

and he set the troops to work on Yonge Street. But even on this comparatively little work was done. Dr. Scadding says "the perils and horrors encountered every spring and autumn by travellers and others in their ascent and descent of the precipitous sides of the Rosedale ravine, at the point where the primitive Yonge Street crosses it, were a local proverb and by-word, perils and horrors ranking for enormity with those associated with the passage of the Rounge, the Credit, the Sixteen, and a long list of other deeply ploughed watercourses intersected of necessity by the two great highways of U. Canada. The ascent and descent of the gorge were here spoken of collectively as the Blue Hill. . . . The wagon track passed up and down by two long wearisome and difficult slopes, cut in the soil of the steep sides of the lofty banks. After the autumnal rain and during the thaws at the close of the winter the condition of the route here was indescribably bad. At the period referred to, however, the same thing for many a year was to be said of every rod of Yonge Street throughout its thirty miles of length. Nor was Yonge Street singular in this respect. All our roads were equally bad at certain seasons every year." Troops were also set to work on the Dundas road, and from what Dr. Scadding relates of their mode of proceeding it is evident that the military were not very skilful roadmakers. He says the work of opening Dundas Street near the Lake Shore, as well as further on through the forest, was first undertaken by a detachment of the regulars under the direction of an officer of the Royal Engineers. The plan adopted, we are told, was first to fell each tree by very laboriously severing it from its base close to the ground, and then to smooth off the upper surface of the root or stump with an adze. As this process was necessarily slow, and after all not likely to result in a permanently good road, the proposal of Colonel, then Lieutenant Denison, to set his militia men to eradicate the trees boldly was accepted—an operation with which they were all more or less familiar on their farms, and in their new clearings. A fine broad open track ready, when the day for such further improvements should arrive, for the reception of plank or macadam, was soon constructed.

Of the proposed Dundas Street, Gourley says (vol. 2 pp. 810-11):—"He (Governor Simcoe) had no money wherewith to open this; but his purpose was to grant its margin to actual settlers on condition of each making good the road as far as his grant extended. Settlers sat themselves down at different parts along the line of this proposed grand thoroughfare and fulfilled their engagements, only to be grievously disappointed. The moment that Simcoe was recalled the ungranted lands along Dundas Street were seized by the people in power, and the actual settlers up to 1817 remained in little communities cut off from each other and unable to make good the grand communication, the completion of which had at the outset promised them such advantages and tempted them so far into the wilderness. . . . Only think of a dozen or score poor men going into the woods fifty or sixty miles from connected settlement, expending their labor for four or five years clearing farms and erecting buildings, in the assurance that before long they should have an outlet to market and a reward for extraordinary exertions and privations. Only think of these people, after five or six years' perseverance and hope, being chilled with disappointment and left imprisoned in the woods."

McTaggart, writing of the state of Canadian roads so late as 1829, said, "There are few roads, and these are excessively bad and full of mud-holes, in which if a carriage fall there is great trouble to get it out again. The mail coaches or waggons are often in this predicament, when the passengers instantly jump off, and having stripped rails off the fences, they lift it up by sheer force.

Coming up brows they sometimes get in, the horses are then taken out and yoked to the stern instead of to the front, and it is drawn backwards." "Old settlers," we are told, "used to narrate how, in their first journey from York to the Landing, they lowered their waggons down the steeps by ropes passed round the stems of saplings, and then hauled them up the ascent on the opposite site in a similar way."

The Legislature endeavored in several ways to bring about a better state of things. The statute labor and the small aid which the Sessions were authorized to give in cases of special importance having been found insufficient, the Legislature in 1810 voted £2,000 to defray the expenses of amending and repairing the public highways and roads, laying out and opening new roads, and building bridges. This amount was probably expended through commissioners named in the Act. In the same year they made a special appropriation for the construction of a bridge across the Grand River. In 1811 they appropriated \$3,450 to making and repairing roads and bridges. In 1812 they made an appropriation, the amount of which is not stated, and passed "an Act to prevent damage to travellers on highways in this Province." This required all persons travelling on the public roads to turn to the right, and required the owners to attach bells to sleighs. An Act of 1812 also provided that when any road laid out under authority of law was not approved of by the justices in session, the charges of the surveyors should be paid by the parties who made the application. The war of 1812 prevented any more being done in this direction for some years, and at an extraordinary session, held in the summer of that year, an Act was passed, requiring the road commissioners to return to the Treasury any of the money granted in the previous session that was unexpended.

In 1816 the Legislature again turned its attention to the highways, and amended the Act to prevent damage to travellers, and £518 12s 6d was voted to reimburse amounts expended by certain commissioners. By another Act passed the same session £21,000 was given to mend the highways and bridges, which probably were in a bad condition. In 1819 an Act, to which we have already referred, was passed, fixing the amount of statute labor to be performed by each person, the rate 2s 6d per day's labor, at which it may be commuted and the rate to be paid by lands not included in the assessment roll. In 1821 £200 was granted towards opening a road from Richmond, on the Ottawa river, to Kingston. In 1828 Acts were passed to make valid such things as were done by surveyors who had been suffered to serve beyond a year without being re-elected or sworn, and to determine how the road between Ernestown and the Gore of Fredericksburg, about which the magistrates differed, should be kept in repair. In 1830 £25 was granted towards opening a road from the river Aux Perches in the Western to Townsend, in the London District. In 1830 £18,650 was granted as aid towards repairing roads and bridges. At that time the number of Districts had increased to eleven. The Act specifies the amount to be expended in each district, names the commissioners by whom the money should be expended, and the amount to be expended by each, and describes the section of road on which each commissioner should expend the amount entrusted to him. In 1831 £20,000 to be raised by Provincial debentures was granted for a like purpose, to be expended in a similar manner. To such an extent up to that time did the Legislature undertake and perform duties really municipal in their character.

The Act 50, Geo. III., c. 1, provided that no road should thereafter be more than sixty-six or less than forty feet in width.

To be Continued.