put into operation a clean-cut Town Planning and Zoning act, embodying certain well-defined regulations, was necessary. The City Improvement League's draft for a Town Planning and Zoning act is the result."—*Frederick Wright*.

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#### GARDEN CITY PROBLEMS

The English Garden cities have not solved all their problems, though they have solved some problems of city building of the first magnitude, regarding chiefly land. A Harvard visitor has been spending a year at Welwyn, as an open-minded student. He says, shortly, and in substance, in an article in the *Welwyn Times*: You have done a great work in getting and keeping control of your land; your leasehold system is a success.

The underlying factor in your success seems to me the communal control of the land. That factor must never be lost sight of, for, without it, the chances of success would long ago have vanished into the profits of the land agent and "jerry builder." There is not a single private building development immune from the ultimate fate of them all—the discovery of some loophole in the

best drawn leases through which somebody's cupidity creeps in to batten on the community's amenities.

And what are these amenities for which Welwyn is distinctive? I should divide them into two broad groups, physical and social. There are many important aspects of each which deserve a more extended discussion than space allows. But there are one or two which are so interesting, because of their uniqueness and their significance for the future, that they seem especially worth noting.

Among the town planning aspects of the physical amenities, no one can fail to be delightfully impressed by the ingenious lay out of the streets. The development of old Handside Lane, with its fine trees and open spaces, is an outstanding example. Again, the skilful use of street intersections (resulting from the communal ownership of land) as garden and grass plots, adds much to the attractiveness both of living in and of passing through the city. Most important, perhaps, from this point of view, is the application of intelligence (again the result of the control of land) to the distribution of housing, business and industry. Most communities try to lock the door after the land which makes it possible has been stolen and the opportunity lost. When Welwyn has four or five times its present population, its inhabitants will be grateful as well as proud that industry is properly segregated, and that they are not compelled to live with even your present attractive factories as next-door neighbours.

But there is another aspect of the physical amenities which is of importance—the constructional. That has to do with everything from streets to doorlatches. Here, again, there is much of which to be proud in Welwyn. As a whole, services (water, sewage, lights, etc.) are ahead of population rather than behind—a blessing for which only those who have suffered from the reverse can perhaps be duly thankful.

But the social amenities of Welwyn are no less significant for the future of the Great Society. If yours was at all a typical case of the friendly and hospitable welcome which the stranger—and the foreigner—within your gates receives, then the Great Society is indeed being built here and now in Welwyn. For the first thing that strikes the newcomer, into whatever group he happens to fall, is the genuine interest of neighbours and friends in his sharing in the life and activities of the group. And the number and variety of these interests and groups to which he may be attached himself are, even to a citizen of the greatest nation of "joiners" in the world, well nigh staggering. It is unnecessary to recapitulate them; it would be hard to imagine a hobby so individual that someone in Welwyn could not be

found as a fellow-enthusiast. To paraphrase the title of a recent American book, Welwyn offers everything from Pinafores to Politics.

He has some friendly criticism, but so have the promoters—of themselves. They say:

Manufacturers hesitate to establish their plants in Welwyn Garden City until they can be sure of getting workers. Workers will not come here until work is available and they can find houses. And, according to the normal working of the law of supply and demand, it is unlikely that houses will be built greatly in excess of applications from prospective tenants. How is this vicious circle to be broken?

The more enterprising Canadian new towns—Powell River, Pine Falls—do not find the problem insoluble, that is the company towns of this generation. Many company towns of the last generation were deplorable examples of callous neglect of the housing conditions of their workers. But some of the new large scale industries in Canada, such as the pulp and power industries, have accepted the obligation to house their workers. Some are doing the job admirably and with fine humanity and taking great pride in it—such as those mentioned. Some are still depending too much on cabins and shacks (which would not be allowed in England).

Some American firms in British Columbia, exploiting Canadian forests for the magnificent timber, are planning for villages and towns on entirely modern lines, with modern cottages and public services. The obligation to house their workers is accepted without demur. It is true the garden cities are not company towns, but it looks as though the large manufacturers settling there should not leave this social problem entirely in the hands of the community.

