

To the Mayor and Council of the City of Calgary:

Gentlemen:

At the last meeting of last year's council, the Parks Board was dissolved and I therefore beg to submit to you my report of the work accomplished last year, with suggestions and recommendations regarding work and improvements for the year 1913.

Although the estimates were sent in by the Parks board by the middle of February last year, they were not approved by the Council until the 27th of May and I was therefore unable to do much work before that date.

The planting season in this country is very short, extensive work has to be done quickly and for this reason I should like to see the estimates passed before the 1st of April.

The work done in the different parks and at the cemetery last year, was principally grading, cultivating, and tree planting, the most costly work as for time and money. An enormous amount of dirt was moved from one place to another. Good black loam is very rare here and I therefore suggest to ask the Street Department not to use any black loam in filling up new streets as it has been doing continually up to now.

Referring to the tree and shrub planting of last year, I selected, in buying nursery stock, only the best quality and only such stock which was tested for planting in the north west, at the experimental farm at Indian Head. Besides this stock, I bought different trees and shrubs (five of a sort) for experimental planting in our nursery on St. Patrick Island and these have done very well.

A very bad thing for nursery stock that we buy from across the line, is, that it has to pass the fumigation station at Winnipeg, where the carelessness and roughness, with which the goods are handled, is the cause that a great part of the shipment arrived here in a dry and dieing condition. For quite a while yet, I think, we shall be obliged to buy our stock across the line as the trees grown in the west are not fit for planting in this country and the nurseries in Western Canada are not competent enough to supply a city of the size of Calgary.

I therefore suggest that the city send in a petition to Ottawa to give Calgary a fumigation station, with me as an examined entomologist, as its superintendent. Senator Loughheed promised me his assistance in this matter. Last year we planted 14,543 trees and shrubs, part of these trees were from Banff. Other expensive items were;- the Entranch Arch, the Office Building, Greenhouse and the Superintendent's Cottage at the Cemetery, the Bandstand in Central Park and the Pavillion on St. George's Island.

St. George's Island

The first work that was undertaken here was to give three coats of white paint on the railings of all bridges. On the 1st of March brush cutting was started in order to clear the new driveway. The driveway around the park is completed except the oiling with Tarvia B. On all river banks a footpath of 6 foot wide has been constructed, which has proved to be a great success as a promenade. The grading of the whole park is nearly finished.

A ditch has been dug on the side of the mainroad for the light cable. 1,261 trees and shrubs were planted, most of them evergreens, the condition of these trees now is very good.

Two new bridges have been erected over the creek, one for the driveway and one for the footpath.

In the centre of the big field opposite the south entrance, a pavillion has been built, containing bandstand, refreshment rooms and public comfort station. I would recommend to put around this pavillion an octagonal shaped addition, built as a verandah which may be used by the public as a shelter, both for the hot sun or stormy weather. This verandah would especially prove of great advantage on days when the band is playing as there is no other shady spot for the public except the trees which, however, are situated rather far off. Up to now the public made use of the shady spots under the trees and in the shrubs, which practice damaged the park to a great extent. There also ought to be a shelter near the children's playground, plans for these two buildings will be submitted to the future parks committee. I also recommend to furnish the two bridges leading to the park with iron gates which may be closed at night.

The plant for the big field is ready and this field, which is to be planted with flower beds and shrubs, can be completed in a short time and at little cost. The ground is in good condition and I expect to have a fine lawn. During the fall and winter I directed the manure wagons from the streets to the east side of the park and plowing under and grading can be started with as soon as the weather permits it.

The south shore, which is damaged by high water every year, should be riprapped with boulders, some of this material is right on the spot. A concrete wall would be still better.

As it is the intention to have a Zoo in this park, I would propose to reserve the stony north part of the park for this purpose which part is very suitable therefore and it should remain untouched until this Zoo has been definately decided about.

The existing old trees need a thorough pruning, a somewhat larger amount should be allowed for this as these old trees are very valuable for Calgary. Another thing, we need very badly is more water, the present two inch pipe not being sufficient. A new pipe for St. George's and St. Patrick's Island should be connected with the mainpipe on Riverside Boulevard.

I hear that it is the intention of the city to extend the 15th Street East through the eastern part of the island to the north of the Bow River, in such a case it would be necessary for the City Engineer to give me all the details in order to enable me to make all arrangements in this part of the park according to his plans. A further recommend to give the caretaker a uniform, this would give the man more authority.

Central Park

As we have some money left from last year's Bylaw 1071, we started work on April 3rd. On account of the dandelion pest in this park, I ploughed the land two feet deep and took special care to get every plant that deep under ground. The most expensive work was to cover the whole of the parks grounds with a layer of good loam, one foot thick, I was lucky to find good black loam in the lower part of the Union Cemetery, 3 to 4 feet deep, which was taken to Central Park. As the water is too cold for the tender summer flowers, and the entire park is exposed to the sun, I put an irrigation system under ground which will feed the flowers from underneath, the soil cannot dry out and the flowers will not get chilled through sprinkling.

The two concrete fountain basins are almost finished and so is the big bandstand with shelter and comfort stations.

On the south side the lattice work summerhouses are nearly completed and all around the whole park about 1,400 shrubs and trees were planted. I am glad to say that this winter I have been quite successful with the trees, my inspection of them a few days ago, proved that most of them are alive.

Although the construction of this park was an expensive one, I can promise, that after completion, this park will be one of the most beautiful spots in this country and people will appreciate the work done.

