

# Taking the Distance out of Mileage

## The Good Roads Policies of Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta

### ROAD CONSTRUCTION IN MANITOBA

#### A Good Roads Act that Gets Results

By ARCH. MCGILLIVRAY, Highway Commissioner

Primarily the construction and maintenance of the roads of Manitoba are controlled by the municipalities. The council of each municipality assumes responsibility under its form of municipal government for these works on all the roads within the boundary of its own municipality.

The government of the province exercises no authority over the expenditure of municipal funds except when these funds are supplemented by government grant. In such cases the work is performed according to the directions of the engineers of the department of public works, and any work performed in a municipality on this basis must be acceptable to the engineer before such grant is paid. These grants are paid from an appropriation voted yearly by the legislature from the consolidated revenue of the province. The distribution of the fund is entirely in the hands of the minister of public works, the allotment to a municipality being dependent on the exigency of the case and the necessity of the work to be performed in each municipality applying therefor. Since the passing of the Good Roads Act, 1914, the distribution of the appropriation has been very largely confined to municipalities in outlying districts, where need of improvements is greater and the financial ability of the ratepayers less than in the older and more prosperous municipalities.

The present Good Roads Act was placed on the statutes of the province in 1914 and is intended primarily to assist the municipalities in the construction of the main market roads. There is also a clause of the act which provides for more liberal assistance on a road through any municipality which has to carry a large amount of traffic from outside sources, over and above the traffic generated within its own limits. This act is administered by a good roads board of three members working with the minister of public works. The highway commissioner is chairman of the board. In conjunction with the board and working under its directions is a staff of engineers. The duties and office of this board, besides those pertaining to the general administration of the act, are to assist municipal councils in formulating suitable schemes of road construction and improvement in the respective municipalities; to compile statistics and collect information relative to the mileage, character and conditions of the roads of the province; to investigate the various methods of construction best adapted to the various sections of the country; and establish standards for the construction and maintenance of highways in various sections, taking into consideration the natural conditions, character and availability of road building material, and the ability of municipalities to build and maintain roads under the Good Roads Act.

#### Municipalities Take Initiative

It rests entirely with the municipality to take advantage of the assistance provided under the act. In order to obtain this assistance the municipality must by resolution of its council apply to the good roads board expressing its desire to avail itself of the provisions of the act. In doing so, this application must be accompanied with a plan of the municipality showing thereon the roads proposed to be constructed or improved. Accompanying this plan of roads, the municipal council expresses its desire in connection with the nature of improvement to be performed, method of financing the same, and also makes a statement as to the approximate cost of the work to be undertaken. The amount of the assessed valuation of all the real property in the municipality liable to taxation and as shown on the last revised assessment roll of that municipality is also required

to be given, as upon this amount is based the amount of debenture indebtedness that can be placed on the municipality for the purpose of works under this act, this indebtedness being limited to 6 per cent of the assessment of the municipality exclusive of all other debenture liabilities.

Upon receipt of an application from a municipal council and information as aforesaid, an engineer of the board is sent into the municipality and a survey and investigation is made by him of the roads proposed by the council. The engineer reports to the board on the feasibility and merits of the scheme and gives an estimate of the cost of performing the several works proposed. The scheme as then outlined and reported upon by the engineer is considered by the board, and if ap-

instead of issuing debentures to defray the cost of the work may appropriate a portion of the current revenue of the municipality and proceed with the work from year to year in that manner, or the council may impose a tax annually, such tax not to exceed five mills on the dollar and pay for its work as it goes. It must be said that under ordinary conditions it is much preferable for a municipality to issue debentures and thus have its roads constructed as quickly as possible.

All works performed under the Good Roads Act are by contract, unless mutually determined otherwise by the council and the board, and no contract shall be let unless the work has been advertised and tenders asked for during a period of two weeks. The acceptance of any tender is subject to the approval of the board. The lowest responsible tender in all cases receives the work.

The work must be performed in accordance with plans and specifications of the engineers of the board, whose services are given free to the municipality. When the works are of sufficient magnitude to require assistants to the engineer who shall be constantly on the work, the municipality is required to engage such engineer's assistants, and the expense incurred thereby is chargeable to the cost of the work and of which the government pays its proportionate share.