In this connection there is a town planning professional problem in British Columbia. Doubtless the American firms, exploiting the timber resources of British Columbia, will employ Canadian labour for the common tasks. The town planners of British Columbia, and the architects, think they, too, should have a look-in on the planning and construction of these new villages, and they are inclined to argue that their Government, in this frankly protectionist country, might insist that the employment of *their* labour should be part of timber contracts. They think this would happen if the national situations were reversed.

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#### SKYSCRAPERS

"At last the Regional Plan of New York and Environs has issued the part of its report dealing with skyscrapers. The emphasis of the statement is upon a continuation and enlargement of skyscraper building. We are presented with a picture of a great structure reaching to the clouds and straddling a whole street, in the neighborhood of

City Hall. There should be, the report advises, no limitation in height. There is, to be sure, an accompanying caution. Skyscrapers must be properly distributed about the city so as not to increase congestion, and each must be surrounded with sufficient open space or low buildings so that it may be seen and may not throttle traffic. We fear that the major emphasis will be effective while the caution is ignored. Who is to be responsible for the proper spacing of the tall buildings? Where, in particular, can the exact population of a new skyscraper be set down on a given spot without overtaxing existing or possible facilities? And who is to bear the cost of the surrounding open spaces or low buildings? Can we allow one property owner to capitalize valuable land with a many-storied structure while we forbid neighboring owners from doing so? Or is the public to subsidize the skyscraper owner by buying the surrounding land? If so, why? The economically just method would be to assess against the skyscraper the cost of the essential space around it, plus any extra public services it necessitates. But, of course, if this were done, there would be no economic possibility of building it. The skyscraper is, at bottom, a device for profiteering at the expense of the community."—*The New Republic*.

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#### IN PRAISE OF THE ENGINEER

The British *Journal of the Town Planning Institute* gives first place to a paper by Captain W. E. James, Engineer of Welwyn City, on "Engineering Aspects of Garden City Development", which illustrates the extended sweep of the engineer's interests, in view of modern town planning problems, and the limitations of the modern city engineer who can only see one job at a time and cannot relate it to a total planning problem. It also illustrates how a flourishing town of 9,000 people can be made in a decade from agricultural territory, twenty miles from town, by business methods and public ownership of land.

In proposing a vote of thanks:

Sir Theodore Chambers, K.B.E. said it gave him great pleasure when the President asked him to propose the vote of thanks because he owed Capt. James thanks not only for reading the paper but for all the work which was described in the paper. What Capt. James had put down on paper with his native humility, did not perhaps strike anyone reading it the first time as so big a thing as it did one who had lived for the ten years watching Capt. James doing the work day by day. When he first met Capt. James in 1919 on the site of what was now Welwyn Garden City there was nothing to be seen except a few cottages and an area of four square miles of virgin agricultural land, a few muddy lanes, and, of course, none of

the services that civilization required for a town. Capt. James had had possibly a somewhat unique experience as an engineer in having superintended and carried out the whole of the services that modern civilization demanded for a town which now had 9,000 inhabitants, and what was probably of more vital interest, he had in fact covered all the fundamental engineering problems relative to a town of 70,000 or even 100,000 inhabitants. What he had done in laying the ground work of the road system, the water supply and the main drainage, and in conjunction with the architect, the town planning lines of the town could never be undone. It was there for all time and merely required quite small *ad hoc* extensions to meet all the necessities of the future. It was extremely interesting from the sociological point of view. It meant that a town, however small it was, had to-day to be as fully equipped as the most up-to-date and largest town in the world. The garden city had to be thought out in every detail of what was to come afterwards, and that applied not only to the engineering details, but to all the sociological details, and it required a wealth of imagination.

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#### PLANNING FOR SASKATOON

The city of Saskatoon is taking town planning seriously and seems to be proceeding with some originality and a good deal of common sense. The city council have appointed a Town Planning Commission with a stronger contingent of technical men than is customary and seem disposed to give the commission a reasonable chance to do something. Professor C. J. MacKenzie, Dean of the Engineering faculty of the University of Saskatchewan is chairman and other members are Mr. J. E. Underwood, Civil Engineer, E. H. Phillips, Dominion Land Surveyor and Frank Martin, Architect.

