

Council Adopts New County Road System

NEW COUNTY ROAD SYSTEM EXPLAINED TO COUNCILLORS BY DEPUTY MINISTER SQUIRE

Changing Conditions in Automobile Traffic make the maintenance and Safety of Public Roads a Serious Problem for the Government. Highways Considered in the Light of Their Value to the Country as a Whole—Government and Municipalities to be partners on a Fifty-fifty basis—Hon. Findlay McDiarmid Outlines Duties of Advisory Board—Road Reduction in Lambton Only Eleven Per Cent as Compared With Average of 24 per cent. in the Province.

The Lambton county road system as revised by the department of highways for the province, was adopted by the county council on Thursday, and the covering bylaw given the necessary three readings and adopted. This action ended the special session of the council which opened Wednesday afternoon at 2.30, continuing until 6.30, and was resumed at 10 o'clock Thursday morning. The revised system makes a reduction of about 11 per cent in the mileage of the county system and the reasons for the change were thoroughly outlined by S. L. Squire, deputy minister of highways for Ontario and the Hon. Findlay McDiarmid, chairman of the advisory committee, at Wednesday's sitting.

Petition Govt. for Inwood Sideroad Thursday morning there was more discussion with reference to some further changes in the new map but the only definite move made was the passage of a motion, after the system had been adopted, petitioning the de-

partment number 10 to remain on the map. A motion was proposed by Mr. Findlay McDiarmid, chairman of the advisory committee, and seconded by Reeve Barrett of Point Edward.

The Keynote. Reeve Shaumessy of Petrolia struck the keynote of the views of the majority of the councillors Thursday when he remarked that from the act it appeared that if the county did not adopt the new system, the subsidy would revert to the 30 per cent basis and the county would still have the county road system on its hands. Someone had suggested that the county system be abandoned but from his study of the case he found that the county could not do that.

After A. Weir, K.C., county solicitor, had answered questions on some details, Reeve Shaumessy moved that the proposed revised system be adopted. Reeve Rilett of Alvinston, seconded the motion and it was carried by a standing vote following brief remarks by Reeves Hillier of Sarnia township and Barrett of Pt. Edward, as to the status of their municipalities under the revision. When the bylaw had been passed, Reeve Shaumessy drew attention to the fact that the council had to settle what was to be done in urban municipalities and he subsequently moved that the advisory board and county road superintendent be empowered to make arrangements with the various urban municipalities with regard to the work to be done on the roads therein during 1925. Reeve Barrett of Point Edward was the second and the motion was carried without dissent.

Scheme Explained. At the initial meeting of the special session Wednesday afternoon the council heard comprehensive explanations of the government's ideas in proposing revision of the county road systems from S. L. Squire, deputy

minister of highways for Ontario, and Hon. Findlay McDiarmid, chairman of the advisory committee. A fairly exhaustive discussion ensued and a motion was proposed by deputy reeve James Huey of Sombra that the system, as outlined, be adopted. Deputy reeve Milton McVicar of Enniskillen seconded the motion. Reeve Fred Eastman counselled more consideration and moved in amendment that the matter be laid over. He was supported by Reeve E. A. Shaumessy of Petrolia.

Further debate followed and before the motion or amendment was submitted reeve Thomas Burnley of Plympton moved adjournment seconded by reeve W. G. Connolly of Watford and this motion was adopted.

The Highway Problem. The deputy minister and party arrived about 5 o'clock and were immediately invited within the bar. Mr. Squires was first requested to address the council and, in his introductory remarks, he seemed like coming home to again have the opportunity of visiting the members of the Lambton county council as he remembered quite clearly his former visits.

Going into the subject matter of his talk, he referred to the changing conditions and new automobile transportation problems which had to be met due to the increase in traffic. In the two years from 1922 to 1924 the traffic had increased from 200 to 300 per cent, and from 1914 to 1924 the increase ran as high as 3,000 per cent.

To those who had the development of Canada, of Ontario, and of the municipalities at heart consideration of this increase by the new means of transportation was necessary and the problem was to know how to construct and maintain roads. Still another problem was making the highways safe. It was a matter of regret that such a large number of accidents should occur taking a toll of life and it was a matter of concern to every man who thought. Then again, the deputy pointed out, there was problem of financing. The government had taken an interest in this phase too and paid a portion of the cost.

Forget Boundaries. Referring back to the county road systems put forward in 1917, he termed them more or less of a compromise plan which did not represent in the best sense a county system to be cared for by county councils that would take care of the greatest amount of traffic.

