

gasoline, while the mothers of the place are in dread lest their children be run down by the tourist, who too often rushes through with scant regard for the safety of pedestrians or for any law of God or man. Such conditions present a serious problem in the development of a complete state or national improved road system.

It is probable that many of the state highway laws provide for a determination of the proportions of the expense of improving such a link in its road system which should be borne by the state and the town, such proportions depending upon the additional width or the more costly type of the road through the town, but there may be no means of securing prompt action by the town authorities in providing its share of the funds.

Such laws, where they exist, are necessarily uniform and inelastic; but even this is better than would be the practice of enacting special laws to fit each case. This would result in endless log-rolling, unfair compromise and grave abuse. It is difficult, if not impossible, to standardize where conditions are quite different.

Prompt Improvement Desired

Prompt improvement of the entire trunk highway is the object to be sought. The state should be able to secure this result, but without injustice to communities where the imposition of the share of the cost determined by statute would involve serious hardship. It would seem as though the power to carry out such improvement at the time other sections of the road are improved should be vested in the state, which would become responsible for payment for the work in the first instance, and that the town should be obliged to contribute such share as may be designated by law, provided the law so specifies, with the right of appeal to some high judicial body which would have the power either to decrease or increase the proportion fixed by statute, the decision in each case to be reached after careful consideration of all the circumstances, including population, the assessed value of real estate in the town, its existing debt and tax budget in relation thereto, the amount of traffic originating in the town, the need of other improvements, the width of its streets in proportion to their traffic and probably other factors which would be essential to a fair determination of the issue.

This suggestion may be somewhat crude, but it is put forward in the belief that the conditions which it is designed to meet are a serious obstacle to the prompt realization of a complete scheme of state and national highway improvement, and also in the belief that the value of such a system is dependent in no small degree upon the promptness with which it can be wholly completed. It will probably be found that the cases where a town has obstinately and persistently refused to do its share of the improvement of a trunk highway passing through it are comparatively rare, and that they are quite generally ready to pay not only for the extra width but also for the improved type of surface deemed suitable.

The attention of the writer has been called to the case of a village in New York State, the main street of which is part of a trunk highway, where the state's share of the improvement at standard width was less than \$25,000, while the contribution of the village, owing to improved type as well as to extra width, was more than \$90,000. That so few serious disputes and delays have occurred is probably due in no small degree to the tact and good judgment of the state highway officials in dealing with rather delicate questions of this kind.

The Big City's Obligations

Where a state contains a large city, the population of which is a very large proportion of that of the state, and the assessed value of the real estate in which, and consequently its contribution to the expense of the state, is more than that of all the rest of the state, as is conspicuously the case in New York and Rhode Island, and where none of the state funds for road improvement are expended within the city limits, there is likely to be a certain degree of resentment on the part of the city to what it deems an injustice, especially if the city receives no part of the receipts from automobile licenses or registration fees.

While this feeling may be justified, it must be remembered that a very large proportion of the vehicles using the state highways come from the cities, while few of those in the rural districts are tempted to go to the crowded city streets for pleasure riding or are compelled to do so for business reasons. This is conspicuously true as to the heavy motor vehicles which result in the greatest wear upon road surfaces, the great majority of which are engaged in delivering goods from the large cities, where they are manufactured, to outlying towns, and which probably will soon be engaged in a vastly increased inter-city and interstate traffic.

After what may have been a digression, and returning to the actual subject of this paper, the writer believes that there has been too much of a disposition in the past to consider city, county and state highway systems as if they were three separate and distinct things, while we will not satisfactorily solve the problem confronting us until we think in larger terms and realize that they are only parts, under different jurisdictions, of a great national enterprise worthy the best efforts and enthusiastic support of every one of us.

HARBOR BOARD TO CARRY FIXED CHARGES

WOOD, GUNDY AND CO., of Toronto, have purchased \$3,000,000 worth of Toronto Harbor Commission bonds. These are 35-year 4½ per cent. bonds and the price is 84.71, the same as that at which the last issue of \$1,000,000 was sold in December. This means that the city is borrowing at the rate of 5.48 per cent., which is lower than the Victory Loan. This will make up the \$4,000,000 required for harbor improvements. The sale of these bonds is taken as an indication that the city intends to proceed vigorously with the further work of harbor improvements along with the Dominion government.

"This four million will finance the harbor improvements through the reconstruction period," asserts the mayor, "and they can now go on with the active development. Within a year the harbor board should be able to carry its own fixed charges for sinking fund, etc., out of revenue. We are now within \$150,000 of our fixed charges at present, but with the acquisition of many new industries, this deficiency will be obtained from the new leases, and the harbor board, like the Hydro, will carry its own fixed charges."

The Quebec government has granted the use of the Parliament Building to the Canadian Good Roads Association for its Sixth Annual Good Roads Congress and Exhibition, which will be held in May in Quebec City.

At a recent meeting of the House of Assembly in Nova Scotia, the Hon. H. H. Wickwire introduced a bill entitled, "An Act Respecting Loans for County Highways." Mr. Wickwire briefly pointed out that the bill aims to create a better class of roads by providing that a portion of the revenue should be treated by the county as capital for a period of seven years, the money being employed to rebuild the roads. Mr. Wickwire said that one of the chief advantages that would arise from the passage of the bill is the stimulation of contract road work.

Noulan Cauchon, consulting engineer, Ottawa, is making a report to the city of Hamilton on the location of 3 per cent. ruling grades for the development of table lands at the top of the Hamilton mountain, and incidentally for park development. Failing the elimination of the Toronto, Hamilton and Buffalo Railway right-of-way by negotiation or legislation, there will arise the contingency of grade separation at the trackage along the base of Mountain Park. The question of the city's right to 3 per cent. ruling grades may have to be established before the Board of Railway Commissioners or in the courts, unless the city desires to pay the entire cost, as the Railway Act at present permits of no apportionment of cost between the city and the railway for any ruling grades better than 5 per cent.