During the year much work has been done in the preparation of plans, with the aid of several draftsmen who have been engaged for the purpose. The procedure seems to be to work out a plan of a tentative character under the guidance of the technical men who are members of the Commission. This will later be submitted to the council and to the criticisms and recommendations of a consultant. Mr. A. E. K. Bunnell, of Toronto, has been engaged with this in view. The method seems to be economical and promises reasonable cooperation between the local technical advisors and the appointed expert.

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#### PLANNING FOR WINDSOR, ONT.

Mr. Thomas Adams has prepared a preliminary Town Planning report for the city of Windsor, Ont., which is now under consideration by the City Council.



**WHERE THERE IS NO ZONING BYLAW: OTTAWA**

How can a fine street of handsome and expensive single houses maintain its character and conserve its values? Not by private restrictions made at the time of land sale, for these expire and usually expire when properties have reached their maximum value in virtue of home culture, such as gardens, lawns and trees.

Then one or two residents, who wish to exploit these values for non-conforming uses may defeat the desires of the majority for continued restriction.

Then the values that have been created may be destroyed, twenty-five or fifty per cent and all kinds of ill-feeling and discontent ensue.

The cure for such glaring injustice is zoning. Ottawa has had a zoning plan "on file" for five years. Yet situations such as the following recur and who is going to tell the non-conformists that they must not do as they like with their property—without a zoning by-law? The non-conformist may take the matter to the courts and the city—if it should decide to protect the home values of its residents may be mulet in costs.

Here is the situation—once more—in a paragraph quoted from a local paper:

Mr. E. Wilson presented a petition asking that the city pass a bylaw to provide that nothing but single dwellings might be erected on Monkland avenue. This was stipulated in the provisions made when the land was sold, but the restriction expired on January 1. Mr. Wilson said 35 out of the 41 property owners had signed the petition and only two had refused. H. D. Marshall wrote protesting against the proposed restriction. The board will have the city clerk check up on the signatures and will get a report from Noulan Cauchon, of the town planning commission.

There is said to be a "snag". Ottawa cannot proceed with zoning because the Ontario legislature has cut out of the zoning clause the vital word "location"—thus eviscerating the zoning Act, Controller Tulley has battled valiantly with the legislature to have the word replaced, but has been beaten.

Yet other cities in Ontario are zoning. They have believed themselves right in demanding sufficient home-rule to zone their cities and they have amended their building bylaws to get over the difficulty.

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**CANADIAN PLANNERS GET A LOOK IN**

Messrs. Wilson, Bunnell & Borgstrom, Limited, have been retained as Consultants by the Town Planning Commission of Saskatoon. Mr. A. E. K. Bunnell is now in Saskatoon and expects to have a Zoning by-law in the hands of the Commission before the building season opens. Mr. Carl A. Borgstrom, Landscape Architect of Wilson, Bunnell & Borgstrom, Limited, is now in Jamaica in connection with the

landscaping of the grounds of the new Canadian West Indies Hotel.

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**THE SKYSCRAPER SCHOOL—AND REPORTERS**

Mr. Thomas Adams points out that our note in December issue on "The Skyscraper School" went astray on the facts and sends us another newspaper despatch that conveys an impression of the addresses made at the architects' dinner in London, exactly opposite to that we quoted from the *Montreal Star*. The despatch we quoted stated that "stirring defences of the skyscraper of New York were given last night when the architects club met here . . . Each speaker agreed that the skyscraper had gone farther in solving New York's efficiency problem and expressed the belief that it is the unlimited hope of solving New York's social and economic problems".

We commented on the one-legged comparative and remarked that "even the reporter sounded hilarious" and challenged the statement made. But we could not guess that another reporter was despatching an exactly opposite impression of the significance of the meeting.

We quote the despatch of the *Evening Post* sent by Mr. Adams and resign the last relic of belief in the infallibility of the Press:

An American architect who builds skyscrapers has advised British architects not to erect any in London.

William A. Delano, president of the New York branch of the American Institute of Architects speaking before the Architecture Club in London, said he felt that Americans "are gradually being crushed by these monsters which have made life about as sterile as it can possibly be for the ordinary man."

"I hope you will not be captivated by this particular phase of our experiment," he said. "Unless you are ready to swallow our civilization whole, it would seem a mistake to copy any part of it."

