

(1) Parks

The President has mentioned that I am to speak on the open spaces in Towns and I wish I had a better gift of the tongue to do justice to this important part of Town planning. I have always been interested in Town planning and the lay out of towns and my work has brought me into close touch with the Municipalities of the cities and towns of the Union. The Government feels it should help and advise them all it can and it has been my privilege in Capetown and Johannesburg recently to do a little for both places.

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My visit and stay in England and Europe was extremely interesting and I visited the capitals of Germany, Holland, Switzerland, Italy and France, as part of my work over there.

Visiting
Legation

On the same ^{night} ship going over was the District Governor ^{next} on his way to the International Congress at Nice. There were 2 or 3 other Rotarians on board and we had an enjoyable time finishing up with a Rotary dinner. *given by the District*

I was particularly interested on this visit in the parks and open spaces of the larger cities and the care and attention being paid to the improvements that are being carried out for the benefit of the citizens. I have visited England and Europe fairly consistently every 3 or 4 years for the last few years but somehow I was particularly impressed on this visit by the value to the communities of the larger towns of the large parks and open spaces.

Council

Why, on this occasion I do not quite know unless it was due to the fact that I was laid up with leg trouble and could only hobble about. As we were living only

/about

at Lancaster Gate

about 250 yards from Kensington Gardens I could just manage to crawl over there and so spent a good deal of time sitting under the trees, meditating, possibly on my past sins.

Our living so close to the Park was due to the fact that we had our little son with us and we had to live near an open place where he could exercise his little legs.

Kensington Gardens, as most of you will know, is a continuation of Hyde Park and, practically adjacent again you get Green and St. James Parks. These Parks are in the centre of congested areas and surrounded by very busy streets carrying enormous traffic and, together with other Parks and the many squares in London (a wonderful feature of London) form most marvellous fresh air and recreational centres for the people who live around them.

During my enforced rest in the Park I watched and chatted with people and was forcibly struck with the use by the public of the Parks and the pleasure they undoubtedly got out of them. I found that many business men and women walked to their work through the Parks under the trees and could get from Kensington and Notting Hill Gate right thro' to Trafalgar Square walking on turf practically the whole way, a distance of some $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles.

The Parks are wonderful for their fine shade trees of all varieties and more than anything for the fact that the public can wander unrestrictedly almost everywhere, and for the chairs provided for rest and ease.

The swimming in the Serpentine and the boating are also a great attraction and, for the quieter and more meditative type there are secluded walks, ornamental water, fountains and other amenities. /Another

Another valuable amenity is the round pond in Kensington Gardens, and on any fine day this was being used by crowds of enthusiastic amateurs trying out their model yachts and steam and electric boats of all descriptions from the small home made affair to the elaborate yachts and torpedo boats. The sightseers were just as enthusiastic.

I have only touched on these particular Parks but there are many others in and around London. Regents Park, Hampstead Heath, Richmond and Bushey Parks and others all useful and beautiful.

As I have mentioned, I was particularly struck with the value of these Parks to the public of all classes, and I was impressed with the vision of those earlier people who planned them leaving them as a fine legacy for the present generation.

Without the forethought of those people who came before us London would be a dismal place to live in. *Other cities in Europe: Paris & Berlin*

Now, getting nearer home to Pretoria or any of the large towns of South Africa, it may be thought that such amenities are not so necessary in this Country with its fine climate and endless veldt but the fact remains it is just as essential here as in England or France or Germany.

In Pretoria we have some nice small Parks but the only place reasonably easy of access where people can relax is at the Fountains. The Wonderboom, which the Municipality have taken over is some little distance out. *but is a valuable acquisition*
The Fountains is small and at holiday time is almost unhealthily crowded.

It should be realised that it is not everyone who can afford a car, and the fact that the Fountains is so crowded indicates /there

there is a decided want for more recreational spaces than we have at present,

I would like to see the Municipality of Pretoria lay out a large park close to Pretoria left in its natural veldt state but planted freely with shade trees. We are fortunate in this country inasmuch as trees grow some ten times as fast out here as in Europe.

I would like to see them provide for a large pond for the use of the younger members of the community generally.

I found there was tremendous enthusiasm for model boat building and sailing among a certain section and this would be a fine thing for similarly placed young people here.

Clapham & Webb a week or so back were telling us about the new boys' club they have recently helped to start to give a particular section of the young people of Pretoria who are living in cramped, miserable homes something they cannot get in their homes. They did not particularly mention hobbies but a hobby of some sort is one of the most useful things to give young people a sane and steady outlook on life. If facilities for using their models were provided a section for this would, I am sure, prove of much interest and value.

I am sure the Municipality could find a suitable place. *for much a natural Park*

There is a piece of ground to the South of the Kopjes running west on the opposite side of the road from the Zoo. This is close to Town. There are many spots not too far from Town but if the matter is left too long these will disappear.

It should not be overlooked that Pretoria is only just commencing to /grow

are secluded walks, ornamental water, fountains and other amenities. /Another

(5)

grow and in 20 years time it may be 2 or 3 times its present size.

In conclusion I would say that these remarks apply equally to all the larger Towns in the Union. *and while there*

is a fair amount of work being done in this respect I feel the matter is not dealt with as seriously as it should be.

There are of course the Town Manning Bodies & I hope they are giving full consideration to this side of Town Manning