

# MUNICIPAL DEPARTMENT

## SUMMARY OF POSSIBLE GOVERNMENT MEASURES.

By A. W. CAMPBELL, C.E.

### STATUTE LABOR.

1. In the earlier history of the country the statute labor system was undoubtedly the best that could be adopted for pioneer work. Under this system excellent work was performed, and results were produced which could not have been achieved by any other means. Unfortunately for the taxpayer and the roads, this method was, not altered in keeping with changed conditions, but is still retained in its original form and is asked to perform work of which it is incapable. For its past usefulness it still has much sympathy among the farming community, though the leading men generally condemn it. The good roads agitation, by pointing out the injustice, waste, and inferior results, and by removing many false impressions as to the consequences of abolishing statute labor, has induced about thirty townships, under the power now vested in them, to make the change, and others are preparing to follow their example. So that although the time may not have arrived for action by the Legislature, making a general change, it would be along the lines of progressive thought to shape legislation to this end. The shaping and introducing of legislation with the consequent discussion would greatly inspire the movement, and would prepare the public mind for the change.

### PROVINCIAL AID.

2. Were it possible for the Government to appropriate money for first construction and thereafter make an annual grant to assist in the maintenance of the county roads on the basis previously outlined, it would at once encourage the county councils to assume control of the main roads of each county, and thereby materially assist in bringing about a proper system of road administration.

### WIDE TIRES.

3. At the municipal convention held in Toronto on Dec. 12th and 13th, of last year, there was an unanimous expression in favor of legislation regulating the width of tires on wagons and carts used for heavy teaming. The necessity of such measures is very great, and seems to be generally understood. The merits of such a law are evidenced by the fact that all the European countries where good roads exist regulate the width of tires; and in the United States wide tires are being gradually required by statute. The Municipal Act now authorizes towns and cities to pass by-laws, but the machinery for enforcing these by-laws is insufficient.

The opposition offered to such legislation is that tires now used are very narrow and the owners object to the expense of making the change. Legislation

to this effect, which would come into force about five years hence, giving the people opportunity to prepare for the change (which would be made largely in the purchase of new vehicles), would be the fairest and most acceptable means, if general legislation is resorted to. But should the county councils take charge of the leading roads, and money assistance be granted by the Legislature, the least objectionable way would be to authorize county councils to pass by-laws regulating tire widths according to a schedule laid down by the Legislature.

### TOWNSHIP CONSENT.

4. As the Municipal Act now stands, the assent of the township council is necessary before the county council can take over any road within the township. If county control of leading roads is advisable, such consent should not be required, as, for local reasons, it materially affects the planning of a proper system of county roads.

### RAILWAY ARRANGEMENTS.

5. Railway companies appear to recognize the advantages which will accrue to

them from better roads. The leading railways in the United States have signified their willingness to grant concessions by way of reduced rates to municipalities on material shipped into the municipality for road making, many of the companies suggesting half rates, and some even better. A great favor would be conferred on many town and township municipalities in this province were the Government, by their influence, able to secure favorable arrangements with the railways of the province for the carriage of gravel and stone.

### MONEY AT LOW RATES OF INTEREST.

6. In the case of counties where a large sum of money is needed at once to purchase toll roads or to re-construct roads with a view to establishing a county road system, or in the case of townships, towns and villages requiring to raise money for road or street improvement, it would be of benefit if the Government could lend to such municipalities the required amount at the lowest possible rate of interest, with repayment extended over a term of years.

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