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**PRINCE ALBERT, SASKATCHEWAN PLANNING PROJECT**

An editorial in the Prince Albert *Daily Herald* states that the local city council "has at last realized that the city's need is a comprehensive town planning scheme to promote its orderly growth and has reached the momentous decision to proceed without delay to bring an expert to the city for consultation." The writer seems to have a background of fear—knowing city councils—that infant mortality may ensue, but gives cogent reasons why it shouldn't. Usually where these "momentous decisions" are made there is a ten years incubation period, to change the figure; then a bad egg, which nobody will have anything to do with, and it has to be buried to make the air salubrious.

## REPORT OF THE TOWN PLANNING COMMITTEE

Association of Dominion Land Surveyors Annual Convention, February 5-6, 1930.

### INTERNATIONAL TOWN PLANNING CONVENTION AT ROME

In September of last year the Twelfth International Town Planning Congress was held in the city of Rome, and 1,500 representatives were present from all parts of the world—except from Canada. Such a gathering would seem to indicate that town planning is being taken seriously by many thoughtful and competent persons. The fact that Canada, almost alone of all the civilized nations of the world, had no representation at this Congress should lead us to ask if we have shed quickly enough the natural if primitive objections to this great social movement. The United States and England, to mention only two other nations, have each something more than eight hundred towns under planning law, while we cannot say that a dozen towns or cities in Canada are consciously controlling their development under the guidance of a complete scientific plan.

### REPLANNING OTTAWA CENTRE

All the same, there are significant signs that town planning is taking permanent root in our country. This report will endeavor, as briefly as possible, to indicate some marks of definite progress.

And, first of all, the replanning of the central part of the Capital City is now under way and bids fair to survive the objections of those who find themselves bewildered and frightened by great schemes of town and city planning. It is not impossible that the first objectors to the surgical operations that are being carried out will shortly be telling their country friends that all towns and cities should follow the example of Ottawa and arrange for a fine and beautiful open space in the centre of their city; that heart-congestion in a city is a most unwholesome thing, from a business as well as from a social point of view. They will most likely be saying; "Why Boston spent \$3,000,000 on widening Stuart Street, and new buildings to the value of \$16,000,000 have been erected, which have given Boston an additional income of \$486,000 and have created Park Square, a new business district of the finest economic and architectural promise. What is the use of great architecture unless it can be seen? Who wants to imitate New York?"

As you know, there are matured plans for the extension of this open area, involving the removal of the police buildings and the City Hall, the covering of the railway tracks and the selection of some suitable place for a war memorial which will probably be one of the most impressive in the world. Beautiful boulevards have been built and it is now commonly stated that there are few cities in the world where residents and visitors can traverse the city on

pleasanter parkways without once passing through congested centres.

This is not to say that everything is being done in Ottawa that might be done from a planning point of view. The zoning scheme which has been "on file" for five years is still on file and there is no sign yet of a great Regional Plan comparable to those of Washington and other great Capitals, reaching out to suburban districts which will sometime be part of the Capital City and which now are developing in uncontrolled promiscuity and piling up planning problems which will add enormously to the cost of future re-arrangements. England has now 80 regional plans in course of development and the United States has at least a score.

### BRITISH COLUMBIA

In the provinces, where Canadian Planning really receives its legislative authority (aside from the Federal District of Ottawa) there are some encouraging signs that planning is taking root. British Columbia is still in the lead with a developed plan for Vancouver and the Greater Vancouver which now includes Point Grey and South Vancouver. This is not only a magnificent plan on paper but has been accepted by the city as a practical and working program for the next forty or fifty years. The signs are too that the Vancouver plan is destined to remove the common fallacy that a comprehensive plan necessarily means the immediate expenditure of large sums of money. It will doubtless also illustrate the fact that in any progressive city money will be spent in any case for public improvements and that it is the part of wisdom to spend this money working towards a definite plan instead of towards a haphazard future with all the risks that expensive and irredeemable mistakes will be made, so that future planning, as in Toronto, will become a nightmare of impossibility.

The chief mistake made in British Columbia, as in some other provinces, was the refusal of the British Columbia legislature to appoint a central Town Planning executive, which would have carried on the lesson of Vancouver to all other towns and cities of the province and would have had the means and power to initiate similar projects in other parts of British Columbia. The signs are now that this mistake may be rectified since Alberta has taken this step and bids fair to take the western lead in town planning activity.

