

nected roads exist,—that is, when the main highways, a series of sections connecting up the county roads, are constructed,—when these main arteries are constructed, I promise you that in Ontario we will have a system of highways that will be equal to any on this continent, because we will be able to go from one end of Ontario to the other, get out on the county roads constructed by the counties, carrying the market traffic, and from those to pass onto the township roads, maintained at the expense of the township, but upon which they will be able, after the county has created its system, to concentrate all of their efforts.

The average township road, under favorable circumstances of material, can be maintained in very good condition with the ordinary township expenditure, and the townships can carry their own financial burden. The county roads require a heavier expenditure of funds. For the present the township, the county and the province will have all that their financial effort will perhaps enable them to meet. But here you have a scheme of distributing the cost. The city joins in the area of the county, and the township looks after minor roadways or arteries. By minor arteries I mean such roads as have perhaps ten or twelve vehicles a day. Such roads require comparatively light construction. When you get up to 25 and 50 or 100 a day, according to circumstances, or 200, 300 or 500, you have to extend your type of construction and spread the cost over the people.

Roads as Costly as Railways

The question of drawing the cities together is the main point to-day. I sometimes illustrate the equity of it by saying we cannot have the county road pass every farm and yet the farmer on the township road has to pay for his share of the construction of that county road, because he drives two or three miles, gets on it and goes to his market point or into the city.

In the city you have an area of two, three or six thousand acres, with a population of ten, twenty or a hundred thousand. Why should that area and population escape from the cost of those main arteries that serve the country any more than the farmer whose property is not even on the county road? In the city you have an area and a population, in the individual farm you have an area and population, they are all part of the country.

Roads, main arteries, cost as much to construct and proportionately to maintain as the steam railway does. A good main artery costs fifteen, twenty or thirty thousand dollars per mile to construct. That is what the steam railway costs. It is an expensive undertaking. Everyone must share in the cost in Canada, as they are sharing in the United States, as they have shared in the past in England and in France. I have always held the view in Ontario that until the cities and towns come wholeheartedly into our scheme, the construction of highways would be proportionately slow in development. In Ontario and throughout Canada the construction of main arteries, our main channels of traffic, is as important to the country as the steam railway. The city and the township must join equally in the cost. The cities were slow in entering the field during the era of the horse-drawn traffic. With the growth of the automobile, the interest of the city has been stimulated, their people have been going out on the country roads and they see the state of those roads. They have been discovering that certain roads are good and that certain roads are of the other description, and they have been asking why. And we have been seeking to tell them

why,—that certain roads carry the concentrated traffic upon which all join, and for which all must in equity expect to pay.

The automobile has increased the carrying capacity of the main highway how many fold? Two, three, ten fold, it is impossible perhaps to estimate, but we do know that the automobile can go five or ten times as far in a day as could the old horse-drawn vehicle, and it can carry four or five and perhaps ten times the load that the horse-drawn vehicle was able to carry. If roads were important to the civilization of the past, and to the people of the past, with horse-drawn vehicles, how much more important are they to the people of to-day with the carrying capacity that has come to them through the introduction of the automobile?

Yet Roads Will Not Be Financial Burden

If the cities of the past have been expected to pay their share, surely the cities of to-day must join in and meet this heavy outlay. Heavy in a sense, yes, but in carrying on this present war we have discovered that what seems a heavy financial undertaking is purely an attitude of mind. If we want good roads, we can pay for them. The financial cost that we have undertaken through this war would have previously seemed impossible to the most efficient of our financiers. To-day we see how it was accomplished. To-day the road problem payment seems heavy. When it is paid for, we will discover that we only had to do a day's work at a time and a year's work was finally accomplished, and we paid for it through our daily earnings at the end of the year, and it was not such a heavy burden after all.

I don't consider that the cost of the highways is going to stagger us at all. It will be immense, but our resources are adequate and the construction of those good roads will pay for themselves in the greater development of our country. All we need is faith and courage to go ahead, knowing that that will be the result. Past history has shown that it is. I believe that Ontario to-day has the foundation of one of the most equitable financial schemes of any country in the world, and I have studied them all. I don't think there is anything to surpass it. If there are any angles to be cut off, we can cut them off as they appear. If there is any filing or sandpapering to do, we can look after that, but we have the foundation of it, and all we need to do is to go ahead and use what we have and perfect it as we see that it ought to be perfected. We have a perfect foundation to work on. That is all we need to concern ourselves with to-day. If there are any inequalities, they will be taken care of as the work develops.

Equitable Distribution of Expense

We have an organization for taking care of the heavily travelled arteries and distributing the cost, and so on to the ordinary township road. I admit that in certain parts of Ontario, some special arrangement would seem desirable in connection with the ordinary township road, but that seems to me to be a matter for the future rather than for the immediate present when we have our main arteries to attend to and our systems of county roads, which will give the townships and the counties and the cities and the province perhaps all we should undertake at this stage of the work.

What we have is not at all final in the way of organization. It is simply the stage from which we must start to use what we have, and I believe that under it the cost will be equitably distributed without any heavy undertaking on the part of any individual or municipality.