

THE MUNICIPAL WORLD.

the work, and the township municipalities in which the work was done supplied stone on the ground, common labor and teams. In this way the practical demonstration to the people of the eastern counties of what machinery will do, how it should be operated, and how good roads should be made, was a marked success.

Following upon this, in September last, an association for Western Ontario was formed, the meeting for organization being held in Toronto. Of this association, Mr. Geo. Gerrow, warden of Ontario county, was elected President, and Mr. J. E. Farewell, clerk of Ontario county, was appointed secretary. Of this organization, composed principally of progressive municipal councillors, much may be expected in the west.

The most important development of the good roads movement in Ontario has been the appropriation of one million dollars by the Legislature to aid in the improvement of country roads. The motive for this step has very largely been to encourage county councillors to assume the management of the most heavily travelled roads in each county, thereby forming them into one class, in the construction and maintenance of which the most efficient superintendence, plans, methods and machinery can be employed. One third of the cost of constructing or reconstructing all roads assumed under a county system will be paid by the Provincial Government, and the Act is so framed as to give county councils the first opportunity to accept this aid. Should any counties fail in this a proper proportion will be given to townships fulfilling certain prescribed conditions. A sufficient period has not yet elapsed to permit an estimate of the extent to which the Act will perform its mission, but at the present time county councils are everywhere interesting themselves in the matter.

By-laws have passed all stages in two counties, Lanark and Wentworth, the initial expenditure of the former to be, in addition to the Provincial grant, \$97,000; and of the latter, \$98,000. Hastings and Wellington already have systems of county roads, which they propose to bring under the Act, by laws are under consideration in Simcoe and Carleton counties no estimate being given in the former case; but in Carleton the sum of \$150,000 is proposed. Action looking towards systems of county roads has been taken by the county councils of Elgin, Frontenac, Prince Edward, Lennox and Addington, Huron and Middlesex.

Just as changes with respect to township road making and management have been gradual but universal, so the results of education with respect to county roads may be expected to be general but progressive, and the adoption of county systems will be brought about with increasing rapidity. The seed sown in the early days of the movement is but now maturing and the time of the harvest has come. The forces at work on behalf of improved roads are many, and the means of bettering the roads are various, but the great object to

be attained at the present time is good management, in order that all the energy available may be utilized to the best advantage.

Statute Labor.

At the last municipal elections many by-laws for the abolition or commutation of statute labor were submitted to a vote of the people, being carried in numerous cases. Wherever rightly placed before the people, a substantial majority should and can be procured for these by-laws. The people of Ontario, almost without exception, want good roads. They are very few indeed, who do not want better roads than they have at present. While there are some who always object to a change of any kind, who seem born to oppose progress of any description, they are and always will be in the minority. The mass of the people want better roads, and they want a better system of maintaining them.

It merely remains to show them in a plain manner, not merely the faults of our present system, and the defects of our roads, but what plans are to be adopted that will effect an improvement. To place these matters before the people should be the work of municipal councillors, and where statute labor by-laws have been defeated, there is safe evidence that councillors have not made the most of their opportunities.

Some by-laws have not been successful because the people feared that the change would create wholly new and expensive methods. On the contrary, it is plainly a measure of economy, securing the best possible results with the present expenditure. Farm help is now scarce and expensive. There are few farmers who, during the summer season, cannot better afford to pay fifty cents or seventy-cents a day for statute labor, than to leave their farms to work on the road. If there are those who wish to work on the road, they can be given ample opportunity to do so, and to even work out more than enough to pay their tax. This is particularly helpful to the poorer farmers, in need of a chance to earn a little money. The systematic grading of roads, operation of the grading machine, draining the roads, building concrete culverts, hauling stone or gravel by the cord, or letting work in small jobs throughout the township, afford all who prefer working to paying, a chance to earn back their tax. Others, at a busy season, when labor is scarce, will much prefer paying fifty or seventy five cents in consideration of their roadwork.

It is sometimes feared that all the money will be spent on leading roads, or in one section of the township. The work, however, is kept in the hands of the council, and their practice is very different. It is the general rule that the commutation money from each road will be required for and spent on that road. But instead of scattering the expenditure over long distances, the good pieces

receiving as much attention as the bad, work is concentrated on the worst pieces first, ultimately making them equal to the best, and in that way making all good. By seeing that the worst parts of the roads throughout a township are fixed each year in a permanent manner, the improvement in a few years is so striking as to satisfy all.

Good Roads Pay.

The public road is one of the landmarks of civilization. The trackless forest or pathless plain answer every purpose of the savage, but the commercial pursuits and social intercourse of civilized people make necessary those travelled thoroughfares known as public roads.

The difference between a good road and a bad road is the difference between comfortable clothing and rags, between a full meal and a scant lunch. A good road is a thing of beauty and a joy forever, while a bad road is an abomination. A good road needs no friends; a bad road never had any.

Bad roads are expensive from any point of view. Each year they cost this country more money than would build a first-class highway half across the continent, to say nothing of the annoyance and discomfort which must be experienced by the millions who are obliged to use them. Good roads are a paying investment. They increase the value of every acre of farm property, save time, wear and tear on wagons, harness and horseflesh, and make it possible for country people to enjoy privileges that would otherwise be beyond their reach.

Waterworks and Public Lighting.

The contract for installing a waterworks system at Sturgeon Falls has been let for about \$40,000.

An extension of the North Toronto waterworks system is under consideration.

Stratford proposes to purchase the local waterworks from the company now operating it for \$95,000.

Waterworks are proposed for Elmira, to cost about \$14,000. The supply will be taken from the River Canagigue, and the system will include pumping station, mains, receiving wells, and an elevated tank of 60,000 gallons capacity.

Oshawa has before it a new report on waterworks and sewerage systems for the town. A gravity system of waterworks from a spring creek will cost \$160,000; pumping from Lake Ontario, \$118,000; pumping from the creek, the water to be filtered, \$140,000. The gravity system is regarded favorably, owing to the less annual cost of maintenance. It is proposed to treat the sewage by means of septic tanks.

The Council of Strathroy has under consideration the purchase of the water and electric light works from the local company, the latter having submitted an offer, amounting to an advance of 10 per cent. on the cost price.