### THE NEW ALBERTA ACT

For the new Alberta Act, with a central planning executive appointed to stimulate and co-ordinate town planning activities, both in established cities, new and smaller towns and in rural districts, promises to be a great success. It was passed last year on

the initiative of Premier Brownlee who is profoundly impressed with the common sense of planning, both for town and country.

The Act may be briefly described as a Town and Rural Planning Act. The first sensible step taken was to appoint a director and staff to popularize the Act and to make it workable. Alberta had had a Town Planning Act for fifteen years and it had been a dead Act, not because it was a bad Act but because there was nobody appointed to bring it into operation and make it intelligible to the people. This has been the case also in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, and there also the Town Planning Acts have been practically useless. In Saskatchewan there is a competent town planning director but with a quite inadequate staff for educational purposes, and in Manitoba it has not yet been recognized that the duties of a provincial town planning director cannot be profitably discharged by an overworked superintendent of roads. In Ontario all appeals for such an appointment have been steadily ignored.

In an admirable paper contributed to the *Canadian Engineer* Mr. T. D. leMay, City Surveyor, Toronto, says that unless there is created in each province some form of central bureau for the co-ordination of town planning spirit it must continue for some time, at any rate, a haphazard effort of a few of the more enlightened urban centres. Mr. leMay continues;

Town planning is neither infectious nor contagious to any marked degree and only seems to flourish as the result of definite action on the part of individuals in different districts. The first duty of a Provincial Town Planning Bureau, as long as legislation is permissive, might reasonably be conceived to be the provision of lectures and literature designed to bring home to the man in the street the advantages of foresight and orderly arrangement in municipal affairs and undertakings to the end that municipal elections may mean, not so much the success of the seekers for political honors, as the creation throughout the province of legislative bodies imbued with the idea that their one big function is the betterment of social and living conditions for their constituents.

Proper technical advice and guidance would seem naturally to follow. Town planning practice is still nebular and a provincial Town Planning Bureau, to form a clearing house for ideas, the centralization of solutions of problems, and the establishment of town planning standards could not fail to be a convenience and advantage to individual cities. It may be true that any town planning is better than none, but fortuitous and experimental town planning may do more harm than good. Scientific method is not picked up at street corners.

Alberta appointed a provincial director and staff and associated with him an Advisory Board on which the Premier and the Minister of Municipal Affairs are the government members. The chairman of the

board is also a member of the legislature. The other members comprise a civil engineer, a farmer, a financier, a park superintendent and two members of the Women's Institute. The function of the director is to study the town and rural districts of the province of Alberta and to take all possible means to advise localities both in town and country as to their planning needs and to render all possible assistance in the initiation and carrying out of planning projects. As the appointed agent of the Premier for the better planning of urban and rural Alberta the director has an effective introduction to local authorities and is less likely to be told to mind his own business than a visiting stranger might be.

At a recent meeting of the Pacific North Western Association of Planning Commissions held at Vancouver, Mr. H. L. Seymour, Provincial Director of Town Planning for Alberta, presented a report of the working out of the Alberta method which was so well received that the Vancouver section decided to petition their government for a similar appointment. A few notes from Mr. Seymour's paper will be of interest to you, since the subject matter touches the real reason why Canadian planning has not made more rapid progress. So far, our towns have been like a collection of excellent schools without any teacher, and at present we have a number of big schools like Winnipeg where the trustees have carried the idea that it would be a great economy not to appoint any teacher at all, but just do the work themselves in their spare time.

Mr. Seymour reports that already some twelve town planning commissions have been officially appointed and these commissions are to be called together for periodical conference and exchange of ideas. As you will understand, the frequent difficulty with local commissions is the absence of ideas due to lack of information and experience. The central office has compiled such utilities as model building bylaws and zoning bylaws for the consideration of town planning commissions and other civic boards. Specific attention is being given to small towns and villages where local organization is apt to be poor, on the perfectly sound theory that the beginnings of a town are of very great importance. An effort is being made to encourage horticultural societies by the provision of grants for the planting of trees in streets, parks and other public areas.