#### Province Contributes to the Cost

According to the provisions of the act the province contributes one-half of the cost of all work, including bridges and culverts of a permanent character done on a system of roads regularly brought under the act when the work thus done is of a superior character to the ordinary earth grading and such as gravel, macadam or other improved type of road. One-third of the cost of constructing earth roads is borne by the province, and where permanent culverts and bridges have been constructed in this type of road, the Government pays one-half the cost of such permanent work. Where a road is considered to be of general importance to the province as a whole, and over which a large amount of traffic is carried from points outside the municipality, and when such road is accepted under the act as a provincial highway, the government pays two-thirds of the costs of works performed in improving the same.

The province also contributes one-half of the cost of constructing a bridge or culvert of a permanent nature, which entails an expenditure of \$200 or over, and one-third of the cost of a timber bridge or culvert which is \$500 or over, built in a road which does not necessarily form part of a system accepted under the act. Such bridges and culverts, however, must be built in accordance with the regulations of the act and in compliance with plans and specifications prepared by the engineers of the board. Specially qualified bridge engineers are retained in the service of the board for such work.

The maintenance of all works performed under the Good Roads Act is done and the expense incurred therefore is borne by the municipality affected. When this work is neglected by a municipality, the government has authority under the act to engage men and teams to do the work and to levy through the municipal commissioner's department for the cost of the same. The provisions of the act apply to a portion of a municipality in the same manner as to the municipality as a whole.

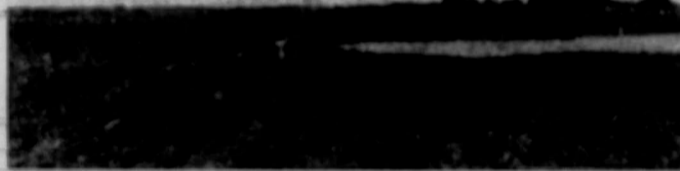
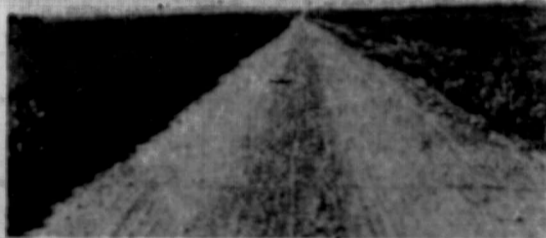
### GOOD ROADS IN ALBERTA

#### The Problem in a Rapidly Developing Province

By L. C. CHARLESWORTH, Deputy Minister of Public Works

The road question in a new and rapidly developing province such as Alberta, presents many problems which are not met with in an older and longer established part of the country. New areas are constantly being opened up for settlement and

Continued on Page 21

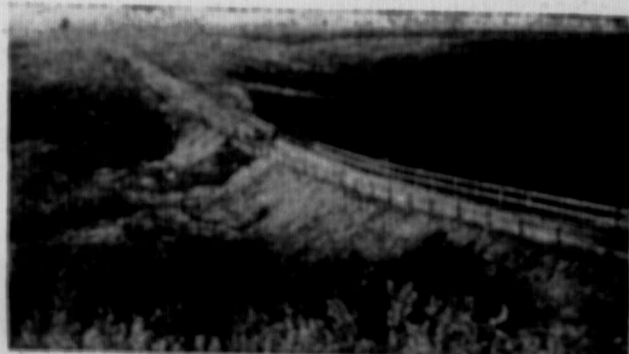


Which of these Roads would you sooner team wheel over?

proved by it and its decision in the premises subsequently ratified by an order-in-council, the municipal council is thereby authorized to proceed with work under the act and is entitled to receive the advantages and privileges of the same. The work, however, must be carried on in full compliance with the act, and regulations of the board pertaining thereto.

#### Raising the Municipality's Share of Cost

A municipal council having a system of roads brought under the provisions of the act, has then authority to issue debentures for the amount of its estimated share of the cost of performing the works proposed. The amount of debenture issue must not, however, exceed six per cent of the total assessed valuation of the municipality. The rate of interest payable on these debentures is limited to 6 per cent per annum. The repayment of the debentures may be extended over a period not exceeding 30 years and must be in equal annual installments of principal and interest. Every by-law for the purpose of issuing debentures for road construction must be submitted to and receive the assent of the ratepayers of the municipality or portion thereof affected by such by-law. A majority of the votes actually polled is sufficient to carry or defeat the by-law. The municipal council



SOME OF THE PRACTICAL RESULTS OF PROVINCIAL GOOD ROADS ACTIVITIES IN MANITOBA AND SASKATCHEWAN  
Left—40-foot Steel Bridge, concrete abutments and graded approach, Touchwood Creek, west of Harris, Sask. Centre—Concrete Road, St. Vital, south of Winnipeg, Man. Right—Approach to 125-foot Steel