



Bureau of Municipal Research
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This is the
Toronto Bureau of Municipal Research
speaking on

"A Fly's Eye View of Toronto"

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IT is said by entomologists that the fly has compound eyes with many "facets", each of which makes its own little sectional picture, and students of fly psychology say that these partial pictures are combined into a picture of as much as a fly's eyes can take in at one time. A fly cannot roll or protrude its eyes, lacking both the muscular mechanism of the human and the eye stalks of the lobster; and, as its neck is very short, if it wishes to get a comprehensive view of any large object, it must move its eyes by moving itself in the necessary directions and for the desired distances. Neither can it adjust its lenses for far or near vision. Its eyes see what passes near them, or what its eyes pass near. They cannot view an object from a distance and get a clear idea of its form and color, or even perceive a motion at a great distance. At least we must consider so if we are to believe those psychologists who have entered more or less into the fly mind. If they could there would be even a larger fly population than there is and the sport of fly swatting would be even less resultful than it is. But the fly gets along very nicely on account of the comparative simplicity of the fly's problems. These may, it is true, be more complex than they were 2,000 years ago, but presumably the fly doesn't know this, and what it doesn't know won't hurt it—or will it?

But the problems of the modern city are almost infinitely more complex than those of cities of a hundred years ago. Those who act as the City's eyes must take not only sectional views but city-wide views. They must be able to focus on important civic problems of a general nature, and not only view the present, but the past, and must preview, so far as possible, the future. One of the attributes of men not shared apparently with the fly is that he looks "before and after", up, down and all around without standing on his head or sitting on the ceiling.

Does the one year term for Aldermen help continuous civic planning, and does the present ward system help in getting city-wide views? We may suffer from myopia, short sightedness; we hardly suffer from hypermetropia, far sightedness. Is it possible that what afflicts us most is flyopia?

Bureau of Municipal Research signing off—Please tune in on the next programme.