

What York Has Done for Its Roads

A Retrospective Glance at the County's Activities

By Geo. B. Henry, Minister of Agriculture for Ontario.

YORK county, that rich agricultural country surrounding Toronto, has a good roads system of which it may well be proud. Of the total mileage of roads within the county schedule of 214 miles, 105 have been improved. The improved comprise one mile of brick pavement, 15 miles of bituminous bound macadam, 85 miles of water bound macadam and three miles of gravel. And this road improvement practically dates from 1911.

The foundations of York county roads were laid more than a century and a half ago by the early settlers who were required to do statute labor for the upkeep of the roads. Then came a period when the roads were under military surveillance during which land along the road was allotted to settlers on condition that they clean, stump and grade the road adjacent to their property. Then the roads were handed over to road companies who operated the toll gate system. This system continued in force until 1896, and it was during this period that most of the roads of the county were given their present grades.

In 1896 the toll-road system was abolished and the roads taken over by the minor municipalities. For 15 years the minor municipalities undertook the burden of maintaining these main highways and met with consistent opposition from the taxpayers. And while the minor municipalities were worrying with the problem of maintaining, not to say improving, these main highways, the county council was attempting to find out how it might assist.

The next milestone was passed when in 1901 the Ontario Legislature passed an act to assist in the improvement of public highways. As this act was designed to assist county organizations, the municipalities of York county were unable to partake of the provincial bounty. In 1904 the county council of York submitted a good roads by-law to the electors. The ratepayers turned it down and then in November, 1906, another attempt was made to take the voice of the electors but it failed to get the support of the county council. About this time Sir John Eaton, at the request of the late Timothy Eaton, made a grant of \$6,000 to build a model water bound macadam road on a section of Dundas street. This road was built and it proved a great incentive to the good road movement. It might be added here that in 1917, Sir John Eaton made a grant of some \$15,000 to build a model asphaltic macadam road on a section of Dundas street. This new road has been built and it will prove as great an incentive to high-class road as did the grant of 1906.

Two Constituencies Get Together.

The problem of the maintenance and improvement of the main highway continued to be a live one for some years, but it was finally necessary to have a special act passed constituting the electoral divisions of east and west York a good road county. Following this legislation a joint meeting was held at Cooksville of representatives of York county, the City of Toronto, the Toronto Board of Trade and the Ontario Motor League. Resolutions were passed recommending a commission, composed of city, county and government representatives to undertake the improvement of the main highways leading into

Toronto, the three interests to contribute a third each to the cost. The result of these negotiations was the formation of a highway commission. This commission was formed and began work in 1911. At the beginning the road schedule was composed of 110 miles. The commission appointed Mr. E. A. James, C.E., as chief engineer, and he has since been responsible to the Board for the work of highway improvement. We spent \$600 under the original agreement with the city, each of the three interests contributing \$200.

In 1915 a new act was passed by the Ontario Legislature granting more generous aid towards highway improvement. Under this legislation the province pays 40 per cent. towards construction and 20 per cent. towards the maintenance of the improved highways in these county systems. The balance of the cost is borne equally by the city and county in our particular system. Under this new arrangement all of York county is included. With the passing of this act of 1915, we now work under a provincial statute, rather than under an agreement between the city of Toronto to the county of York. Our Board is now composed of five members. Controller Thos. Foster and ex-Alderman David Spence are the city representatives. W. H. Pugsley and Wm. Keith represent the county and Geo. S. Henry is the old man mutually agreed upon.

Our roads are of a higher type than any other county roads in the province. We were able to profit by the experience of those who had begun work before us. And we have been profiting by our own experience since we began in 1911, so during the latter years we have been enabled to build a better class of road than we did at first. You will notice that we have different types of road construction, because we have different classes of traffic to contend with.

\$7,500 Per Mile.

