

# The Canadian Engineer

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## The Canadian Engineer

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### CONVICT LABOR ON PUBLIC ROADS.

The use of convict labor on public highways in the United States is becoming more general.

In Canada two provinces have tried the experiment, and in continuing the experiment one or two things will be absolutely necessary to insure its success. The first will be that the control of such work shall be vested in the hands of a highway engineer and not at the direction of the provincial criminal authorities. As a road builder the prison laborer will not be of use to the State unless his work is under the direction of competent men.

The convict camps should be under the inspection and supervision of the Board of Health. The people of the Province, although they have every confidence in the prison authorities as officers of the department of justice, will be more satisfied that the food and sanitary arrangements for the convicts are suitable if the Provincial Board of Health have the right of inspection.

Badly as we require good roads, we must consider the humanitarian side of this matter, and must not disregard rules regarding the physical and moral health of the convicts, nor must we forget that unfortunate citizens are assigned to the country jails with a view of reforming and improving the manhood of the convicts rather than for the purpose of building highways.

### PROVINCIAL AID FOR HIGHWAYS.

There is no division of sentiment in Canada as to the desirability and necessity for better highways. Every good roads movement has the universal indorsement of legislators and taxpayers, but when the reports commence to show the burden of taxation a halt is called. The longer stretches of rural highways on which front land at low value and with low assessments cannot stand the taxation necessary to so improve these highways as to make them comparable with the roads and pavements of the cities, where land values and assessments are high.

Although the rural districts will receive benefit from the improved highways in the matter of increased land values and greater ease at reaching markets, yet those dwelling in cities have considerable to gain from the improvement of rural highways. Good roads mean a lower price for farm and garden produce to the consumer and higher price to the producer, because waste is eliminated.

### TELEPHONE RATE REGULATION.

The question of fair telephone rates is one which has for some time been a question for the consideration of both the telephone companies and the railway boards. During the past few weeks several hundred telephone companies operating in Ontario have submitted to the Ontario Railway and Municipal Board their toll charges,