

Engineering Department

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Road Reform in Pelham.

The statement so frequently made that, while the statute labor system is an inferior one, the council is unable to frame a better one to take its place, should have answer in the following by-law, recently passed in Pelham township. This will repay careful study, as it is an exceedingly good measure. In this township it is looked upon as a most important one, and has been carefully discussed and considered by the council and in public meetings. The by-law is the result of mature deliberation.

PREAMBLE.

Whereas the highways of this municipality have been maintained by statute labor performed thereon, supplemented by sufficient grants from the township levies to meet all the expenditure connected therewith ;

And whereas for several years an agitation has been gaining strength to have the statute labor commuted or paid in money instead of worked out, as heretofore, by the ratepayers, under the direction of pathmasters chosen for each road or locality ;

And whereas the ratepayers of the township, at a public meeting recently called by this council to discuss, with the Good Roads Commissioner of the province, the advantages of the commutation system, did express themselves as desiring its adoption, and the council believes that better results would be possible if the change asked for were inaugurated, and the commutation moneys thus available judiciously expended where most needed by one or two competent overseers to be placed in charge of all the public highways of the municipality ;

Be it therefore enacted by the municipal council of the township of Pelham, and it is hereby enacted, as follows :

ALL LABOR TO BE COMMUTED.

1. Upon, from and after the passing of this by-law, all statute labor to which any person (resident or non-resident) may be liable in this municipality shall be commuted at the fixed rate of fifty cents (50c.) for each day's labor ; and the amount of each person's commutation tax shall be added in a separate column opposite such person's name in the collector's roll, and shall be kept by the treasurer in a separate account, to be known as "The Commuted Statute Labor Account."

TWO ROAD DIVISIONS ONLY.

2. The subdivision of the public highways of the township into ninety-three statute labor districts, as at present, is hereby abolished, and in lieu thereof the township shall be divided for road purposes into two districts or divisions only (to be as nearly equal as may be), to be known as North Division and South Division ;

North Division to comprise and include Concessions One to Seven inclusive, and South Division the remaining Concessions, Eight to Fourteen inclusive. The west half of the concession line road which separates these two divisions shall belong to the South Division, and the east half to the North Division.

TWO ROAD COMMISSIONERS ONLY.

3. Over each of these two road divisions there shall be appointed a single overseer, to be styled, for the purposes of this by-law, a "Road Commissioner," who shall hold office continuously during the pleasure of the council, and who shall have the exclusive control and management of the maintenance, repair and improvement of all the public roads, streets, bridges and highways in his division, including the township boundary line roads bordering same, in so far as the commutation and other moneys belonging or appropriated to his division will enable him to do so, subject always to such written instructions as he may from time to time receive from the road and bridge committee of his division.

GENERAL DUTIES OF ROAD COMMISSIONERS

4. It shall be the duty of each of the two road commissioners who may be appointed to carry out the provisions of this by-law.

(1) To acquaint himself with the best and most modern methods of constructing and maintaining good roads, and of advantageously operating the tools and implements with which he may be supplied for that purpose ;

(2) To employ, direct and discharge all men and teams he may require to carry on his work ;

(3) To begin the annual labor as early in the spring of each year as the condition of the roads will permit and work continuously till the appropriation to his division for the year is exhausted.

(4) To plane or scrape any of the roads in his division whenever in his judgment they may require it ;

(5) To keep the bridges, sluices, and ditches in his jurisdiction open and in repair, and the highways free from obstructions at all times ;

(6) To properly protect by railings or otherwise, all pits, precipices, deep waters and other places dangerous to travel ;

(7) To see that the provisions of the Act to prevent the spreading of thistles and noxious weeds upon highways and road allowances are carried out ;

(8) To cause the roads within his division that are used by the public in winter to be made and kept open during the season of sleighing in each year ;

(9) To crown or round the roadways in the centre so as to shed the water to the side ditches, the crown on level roads not to exceed one inch of raise to each foot of width from side to centre ; and

(10) To perform such other services as may be required of him from time to time under the written instructions of the road and bridge committee of his division.

COMMUTED LABOR TO BE SUPPLEMENTED FROM GENERAL FUNDS AS HERETOFORE

5. All expenditure for road material, tools, or machinery, for jobs or contracts similar to what have hitherto been met out of the general funds of the municipality, shall continue to be met from the same source to be still known as the road and bridge account, leaving the commuted statute labor monies of each year to be applied in that year exclusively towards the maintenance and repair of the highways of the township in place of the statute labor which has heretofore been used for that purpose. The total commutation monies received shall be annually apportioned between and expended in the two divisions established by this by-law upon the basis of the assessed value of the property in each division, as ascertained from the assessment roll of that year, and the treasurer shall charge each payment made by him to the fund and division to which same belongs as defined by this section.

PAYING FOR WORK DONE.

6. Each commissioner shall keep an accurate record of the men employed and the work done by him under this by-law, and he shall furnish to the reeve in such written form and at such intervals as his instructions may require, properly itemized statements made up from these records and duly certified by him, accompanied by any vouchers pertaining thereto. The reeve upon being satisfied of the correctness of such statements may issue his cheque upon the proper fund from which payment should be made, as per section 5 above.

ROADWAYS.

7. In order to remedy the inequalities that at present exist throughout the township in the width of those portions of its highways which are intended respectively for the use of vehicles and of persons travelling on foot, it is hereby further enacted that hereafter the road commissioners in reconstructing or regrading any highway shall aim at a uniform standard width of track or roadway for vehicles of not less than twenty nor more than twenty-eight feet (according to the importance of the road) in the centre of each highway between the inside edges of the side ditches, unless the confinement of the road is such as to justify a deviation from this rule.

GUTTERS.

8. Ditches or gutters shall be constructed to drain every highway immediately adjacent to and parallel with the travelled roadway, and separating same from the footpaths set apart by the next section. Every side-ditch shall be of such width and depth as its capacity may require, and shall have an outlet to which the water will flow freely and not be held to soak into and soften the foundation of