

Good Roads in Quebec

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There is a remarkable fact connected with the development of the good roads policy in the Province of Quebec, and that is the complete accord between the ratepayers and the Government. One might say: It is obvious that the people approve your policy, since they have maintained in power the men who devised it. But this is not the question, and, if I refer to such community of opinions, it is because it appears in numerous manifestations which while they have no affinity at all with politics, throw an interesting light on the mentality of those with whom we have come in touch in carrying out our plans for better roads.

Matters, of course, did not take that favorable turn at once. At the very beginning, a trial had been made with some county councils by giving them aid to buy stone crushers; then, we made another attempt with local municipalities, helping them to purchase road graders. The crusher was left idle in the neighboring field, and, in one instance, the road grader was the subject of a most boisterous meeting at which a resolution was passed prohibiting the use of the implement. That was really strange, but not supernatural, nor by any means unnatural.

We set our mind to work to find out what was the matter and why, since we were not Greeks, our presents were refused with such disdainful indignation. We soon realized the truth of the old French saying, which is not easily translated into English, but which means that you cannot get anything unless you put up the money for it. We granted certain subsidies and obtained good results; but again, we saw that it would be a rather slow affair if we did not do more.

However, the trend of opinion showed a general desire of getting good roads; on the other hand, the Government was also anxious to give to the province a much needed improvement. The only question remaining to be settled was that of the necessary funds. That was up to the Government, and the latter decided to borrow millions and to furnish the ratepayer all the money required to pay the cost of construction. I might mention that the trend of opinion had been carefully framed by a very extensive and intense campaign organized, as it were, on commercial principles, that is from the standpoint of advertising, which was carried out by means of circulars, posters, meetings, newspaper reports, and so forth, so as to maintain the spirits at the boiling point. We were at that time impressed by the fact that public opinion as regards good roads was not mere fiction that it actually existed, but that it was slumbering and needed only to be awakened. Besides, another slumbering idea was awakened; the idea that the construction of good roads is just as important, if not more so, than the construction of all kinds of public works, without excepting railroads, the idea that, if the energies of the nation had been in due time directed towards the normal development of nearly all the national services, the time had come to put good roads on the same footing, and to invest in their construction all the money available, provided it would not interfere with sound administration.

Now, here is where appears the accord to which I have referred: With a view of building provincial roads, the Quebec Government asked from the municipalities a contribution of one thousand dollars per mile; the contribution was readily granted; as regards local roads, the Government offered to pay 50 per cent of the amount expended for macadam or gravelled roads; without hesitating, those who don't believe in long term payments accepted the offer; the Government offered money at two, and then at three per cent, without sinking fund; the demands have not ceased to pour in, and with such a continuity that, in five years, the joint action of the people, and of the Government, has given to the province over 300 miles of trunk roads, nearly 2,000 miles of improved roads, has done away to a large extent with statute labor, and moreover has created a new spirit which will no longer suffer trails to be called good roads.

The foregoing is a very simple story, so simple a story that one might even have expected it to begin with the words of the nursery tales: Once there was a man . . . who did such and such a thing. But simple as it is, however, and this does not involve return to simple life — all of us are fond of stories, especially when the conclusions to be inferred therefrom have a practical and far-reaching importance, and I don't think anybody could deny the im-

portance of an object lesson taken from the life of one of the largest provinces of the Dominion. If, as says Monsieur Manotau, laws are the synthesis of social experiments, is it not a great point to be able to frame laws which, based on experience and knowledge of popular aims, bring the people and the Government to go on and work side by side for the welfare of the country? Further, my excuse for giving details which may seem, in some way, of rather local interest, is that such an experience might be good food for the mind of the practical man who would broaden his knowledge of what remains to be done in the country, and consequently, of what has already been done.

"CONTAGIOUS" AND "INFECTIOUS."

These are popular terms which are not scientific or precise, and we are often asked by intelligent people as to the difference between them.

A "contagious" disease is one that is readily communicable or "catching." The word is derived from 'contingere,' meaning to touch, and was at one time confined to diseases which were supposed to be "caught" from one having the disease by personal contact.

An "infectious" disease is usually considered to be one not conveyed directly and obviously as in the case of conveyed directly and obviously as in the case of contagious diseases, but indirectly through some other medium. Typhoid fever was often taken as a type of infectious disease.

These distinctions are entirely artificial, and serve no useful purpose. Infectious disease may be contagious, and contagious disease infectious; and both terms leave out a large class of communicable diseases conveyed by insects. The word "communicable" is therefore much better and broader in every way, and should be used in preference to either of the above terms.

A "communicable" disease is one caused by a specific 'virus' transferred in a great many ways. Thus the virus in Diphtheria is the diphtheria bacillus; in Typhoid fever, Typhoid bacilli; in Malaria, the Malaria parasite carried by mosquitos. The term "communicable" ignores the method by which the virus is conveyed. There is a great difference in the ease with which different diseases are conveyed. Some diseases such as measles and smallpox, are conveyed readily from one person to another, while others are communicated only with difficulty. Tuberculosis is a disease which is communicable, and yet a very long time may occur between the time when an individual became infected and the time he developed symptoms of the disease.

We can control our environment to a great extent, and can for instance destroy insects like mosquitos which carry malaria and yellow fever, or destroy lice, which convey typhus fever. But it is very difficult to control man himself, because it requires his own consent. It is therefore easier to stamp out Yellow fever through a campaign against the disease-carrying mosquito, than it is to stamp out typhoid fever which is carried and spread from one human being to another.—Health Bulletin.

THE SPLIT LOG DRAG.

Good Roads conventions are excellent. Much information and many helpful suggestions are to be obtained from attending them. Unfortunately very few country pathmasters attend them. We all hope that, eventually, good roads, with proper surface and under-drainage and foundation will become general. Meanwhile it would be well for us to exercise the proper care that should be given to many existing arth roads.

While traveling through Dundas county the middle of April, it was distinctly noticeable that the road upon which the split log drag had been used were in decidedly better condition than the undragged roads. Do not wait until the road is to be reconstructed. Do something to keep it in good shape. If the split log drag is used in the spring, or, after rains, earth roads can be very much improved. Instead of having a road full of holes and ruts an earth road can be kept smooth and in much better condition than many of the undragged roads of the present day. The cost is small but the improvement is great.—F.C.N.