

Gordon C. Wilson, the county of Wentworth representative in the house of commons, has seen fit to make a series of statements, or charges, on the floor of the house, against the department of public highways and against me, as the minister responsible for the building program now being put through. His method of attack was to make charges in the house of commons just before the federal parliament prorogued, thus preventing a proper reply being made to his insinuations and inferences. He also caused the publication in a Toronto paper, which has been bitterly antagonistic to the government in power in this province, of a tirade against myself and the policy of the department of highways. Not only were many of the statements credited to Mr. Wilson untrue, but the photos, with which the attack was augmented, were used in a misleading manner. The publication of the charges against the department was made in the Toronto paper the day before Mr. Wilson's speech in the house of commons, the two incidents being inspired evidently by the same people with the same motive. It is my desire to deal with these misstatements, as they affect the department and myself as briefly as possible, but at the same time in complete detail, the wide publication of the charges demanding a reply, if for no other reason than to bring to the attention of the public just what is being aimed at and just what is being accomplished by the department of public highways. The attack by Mr. Wilson is made up of a number of untruths and misstatements, some of them uttered deliberately, and some of them perhaps through ignorance of the road-building policy of the government and of the council of Wentworth county. In this connection it is only fair to point out that ill-feeling toward myself and the present government has much to do with this policy of petty politics.

THE CHARGES

Mr. Wilson charges the department of public highways with extravagance; he alleges that I have favored the county of Wentworth, and particularly my own constituency, North Wentworth, in the matter of new roads or highways; that I have spent government money in constructing these thoroughfares around my own home for my own convenience and benefit; that I have used provincial funds in opening a "blind concession" though one of my needs; that excessive wages have been paid to the workmen on these highways; that the road-building program of the province is suffering because of the alleged preference

shown the county of Wentworth; that tenders have been juggled and secret conferences held with the council of Dundas. To all of these charges I give an unqualified denial and at the same time brand every allegation as spurious and misleading. Proof of the falseness of Mr. Wilson's many statements will be found in the facts which are recited as each particular charge is dealt with in detail.

Those who are familiar with the department of provincial highways will realize that the present road-building policy is but an elaboration to a large extent of the one laid down by the late government. Now that it is being pursued with vigor, it appears fated to meet with opposition from a few individuals who are ever ready to place personalities and cheap political tricks ahead of the common welfare. The department of highways at the present time has 71 contractors busily engaged with large gangs of road builders on road work stretching from Sarnia in the west to Ottawa in the east. Proof of this is to be found in the accompanying map, which shows the work now under way in that part of the province from Oshawa to Windsor and the western border. The section embracing the eastern part of the province is not given, simply because space does not permit. The road-building policy is a broad, comprehensive one, embracing the entire province, our aim being a series of much-needed main highways connecting the principal cities and towns and linking them up with the fertile farm lands surrounding these communities. Those who have followed the trend of events readily realize that our greatest need at present is good roads, the development of motor transportation alone making this imperative. Our work has the approval of the various municipal bodies of the province, and we are repeatedly urged to pursue our policy with even more vigor and dispatch, instead of delaying it on the ground that the "costs are excessive."

DEPARTMENT PLANS

Our plan calls for the initial construction in the vicinity of main cities and towns. This year many miles of highway approaching Toronto, Hamilton, Ottawa, London, Sarnia, Windsor, Stratford, Galt, Waterloo, Kitchener, Brantford, Guelph, Peterboro, Kingston and other cities will be constructed. Next year the extension of these roads will be undertaken, until eventually they are hooked up, and a network of perfect highways completed. The prin-