Special attention is being given to subdivisions with a view to site planning and better regard for topography, and careful regulations have been drawn up for the guidance of subdividers. The regulations contain a provision that with certain exceptions 10% of the total area of a subdivision is to be set aside for public or park purposes. In the case of residential subdivisions bordering railways, a one hundred and fifty foot park strip is required between the nearest street and the railroad right-of-way. The regulations for rural areas take the form of elementary zoning regulations.

There are also provisions for the re-plotting of subdivisions, after obtaining the consents of owners of 60% of the parcels of land concerned and of 60% of the assessed value of the land affected. It is claimed that these modern regulations for subdivisions are likely to result in better housing conditions throughout the province.

Much attention is being given to the scenic advantages of the Alberta highways and reasonable control of road-side advertising is already in operation. The work of the town planning board extends even to farm-stead planning, and wherever necessary and agreeable to the farmers concerned, advice and assistance are given to farmers in the arrangement of their homestead buildings. The province has an appropriation of \$25,000 for the acquisition of park sites and already some \$20,000 has been spent on this work. You will see the importance to a province of selecting areas of special interest and beauty for provincial parks before they have been permanently injured by thoughtless uses. Attention is also given to the amenities of school grounds. An effort is also being made in the Peace River country towards a new policy of homestead development by which settlers may be arranged in something like village groups.

Alberta also promises to take the lead in university instruction in town planning. Town planning is now a compulsory subject in the final courses in architecture and engineering, and for the fall term Mr. Seymour is taking the lecturing duties. In the United States there are about 80 colleges and universities offering town planning instruction and Harvard University has just founded a Chair in Regional Planning and has established a Master's degree in City Planning.

You will see that something is being attempted in Alberta of a very comprehensive and far-reaching character. The Premier's idea is that the benefits of planning cannot be secured by the mere planning or re-planning of one or two adventurous towns or cities, while the rest of the province, including priceless areas of natural beauty and expensive highways, are drifting to the confusion and inefficiency of fortuitous development. He would plan the province as a unit and pay special attention to the important first beginnings. For this great purpose a central educational planning executive is indispensable and the Premier of Alberta has appointed such an executive and seems determined to supply the widest opportunity for such an executive to function for the general benefit of the province.

The relation of this executive to private and professional practice has yet to work itself out. It would seem, at first, that if the province is to do so much there is little room for the professional town planner in Alberta. The signs are however that if the Alberta program is carried out, that the mass of work all over the province cannot possibly be done by the central executive and must involve the

employment of a large number of independent professional workers. At present the project is largely a programme and patience will need to be exercised to see how it works out.

It will be manifest to all careful observers that town planning in Canada has so far badly-needed Government stimulus and that the laissez-faire principle has not yet created a vigorous independent profession for town planning students and practitioners in Canada. The Alberta method may supply the Government stimulus which so far has not begun to compare with that of other countries.

#### THE TORONTO DEBACLE

In Toronto town planning has been at the hustings and has come out bruised, battered and broken. From the status of an academic subject for idle discussion it has burst into a political conflagration which has moved the passions of the citizens, just as evolution was lately born again in the State of Tennessee. By this time all the newspaper writers in Toronto must be expert town planners. Our sympathies are with the real planner, Mr. Norman D. Wilson, who toiled terribly in a public cause which appears now to lie in ruins. One thing seems clear: that town planning cannot make progress with all the newspapers demanding that the new streets that are to be shall pass by their office doors. They will have made you familiar with the facts and we need not cover this shell-shocked ground. The new mayor has announced that city planning is now to take the place of town planning. If Toronto's tribulations should issue in the creation of a comprehensive City and Regional Plan for Toronto and environs, perhaps the Toronto planners will be able to say with the poet:

Say not the struggle naught availeth,  
The labor and the wounds are vain.

#### HAMILTON

Hamilton has recently had the distinction of a page-wide eulogy in a Toronto weekly concerning its very fine plan for harbor development and park extension, with the sensational title "Hamilton Shows Toronto How". Whether energetic means are being taken to carry out the plan we do not know and suspect the article in question of excessive colour. The more sober Hamilton *Spectator* says that "town planning commissions in this city have had discouraging experiences. The last one to function was given every kind of support but financial. Not one important surgical operation has been made."

In Hamilton the Parks Board seems to be in charge of the plans and to be using its appropriation of \$180,000 a year with much foresight and wisdom in securing desirable areas for park development. Hamilton has a magnificent opportunity for effective planning and a publicity campaign on the lines of the Chicago plan might soon place Hamilton among the small group of leaders in Canadian planning.