The current year's greatest expense in Central park, will be the electric light installation. I would recommend concrete posts similar to those used in St. George's Island, only a smaller sized one. I would further recommend that the concrete foundation for the soldier's Memorial be put in as soon as possible as later on this work would damage the surrounding flowerbeds.

Mewata Park.

We commenced work here on the 8th of May, planting 1,335 spruce trees which we got from Banff. The north side facing the river was graded in a nice shape. In the north west corner a wading pool was excavated and this is now ready for the concrete finish. On both sides of this pool gymnastic play apparatus have been put up. The rest of the work in this park consisted of the keeping up of the different playfields.

As there is the possibility of the erection of an armory in Mewata Park I would recommend to wait till this matter is settled and therefore there would hardly be any work there this year.

Riley Park

Work was started on the 11th of April digging holes for shrubs and trees all around the border, fifty feet wide. 7,873 shrubs and trees were planted and most of these seem to have come through the winter all right.

Pipes for the summer water service were laid all around outside the park so that we shall be able to water all the planted shrubs and trees. In the north west corner play apparatus were erected.

The whole area of the park was well manured and twice very deeply ploughed. A rough grading will put the ground in good shape and make it ready for use. In my last year's report I suggested to build a pond, made of concrete, in the north west corner of the park. The water for this pond could be taken from a live spring near this spot and I beg to call your attention once more to this proposition. As this project is pretty expensive but very attractive I always hoped that some prominent citizen would donate this pond to the city.

Reservoir Park

The work done during the last year consisted of planting two rows of Russian Poplars (1,500) and these trees are doing very well, every one being alive. I would recommend to plant another two rows of these poplars this year; the four rows will be a good windbreak in a short time.

As there was no money for cultivating the evergreens around the reservoir during the summer, we unfortunately lost a number of these trees. I would recommend to have them re-planted as they were put there with the intention to keep the dust from blowing into the water in the reservoir.

Shouldice Park

Before we started work on this park, the park was surveyed by a Dominion Land Surveyor. Most of the ground was ploughed by contract. On the west side riverfront the only spot with shade trees and a favorite place for picnics, some of the ground was graded and a walk along the river front is completed.

For this year I would recommend to finish this west part and plant the ploughed eastern part with vegetables, potatoes, and oats.

It will be very expensive to make a good park of these vast grounds and as the present Union Cemetery will be filled up in a few years time I think this eastern part of Shouldice Park will be an ideal site for the future cemetery, both as regards the location and soil.

Last year at the request of the Mayor, I ordered a concert out in Shouldice park, but the musicians refused to go out, because there was no bandstand or shelter for them out there. I would recommend a bandstand of not too expensive a make, which could also be used as a shelter for the visiting public.

Tuxedo Park

The population is increasing fast out there and we should do a little more work around the bandstand than last year. I recommend to put flowerbeds and shrubs all around the pavilion, about 200 feet wide.

Shagganappi Park

Last year I left it to the Parks board to recommend any improvements in this park. There was nothing done last year out there and I leave it again to the future parks committee to decide about this ground.

Boulevards

1,183 trees, spruces, and Russian poplars were planted last year.

As there was not much money left over from last year's bylaws 1071 and 1154, and as the new bylaw, brought in, was not passed it was impossible to do much work. I hope, however, that this bylaw will be passed this year so that we can make the intended improvements.

Union Cemetery

The construction of greenhouses and office building was the first work last year on the cemetery, the arch at the main entrance was next.

The hilly west side which was unfit for interments, was graded in such a way that a good deal of new burying ground was acquired by this grading. The land is ploughed, manured, and ready for seeding.

The steep slopes ought to be planted with good sized spruces, these would form a good windbreak for the bare top of the hill. The most costly improvement for this year will be to macadamize the main road from the entrance to the chapel.

As several parks this year have to be provided with many flowers, I beg to ask to enlarge the greenhouse to double the present size. I am glad to say that the greenhouses have proved to be also a great pleasure to many people who come to the cemetery and like to see the flowers and palms in the greenhouse this is one more reason why I ask for an enlargement.

I also wish to mention that cities of the size of Calgary have larger conservatories which are open to the public and which appear much as public winter gardens, at the same time being useful for the purpose of raising plants.

The last bylaw, which I made up for the cemetery, has not yet been passed by the council and as I cannot therefore do anything for the beautification and administration of the cemetery, I beg to recommend the appointment of a committee to look after this.

It being impossible to explain by letter what improvements I propose to make I should like to show this committee the grounds where I can personally point out what work should be done.

The little improvements made last year seem to be appreciated by the public, judging by the many more visitors coming to the cemetery and I therefore think that no money should be spared to make this cemetery an attractive and beautiful part of the city.

There is now another thing I wish to call your attention to. In every city in Canada and the U.S.A. all the money taken in from selling graves, digging same, taking care of graves, and removing bodies, goes back to the cemetery for improvements and for buying more cemetery ground, this ought to be done in Calgary also.

Encouraged by the sight of the wild roses all over the prairie, I imported 2,000 roses and I am glad to say that this was a great success as I cultivated last summer many thousands of roses.

I herewith beg to tender my thanks to the ratepayers for the liberal sums voted for the different purposes. Most of the money was spent for preparatory work and cannot therefore be very conspicuous at a superficial inspection, but I can assure you and the ratepayers that this year we shall finish several parks at a comparatively small cost and do work which will please and strike the eye of every citizen.
