

## STATUTE LABOR.

An authority has said that "of all the economic questions affecting the welfare of the farmer and every good citizen, there is none of greater importance than the construction and maintenance of good highways, over which they may pass to and fro in their commercial and social relations with one another." If this is so, we fear that a large portion of our farmers have not grasped the situation, judging by the manner in which they perform their statute labor. After having wallowed through the mire all spring, and just when the roads have become dry and passable, the pathmaster comes along with his men, and by means of ploughs and scrapers the earth is turned up and left loose, and the passer-by has to pick his way along the sides if he does not wish his wheels to sink down or jolt along at a snail's pace through the "improvements." Then the first heavy rain that comes turns the "improvements" into a perfect quagmire. This is the usual manner of "improving" the roads, and it is time that our various local councils put on their thinking caps to find out a better system of road making. England and some other European countries are blessed with fine roadways, of which they are justly proud. A little over a hundred years ago it is said that the laws in England regulating road work was somewhat similar to ours, and their roads were so bad that during certain seasons of the year their markets were inaccessible. About the year 1760 the people of that country began an agitation which eventually forced a repeal of her defective highway laws, and they enacted the system which resulted in the present improvement. It is said that between 1760 and 1773 no less than 452 highway laws were passed, but these were local laws, each one affecting some particular parish only. Finally a general law was enacted providing a uniform system of collecting all taxes in money instead of the system of statute labor. From that time the highways of England steadily improved, until to-day a person can ride from one end to the other of that country, over a uniform system of scientifically built Macadam or Telford roads. Our system of statute labor, by which the settler can put in so many days' work on the roads in his vicinity was no doubt a necessity in the early settlement of this country, when the farmer had to take truck for everything he had to sell. But that time has passed. He now gets cash for everything he has to sell, and his time can be more profitably employed in improving his farm than playing at "improving" the roads. Each township should have an overseer of highways specially fitted for the office, who should have the supervision and control of all road work ordered by the council. Nature has provided material for road making close at hand in many townships where the worst roads are to be found. If instead of throwing the earth loosely on top of the centre of the roadway, a trench twelve or fifteen feet wide and about six or eight inches deep was made and then filled up with stones or boulders well packed, and the top covered with a few inches of broken stone or gravel, and the whole rounded off to throw the water to the ditches, a solid roadbed would be the result, which would not require the constant tinkering now in vogue. If even half the money that is now represented by the labor of the present system was judiciously expended in making substantial roads, a very few years would

see a vast improvement, and our country roads that are now a by-word of reproach would become a matter of pride to our people, and the farmer would save much in time when travelling, besides the tear and wear on himself, his horses and his vehicles.

A CIRCULAR has just been issued to the various municipal corporations from the Provincial Treasurer's office setting forth in a tabulated form the statutory dues to be collected for Tavern and Shop Licenses, etc., and an explanation of the additional amounts which may be imposed by local councils for the exclusive use of the municipality. The provisions of the statute in the wording of the different sections was somewhat confusing, and in consequence many councils were in doubt as to the amount they were limited to raise by by-law, hence the necessity for this explanatory circular from the Government. Section 41 of the Liquor License Act makes the statutory dues for taverns and shops in towns \$80, and in villages and townships \$60. One-third of the above dues go to the Province, and the remaining two-thirds to the municipality. Section 44 adds additional statutory license dues for the exclusive benefit of the Province—tavern and shop licenses in towns \$70, in villages \$60, and in townships \$30. Thus it is seen that of the amounts laid down as statutory dues, the Provincial Government receive for tavern and shop licenses in towns \$96.66 and the local municipality \$53.34; in villages the amount payable to the Government is \$80, and to the local municipality \$40; in townships the Government receive \$50, and the local municipality \$40. In addition to the above amounts, which are the least such licenses can be issued for, Section 42 gives permission to local councils to pass by-laws to increase the statutory dues for the exclusive benefit of the municipality, and reads as follows: "The council of any municipality may by by-law to be passed before the 1st day of March in any year, require a larger duty to be paid for tavern or shop licenses therein, but not in excess of \$200 in the whole, unless the by-law has been approved of by the electors in the manner provided by the Municipal Act." The difficulty with some was as to whether "\$200 in the whole" meant to include the dues laid down in both Sections 41 and 44 or the dues laid down in Section 41 only. The latter is the correct reading of the statute as explained by the circular from the Treasury Department. A village license for a tavern or shop may thus be raised to cost the licensee the sum of \$260, provided the council pass a by-law to increase the amount in Section 41 to \$200, as the amount of Section 44 has also to be paid. Many are of the opinion that the whole of the revenue derived from liquor licenses should belong to the local municipality, except so much as is necessary for the cost of enforcing the law. This however will be fully discussed in future issues.

GRAND and Petit Jurors will in future be paid \$2 per day for attendance, and ten cents per mile going to the county town. If at the trial a juror should die or become incapacitated by illness or other cause, the Judge may direct the trial to proceed, and the verdict of the remaining eleven jurors shall be as good and valid as if rendered by the full panel.