

# The Canadian Engineer

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## ONTARIO GOOD ROADS ASSOCIATION

WHEN 327 members of the Ontario Good Roads Association lunched at "Government House" last week as the guests of Lieutenant-Governor Clarke, they reached another milestone in the official recognition which that association has enjoyed ever since its formation eighteen years ago. Membership in the association is mostly municipal rather than individual; all of the counties and most of the towns, townships and cities pay dues and send representatives to the annual meetings. Those meetings are therefore practically provincial road parliaments, and have proven very useful to the various governments in Ontario since 1894 in advising on highway legislation.

Among the regulations and statutes that have been sponsored by the association, the following are outstanding: In 1896, the appointment of A. W. Campbell as provincial instructor in road-building; 1901, Highway Improvement Act, providing provincial subsidy of 33% for county roads; 1912, \$5,000,000 grant for colonization roads; 1913, appointment of Public Roads and Highways Commission; 1915, Ontario Highways Act, under which the Department of Public Highways was formed, "suburban areas" were authorized, provincial county roads were given 60% aid, county roads were bonused to the extent of 40%, and a maintenance grant of 20% was declared; 1917, Provincial Highways Act, inaugurating a system of provincial roads subject to 70% aid from the province. The association can also reasonably claim to have had considerable influence upon the 40% federal aid granted last year, the increase in maintenance subsidy from 20% to 40%, and last but not least, the extension of Ontario's provincial highway system from 422 miles to more than 1,800 miles.

Undoubtedly the keynote of this year's meeting was the declaration of policy made by Hon. F. C. Biggs, the newly-elected provincial minister of public works and high-

ways. His announcement that the U.F.O. government has designated 1,824 miles of provincial highways instead of the 422 miles designated by the Hearst government, means that the money of the federal and provincial governments will be spread over more roads than was originally intended. It means that many roads which were formerly designated as provincial county roads are now designated as provincial highways; it means that 1,402 miles of roads which previously would have received little or no help from the federal appropriation and only 60% from the province, will now receive 40% from the federal government and 40% from the provincial government. The expenditure of the counties and municipalities is, therefore, reduced from 40% to 20% on 1,402 miles of highways. Whether this will prove to have been a wise move or not will depend entirely upon these two things: (1) Whether the counties, towns and township will spend on other roads the money that they will save in regard to these 1,402 miles, or whether they will devote that money to other purposes or else lower the tax rate and not raise the money at all; and (2) whether the money available can be spread over 1,800 miles of road instead of 422 miles and result in equally satisfactory standards of construction.

To build 1,800 miles to the same standards will obviously require more money than to build 422 miles, and the success of Mr. Biggs' whole scheme depends upon how sincere his government will prove to be, and how much money they actually raise and appropriate for highway construction. His scheme on paper is good; 1,800 miles of roads will be more popular than 422 miles if they are good roads; the public likes Mr. Biggs' promises and awaits with interest his performance of them. It is hoped that he will provide an ample amount of butter and not attempt to spread it too thin.

No reference to the convention of the Ontario Good Roads Association would be complete without mention of the allied meeting that has been held just ahead of it and in conjunction with it annually for the past six years. The annual conference of county road superintendents and engineers of Ontario has proven to have been a splendid innovation. It gives an opportunity for exchange of ideas between the county officials and the officials of the Department of Highways, and has resulted in enthusiastic co-operation that could have been obtained in no other way. W. A. McLean, deputy minister of the department, and his chief engineer, George Hogarth, are to be congratulated upon the success of these conferences.

## Letter to the Editor

### CONSISTENCY OF CONCRETE

Sir,—In the editorial on "Consistency of Concrete" in your issue of February 26th, 1920, you credit us with the use of a "chute test," for measuring consistency. While it is true that we have made such tests, your reference to it might lead some of your readers to believe that this is our standard test for this property. This is far from being the case. As yet, we have no standard test for consistency. We have tried most of those so far proposed and have found them to be wanting in some important particular.

R. B. YOUNG,

Assistant Laboratory Engineer,  
Hydro-Electric Power Commission of Ontario.

Toronto, Ont., March 8th, 1920.

The practicability of the establishment in British Columbia of an iron and steel industry was the subject of a recent interview between G. Lewis Casey, president of the Smelters Steel Co., Seattle, Wash., and Hon. Wm. Sloan, minister of mines for British Columbia.