

MUNICIPAL DEPARTMENT

COUNTY SYSTEM OF ROAD MAKING.

The Provincial Instructor of Public Highways for Ontario has issued a special report, in which he advocates a county system of public highways. Of the advantages of this system he says:

Under a county system, a portion of the cost of road building is levied, in the county rate, against the towns and villages within the municipality for road purposes. In order to extend this tax to the cities, it will be necessary to amend the statutes. At the present time, under township systems, the farmers bear the entire cost. All the expenditure placed on roads would be spent in the county, and thus returned in a great measure to those who contributed it in the first place.

Under county control a properly organized corps of men can be employed to build and repair roads. As at other employments, they become experienced and do better work, and in the matter of repairs are ready to make them as soon as signs of wear appear.

By a county plan, uniformity of work and system will be secured throughout the various municipalities, whereas under township control a diversity of plans is sure to be adopted.

In a county plan an experienced and properly qualified man could be employed to have constant supervision of the work, whereas under township control, each municipality cannot afford to pay the salary of such a man. Under every good system it is necessary to have responsibility centralized and defined, not divided and easily shifted from one to another, as it now is under the statute labor system.

Under county control modern machinery, too expensive for individual townships, can be purchased and handled to advantage, an experienced operator can be employed for each implement, and a better and more uniform class of work will be secured.

A township can manage its road properly only by adopting a plan similar to that outlined under a county system, but by extending it over a county it becomes more cheaply operated.

A properly connected system of leading roads throughout the county will be obtained under a county system; whereas with each township, and even each statute labor beat, working independently of those around it, this will be lost sight of.

There is no community of interest between the townships. In one township there is a certain leading road much travelled and well made and maintained. The adjoining municipality may for various

reasons not consider it of so much importance as to warrant them in making an expenditure to benefit largely their neighbors who are obliged to travel over it.

During the winter months when snow is plentiful, the necessity for use of the roads is as great as at any other season. But unfortunately often in one night they become by drifts almost impassable, especially for heavy teaming; or at least, owing to drifts and pitchholes, are made very unserviceable. The opening of snow roads would be part of county maintenance, and the necessity would supply implements for doing the work promptly and cheaply.

If no greater expenditure is made upon the roads than at present, the rate will be reduced, because most of the township expenditure is now placed on the leading roads, and the township will be relieved of these by a county system. Under the county system the funds will be sufficiently

concentrated to undertake durable work, and consequently these roads will be properly constructed and afterwards maintained at a less cost than at present.

A county road system equalizes the cost of maintaining leading roads. In every county within a certain radius of a market town, traffic constantly increases as the town is approached. The cost of construction and maintenance increases in proportion to the traffic. It is unfair to charge those living near the town with the cost of building roads to accommodate traffic from a distance, so unfair as to cause discouragement and often withdraws support.

(To be Continued.)

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