

## Editorial

### THE GOSPEL OF GOOD ROADS AND THE CANADIAN ROAD CONGRESS.

Considerable space is devoted in this issue to a summary of the proceedings of the Second Canadian and International Good Roads Convention which was brought to a close on Friday last. Our issue of March 25th presented a brief description of the very interesting and comprehensive exhibition of machinery, materials and appliances, held in conjunction with the convention. Undoubtedly the Dominion and Ontario Good Roads Associations, an amalgamation of which had been effected to accomplish the great undertaking, are to be congratulated upon its distinguished success, and the president, W. A. McLean, and the secretary, Geo. A. McNamee, deserve no small credit for their achievement. The illness of President McLean, which prevented his participation in the Conference, as chairman of the sessions, was a serious set-back, and was much regretted by all who were in attendance.

The successful road convention is of decided assistance to the good roads movement in a number of ways. It provides ample opportunity for road engineers, superintendents, contractors, municipal officials and others interested, to get together by two's and three's to discuss in a companionable and unprofessional manner the different phases of the road problem, all the way from legislation and finance to maintenance and repair. It gives them opportunity also for inspecting the machinery and materials which the progressive science of road-building has created and placed at their service. It brings them into personal contact with quite a number of the best highway authorities and experts—men whom the management brings to expound what is new in theory and practice, and what of the old is proving worthy or detrimental to present-day road-building. And finally, it gives them, or should give them, opportunity to discuss the up-to-dateness, practicability and reliability of theories, new and old, to explain their own activities, successes, difficulties and failures, and to ask the advice and experience of others as well or better qualified to debate upon the every-day problems which varying conditions are wont to present. A road convention primarily serves this purpose, which, upon closer analysis, is really to educate those not expert in highway matters, rather than to form a meeting-ground for highway authorities to present and discuss papers of high technical excellence.

It can be truly said of the convention just closed that the opportunities given to road men to converse with each other was a very creditable one. Also that the manufacturers did their part in displaying and explaining their products, those recent achievements auguring well for efficient road construction. Thanks are due the Association and the speakers for the educative papers presented. In the main these papers were of an elementary nature and dealt in fundamentals. Others were of a general character, while a few dwelt upon important details of particular phases of the road problem. In passing, it was an opinion expressed by many that more papers of the latter type might well have replaced some

of a general nature, considering the large representation of road men more interested in engineering problems relating to design, construction and maintenance. As already stated, the convention was not primarily for a discussion of these problems, but it would seem advisable to devote more time to discussion of these details rather than of general characteristics.

This brings to mind the periods allotted for papers and discussions. Some of the papers were too long. Some of the sessions were quite late in starting. As a result there were occasions when it was impossible for some of the speakers to properly present their papers. Few papers received adequate discussion owing to lack of time. Some of them invited valuable discussion, but received little or none. As suggested last year, when commenting upon the First Convention, the practice of printing and distributing papers several weeks previous to their presentation relieves this situation, by allowing some of them to be taken as read and leaving the entire period to be devoted to discussion. At this convention it would have proved a distinct advantage. It is not an uncommon thing, at conventions such as this, for the discussion of a paper to be even more valuable than the paper itself. Of course, this applies less to papers of the first two types mentioned above, and more to those dealing with details. But one has only to pay attention to the subjects that are under discussion between sessions and at odd times around the corridors, to realize the interest value that lies in these details. These little topics are very important, yet they are discussed in the hearing of only a few and the attendance at large does not receive the benefit.

Be that as it may, Canada's second big road conference is over, and in every way it was a decided improvement upon the first. Perhaps the above suggestions may be of some little assistance in advancing the third convention to a still higher rung on the ladder of success. In conventions, as in road-building, experience is a great thing.

### THE OILING OF HIGHWAYS.

Last week at a court session in Toronto Judge Morison gave a decision that bitumen could not be applied to the surface of a highway unless the road were closed with suitable signs until the oil had dried or unless the oil was immediately covered with sand or chips. There was an alternative to the effect that the municipality must be willing to assume full responsibility for damages.

The learned judge held that the user of the highway was entitled to a safe roadway unless warned or cautioned to the contrary.

This decision having been handed out, it now behoves the road engineer or superintendent to see that an application of sand or chips be made immediately upon oiling or that the public be informed by conspicuous signals of the condition of the highway in order that they may exercise care in travelling over it.