

A RECORD OF PROGRESS

The annual report of the Department of Public Works of Alberta for the year 1909 has now been printed, and it is interesting to note the progress which has been made in the different branches. The report states that the large influx of population to outlying districts has been in a large measure responsible for the increase in the work, and in view of the province new conditions are constantly being presented and new sections of the country are being opened. The endeavor has been made to extend main roads, build bridges where possible and install ferries as far as possible to meet the traffic demands as a means of meeting the present requirements. Recognizing the necessity of increasing the weight and strength of structures to provide for the increased size and weight of threshing and traction engines in the country, all structures were built with this end in view, and all existing old steel bridges were examined and a notice placed thereon to show the load they are capable of carrying.

The total number of bridges constructed during the year were 235, of which 219 were built of timber, and in addition 95 bridges were repaired or reconstructed. The total number of steel bridges in the province is 117, of which thirteen were built last year.

The report further states that the policy of the department in reference to road improvement is that the department open up and improve, as far as possible, main roads, the local improvement districts being responsible for the improvement of side roads. It is gratifying to note that many of the districts are taking hold and endeavoring to co-operate with the department in carrying out a uniform system of road making. An effort has been made to point out to local organizations the importance of carrying out a uniform system of road making and a bulletin in connection with the construction of roads has been prepared and will be issued to local improvement districts, general road foremen and any others interested in the road improvement question throughout the province. During the year 32 ferries were operated in the various parts of the province, an increase of six for the year.

Four hundred and eighty-five miles of fireguard were plowed during the year, this being considerably less than the mileage the year previous. This is taken as evidence that in view of the rapid settlement, improvement of roads and extension of irrigation, the amount of fireguarding in the future will gradually decrease.

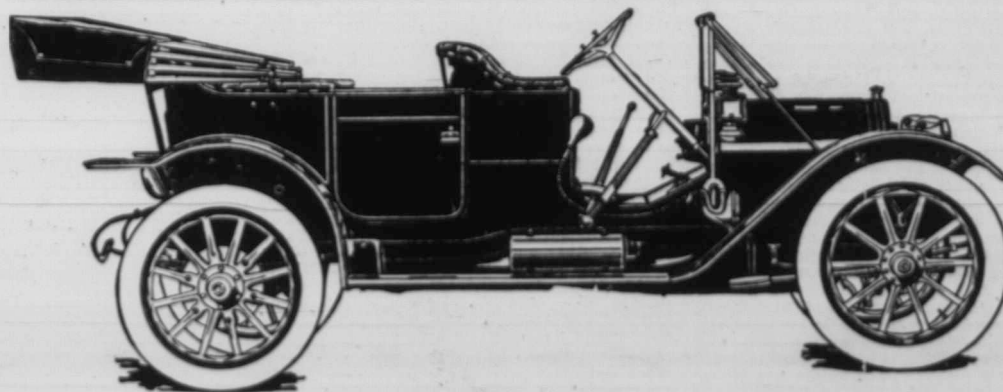
An effort is also being made to assist settlers, as far as possible, who were experiencing great difficulty in obtaining adequate supply of water. Generally speaking the water supply of the province is good. There are, however, sections in the southern and eastern portions of the province where difficulty has been experienced in securing water. The drilling has generally been done on road allowances where, if water is obtained, the well is of service to the adjacent community, and the operations determine if water is obtainable and at what depth, the operations being more in the nature of tests than to supply water for all the settlers. Twenty wells were sunk and a fairly good supply of water was secured in seventeen. In addition to the public wells a number of private wells were drilled where settlers were prepared to meet all the expenses, the use of drilling machine being supplied free by the department.

It was thought advisable, in order to protect the public and to safeguard life, that a more efficient method of construction of steam boilers should be planned. With this object in view a ruling for the construction and inspection of steam boilers was adopted by the department with good results. In addition to this a conference was organized between the inspectors of Alberta and Saskatchewan with a view of formulating uniform boiler rules for the two provinces.

The coal mine branch statistics show a steady development of the mining industry of the province, the total output for 1909 being 2,174,329 tons as against 1,845,666 the year previous,

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which shows an increase of 17.85 per cent. During the year 32 new mines were opened and eight abandoned; the number of mines now in operation being 121.

With reference to building construction during the year, reference is made to the fact that the erection of steel and masonry work in connection with the parliament buildings at Edmonton, has been carried on with success. Several

other public buildings were started in various parts of the province.

Work of the Local Improvement Branch shows a steady increase and at the end of the year there were 188 small local improvement districts fully organized and carrying on business in the province, fourteen new districts having been organized during the year.

The telephone branch also called for a large amount of work, and construction

of new lines was carried on all over the province. In all 793 miles of long distance toll lines were constructed, nine new exchanges and fifteen new over the province. In all 793 miles of long distance toll lines were constructed, nine new exchanges and fifteen new toll offices were opened, while extensions and additions were made to fifteen existing exchanges rendered necessary through growth.