Under the new plan the basic idea was that the roads of the county of importance be considered in the light of their value to the county of a whole and that township boundaries be forgotten. In other words, the desire was to arrange a system that would take care of the traffic through the county and also to do away with dead end roads, and furthermore, to have the roads of one county, insofar as possible, connect up with the roads in the adjoining county and form a net work from one end of the province to the other and enable people to go through on county roads from one place to another.

Effective from January, 1925, the government paid a 30 per cent. subsidy for the construction and maintenance of township roads, an increase of 10 per cent. and an indication that the government felt that every one should have good roads to market points. It was not the government thought to have roads for

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the joyrider but to take care of the roads that took care of the greatest amount of traffic.

Lambton System. Turning to a consideration of Lambton's system, Mr. Squire said, that the county had done well and the government appreciated the fact and made some contribution. The expenditures on roads in the county up to the end of 1924 was \$2,170,000, on which the province paid \$1,033,000. Last year the expenditure was \$450,000 for which the province contributed \$224,000 or practically 50 per cent.

The deputy minister admitted that there were inequalities in the counties now but the aim of the government was to do away with the dual system and to meet the counties dollar for dollar. In connection with the revised map which the county was asked to consider any expenditure which had already been arranged to be made on roads which were to be deleted, the government was prepared to pay 40 per cent, and on roads remaining on the county system they would pay 50 per cent. whether the expenditure was made prior to this date or later. The speaker said he believed that the new plan would be more equitable for the towns too.

Connecting Links. Several questions were asked when Mr. Squire had concluded including one propounded by Reeve Rilett of Alvinston regarding the status of connecting links. The deputy minister replied that they were taken care of in the legislation. As soon as the bylaw was passed the connecting links became part of the county system. In answering a question about a connecting link in a town or village for which an agreement had been drawn up between the municipality and the county, Mr. Squire said that the act did not interfere with any agreement.

Hon. Mr. McDiarmid. Hon. Findlay McDiarmid, chairman of the advisory board, outlined the duties laid upon that body by the government and said that the proposals which the board were making involved a reduction of 2,000 or 3,000 miles throughout the province. Their proposals were not a finality but were submitted to the county councils for consideration.

The Toll Road. To have a county road system that would survive it was necessary to take care of roads that were truly county roads.

Warden Hackett asked about the Sarnia-Florence or Plank toll road, and the deputy minister replied that he was surprised to learn that there was a toll road in the province. Lambton had the unique distinction of having the only toll road in Ontario. The government had introduced a new toll—the gas toll—believed to be an equitable way of collecting toll.

The province did not like the principle of a toll road and was willing to do more than its share toward sol-

ving a problem of this kind. He suggested that the council appoint a committee to meet with the toll road company and settle this matter for once and all.

Further discussion followed during which representations were made that the Inwood road and Bridgen sideroad should be retained on the county system. R. C. Muir, chief engineer of the department, pointed out that the county road mileage was only being reduced 15 1/2 per cent. Retention of the roads suggested would lessen the reduction 11 per cent. The average reduction for the province is 24 per cent.

Vote of Thanks. Before the motion to adjourn was offered, reeve W. G. Connolly of Watford moved a vote of thanks to the visiting committee and it was seconded by Deputy Reeve Johnston of Brooke and adopted unanimously. Hon. Findlay replied for the deputa-

The visiting committee was composed of S. L. Squire, deputy minister of highways, Hon. Findlay McDiarmid, chairman of the advisory board, A. Rankin, M.P.P., for Frontenac, R. C. Muir, chief engineer, municipal roads, and J. A. P. Marshall, district engineer.

Bosanquet Council

Council met on Monday, July 6th. All the members present. Minutes of last meeting read and confirmed.

The following orders were given: Thos. Waite \$7.50 for digging drain for an outlet on con C; Standard, Forest, \$1.80 for advt re assessment roll and \$6.00 advertisements for tenders for Mud Creek drain; Wm. Waller \$5.00 for digging a drain across the lake road; A. H. Loughheed \$13.50 to pay engineer's assistants on Brush drain; A. Donald \$2.00 for serving copies of bylaw for Moly-Romph drain; H. Russell \$2.00 serving copies of bylaw for Wells drain; H. Russell to pay engineer's assistants on Wells drain; Wm. Bryant \$15 printing Moly-Romph drain, \$18 printing Wells drain and \$3.75 for envelopes.

A. Donald and H. Fussell were appointed commissioners on the Wells drain and A. Donald and A. Wright on the Moly-Romph drain.

C. Medcoff was appointed to impound stock running at large.

Council adjourned to meet on Monday the 3rd day of August at ten a.m. Geo. Sutherland, Clerk.

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