

Surveyors of The Past

BY DON W. THOMSON

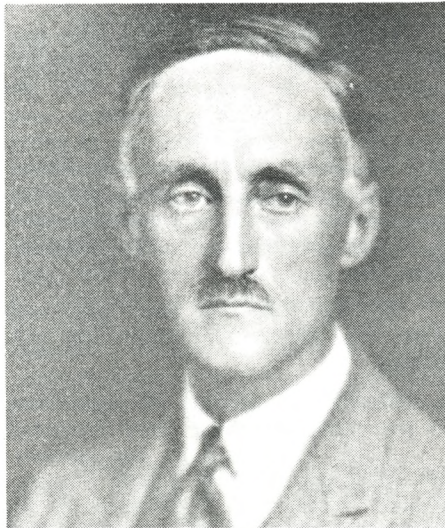
T. D. leMAY, O.L.S.

Tracy Deavin leMay (1884-1954) was born in the county of Kent, England. Emigrating to Canada he located in Toronto, working for a time with such well-known land surveyors as Speight and Van Nostrand. Commissioned an Ontario Land Surveyor in May, 1909, he became a member of the Association of Ontario Land Surveyors in that same year. In the following year, at the age of 26, he joined the staff of the City of Toronto as City Surveyor. By 1930 the City Surveyor's office had greatly expanded and had become the City Planning and Surveying Department, continuing as such until 1954.

In the course of time leMay was given such important additional functions and responsibilities as City Traffic Engineer, Director of the City of Toronto Planning Board, Director of the Toronto and York Planning Board and, in 1953, Director of the Metropolitan Toronto Planning Board. Endowed with a remarkable capacity for sustained hard work leMay spoke to scores of public meetings to explain city rezoning policies at a time when Metro Toronto was coming into existence.

Tracy leMay's ability as a public speaker soon became widely recognized. He was quick to gain the attention of an audience, using a witty approach at the outset of his remarks or by making an immediate frontal and forceful assault on the subject at hand. While speaking on his feet he was able, on very short notice, to review, analyze and recommend courses of action. In 1921, for instance, copies of his address to the Ontario Town Planning and Housing Conference were in particularly lively and wide demand. His was an open, engaging frankness of expression, fortified by his customary fair-mindedness and, despite, his solemn-looking photographs, an ever-present sense of humour. In the Association of the Ontario Land Surveyors he served with distinction in various responsible capacities including the posts of Chairman of Council, Secretary-Treasurer, Chairman of the Board of Examiners and Chairman of the Town Planning Committee.

As a departmental administrator leMay's qualifications and vision proved unique. He revealed profound technical knowledge in all fields related to the planning, growth and development of a community. He regarded such activity as the natural realm of the land surveyor. "Town Planning," he would say, "is not a fad. It is going to be one of the most



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important factors in the development of this province . . . and the foundation of it all is the work of the surveyor in his influence on the growth of communities."

His fame was not confined to Canada. During his career as City Surveyor of Toronto and while serving on various planning boards leMay was mainly responsible for noteworthy improvements in road systems and zoning laws. Because of his special experience, natural gifts and mature wisdom he was frequently consulted by leading planning officials of the United States and other countries. The appointment of leMay as vice-president of the Town Planning Institute of Canada in 1953, the year before his death, crowned a lengthy period of his work in and for that organization.

In this latter part of the 20th century it has been more widely realized throughout Canada that good subdivision design, in addition to fitting better into local topography, should include and ensure the most efficient use of land, permit the most economical installation of municipal services, promote health and safety as well as providing maximum amenities of living. Tracy leMay foresaw all this at an early stage in the growth of the province and did his level best to alert his fellow surveyors to the fact that the land surveyor, in relation to these objectives, should be a leader, rather than a servant of land development, involved in the expansion of urban communities. He felt strongly that a surveyor should not only be a measurer of land but should make surveys as well of land potentialities for beneficial use. He saw the land surveyor as a human instrument by which conditions under which people lived could be vastly improved. He was that rare combination - a man of vision and a man of action . . . as well as a man before his time.

A LETTER FROM JIM DEARDEN

June 9, 1977

Fellow Members

This concerns a resolution which was passed at the recent meeting of the Canadian Council of Land Surveyors at Ottawa. It is a resolution which has a good deal of human interest in it, a bit different from the average run-of-the mill motions which are common to meetings of this nature.

It was moved by Alex Hittel, President of the Alberta Association and seconded by John Matthews, President of the British Columbia Association and is similar to one passed at the annual meeting of the Alberta Association in April. Needless to say it was unanimously approved by all the delegates and really appreciated by the representatives from Quebec.

MOTION

Moved by Alex Hittel

Seconded by John Matthews

Whereas our country "Canada" needs all its people to build and make a home where people can live, grow and prosper in harmony and:

Whereas the Province of Quebec has done much to model our young history and country for all peoples, and:

Whereas the CCLS a "national body" representing the land surveyors in Canada who worked so hard to explore and map this vast country, is now sincerely concerned in keeping our great country whole for the benefit of all its people.

Be it therefore resolved that the Province of Quebec is requested to remain in Confederation to grow, prosper and identify within our CANADA.

While I have a captive audience (I hope) I'd also like to put in a plug for the C.I.S. It is written into the agreement between the C.I.S. and the C.C.L.S. that the latter endeavour to encourage membership in the Canadian Institute of Surveying. Personally I have no hesitation in doing so because I have belonged for many years and readily appreciate the benefits it brings. The journal itself is well worth the yearly fee and if one takes the opportunity to attend the annual meeting or the meetings of the various branches which are organized across Canada he will meet people who are part of the survey fraternity but have interests widely different and in some cases far beyond those normally experienced by the average land surveyor.

Anyone interested can write to:

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