During the last seven years we have spent \$850,000 between \$50,000 and \$60,000 being for bridges and culverts, so that we have averaged on actual road construction about \$7,500 per mile. When we started work between \$4,000 and \$5,000 would have been a fair estimate of the cost per mile, but conditions have changed. Motor traffic has increased eight or nine-fold and our people appreciate the better types of road construction as they did not when we started highway improvement. It is easier to obtain \$8,000 now than \$4,000 seven years ago. We are also gradually improving our maintenance; with provincial assistance we are developing rapidly along this line. Our ideal is a patrol system which will gradually be established so that in the future our city constituents will not be as critical as they have sometimes been in the past. We cannot expect 200 miles



An Ontario Road of the Best Type.

This is an inter-city road. Its cost is borne jointly by the cities which it serves, the province and the municipalities through which it passes.

of highway in York county which will be as even as the Toronto-Hamilton highway. All our roads will not be called on to take as heavy traffic as will naturally develop between these two big cities, and consequently it would be poor economy to build for a traffic that does not exist. As our population increases, our type of construction will improve, to take care of the greater traffic.

Road improvement is in a transition stage and what seems to satisfy us at the moment in all likelihood will not suit five years hence. The counties of this province who are just about to undertake a system of highway improvement—and there are only four out of 37 organized counties who have not improved highway systems, or systems now being organized—have a big advantage in that they have the experience of the others during the last 15 years, which has shown very marked progress.

I look for a vast improvement in all the rural highways of this country. After we are through settling with the enemy of real progress overseas, we are to have a great awakening—our people will not be satisfied with the old order of things. The improvement of the county or main highways has an educative value which will not be lost on the minor municipalities. Our side roads must need be improved, because our farmers will not be satisfied unless they can motor home on a good road during all the season. I say motor advisedly because who, more than the farmer, needs a motor? And I fear some one, who more than he can afford one if present prices continue.—From an address.

A Boost for the "Vet"

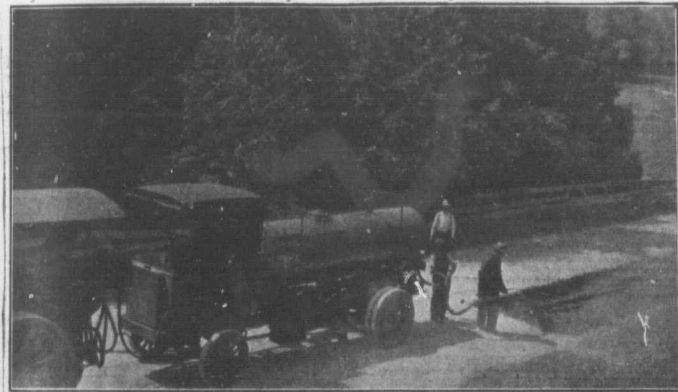
An Experience Lesson Costing \$450

NOT long ago a farmer of the old school experimented for a couple of weeks on his sick hogs.

He fed a hog tonic and various concoctions the knowledge of which he inherited from ancestral swine breeders, but a few more hogs got sick each day and they began to die faster and faster. He winced under the strain as hog after hog went under the sod. He thought it might be cholera, but he did not know. Finally his wife persuaded him to call a graduate veterinarian and to agree to follow his suggestions. She thus virtually secured a promise that her husband would vaccinate his remaining hogs and stop the loss. A post mortem revealed unmistakable cholera lesions and all the hogs on the place, big and little, were given the serum and virus, with the exception of a few very young litters. Over 150 head were treated and thirty of them were noticeably sick. Only seventeen of these died and all the others were saved. He paid \$137 for the treatment—the value of four of the fifteen hogs that he had buried during his trial of home doctoring.

After recounting this experience and the outcome, this gray-haired man declared that the burial of \$450 worth of hogs had taught him that prompt veterinary advice and treatment is the best investment a farmer can make when an animal is seriously sick and he does not know what will cure it. He regretted that he had not called the veterinarian sooner, but he thanked his lucky stars—and his wife—that he called the doctor when he did.

"Records are made before the test work starts," says L. H. Lipsit, of Elgin County. "First you must have the cow with both the breeding and the individuality. Then she must be gotten in condition for the test. If the right cow is in the right condition the work is practically done."



One of the "Eaton" Roads in York Co., Ont., receiving an application of Tarvia A.