**MONTREAL**

The engineering staff of Montreal are said to have ready a zoning scheme for the city, but what the city council will do with it remains to be seen. Town planning has been a subject for polite conversation in Montreal since the young men and maidens were in their cradles.

The City Improvement League of Montreal has worked for decades at the idea that Montreal needs a great comprehensive plan for the city and region, but the city council, shall we say has had other things to do?

Lately this fine league of public-spirited men and women has drafted a provincial Town and Regional Planning Bill for the province of Quebec of considerable originality and great value. It is expected that the Bill will come before the legislature during the present session, with a fair chance of passing.

**OTHER CITIES**

The City of Windsor, Ontario, has now a preliminary planning report before it prepared by Mr. Thomas Adams.

In the province of Saskatchewan 15 new townsites received the approval of the provincial town planning director during the last year. This means that town planning oversight is being exercised in Saskatchewan at the point where it is most needed, that is at the beginning of town development where most of the expensive mistakes of past planning have been perpetrated.

The city of Saskatoon has appointed a strong town planning commission of which Professor C. J. MaceKnzie, Dean of the Faculty of Engineering of the University of Saskatchewan, is chairman and E. H. Phillips, Dominion Land Surveyor, J. E. Underwood, Civil Engineer and Frank Martin, Architect are members, making an unusually strong group of technical men on the commission. Several draftsmen have been employed and a considerable amount of preliminary work has already been done. The commission has engaged a consultant to go over the work and make recommendations as to future developments.

The Maritime provinces were earliest in the field with provincial town planning Acts but failure to appoint provincial officers to carry out the acts has left them sterile and unprofitable. Occasional paragraphs come from St. John saying that the mayor thinks that something should be done in town planning, but since this has been going on since 1912 it cannot be considered exciting news.

In a number of other towns there are flutters of town planning interest which ought to be utilized by the city councils and translated into programs, but city councils generally do not seem to be alive to the importance of the movement. Even in Saskatchewan the annual report states that the municipalities generally do not seem to be actively interested in town planning.

Regina and Winnipeg, where the subject has received a good deal of attention for many years, may yet see the wisdom of the Vancouver method of appointing an outside firm with no local affiliations to take charge of their work and contract to execute it within a definite time. The best local talent is commonly the least appreciated by local authorities.

**WINNIPEG AND NORTHERN MANITOBA**

After years of wearisome struggle against unenlightened traditionalism of the land speculative order, Mr. Avent and Mr. Hobbs, two of the most competent town planners in Canada, have succeeded in passing a partial zoning bylaw in Winnipeg. But so long ago as 1914 Winnipeg killed off a regional planning group of the finest quality, which by now might have placed Winnipeg at the head of Canadian planning, and Mr. Hobbs has resigned twice because life is too short to struggle endlessly with irresistible obscurantism.

Fortunately Mr. Hobbs' appointment as surveyor and Townsite engineer for Northern Manitoba, under the Manitoba legislature, marks the beginning of what may prove to be a new era in the development of new towns in Canada.

As you know, the townsites of Churchill, Flin Flon and other new settlements in Northern Manitoba are to be planned under Mr. Hobbs' direction and under direct control of the province; and, though the land policy has not yet been settled, it is more than probable that the leasehold principle will be adopted in order to maintain unit control of development and to avoid the notorious evils of land speculation, which in scores of cases has strangled progress and deprived industrious families of the legitimate use of land.

At the annual town planning convention held in Winnipeg last June a most interesting account was given of the creation of a company town at Pine Falls, Manitoba, on careful town planning lines. In other parts of Canada there are also some interesting projects of this character which contain rich promise for the future.

**CONCLUSION**

We cannot resist the conclusion that what is needed in every province is a provincial town planning organization adequately and generously staffed such as now exists in Alberta, to function as a province-wide educational bureau, reaching out to stagnant areas and even to the smallest rural settlements and supplying a constant stimulus to town and rural planning activity. There is no doubt that this is the secret of the astonishing progress that is being made in planning in Great Britain, United States and other countries.

There is nothing to report concerning the reorganization of the Federal Town Planning office.