

boat, and thence by rail and steamer to New York.

The people were alive at a very early date to the importance of improving the roads; and as far back as 1793, an Act was passed at Niagara, then the seat of government, placing the roads under overseers or road-masters, as they were called, appointed by the rate-paying inhabitants at their annual town meetings. Every man was required to bring tools and work from three to twelve days. There was no property distinction, and the time was at the discretion of the roadmaster. This soon gave cause for dissatisfaction, and reasonably, for it was hardly fair to expect a poor man to contribute as much towards the improvement of highways as his rich neighbour. The Act was amended, and the number of days' work determined by the assessment roll. The power of opening new roads, or altering the course of old ones, was vested in the Quarter Sessions. This matter is now under the control of the County Councils. The first Government appropriation for roads was made in 1804, when £1000 was granted; but between 1830-33, \$512,000 was provided for the improvement and opening up of new roads. The road from Kingston to York was contracted for by Dantford, an American in 1800, at \$90 per mile, two rods wide. The first Act required that every man should clear a road across his own lot, but it made no provision for the Clergy Reserves and Crown Lands, and hence the crooked roads that existed at one time in the Province. Originally the roads were marked out by blazing the trees through the woods as a guide for the footman, then the boughs were cut away, so that a man could ride through on horseback, then followed the sleighs, and finally the trees were cleared off so that a wagon could pass. 'The great leading roads of the Province had received little improvement beyond being graded, and the swamps made passable by laying the round trunks

of trees, side by side across the roadway. Their supposed resemblance to the king's corduroy cloth, gained for these crossways the name of corduroy roads. The earth roads were passably good when covered with the snows of winter, or when dried up in the summer sun; but even then a thaw or a rain made them all but impassable. The rains of autumn, and the thaws of spring, converted them into a mass of liquid mud, such as amphibious animals might delight to revel in. Except an occasional legislative grant of a few thousand pounds for the whole Province, which was ill-expended, and often not accounted for at all, the great leading roads, as well as all other roads, depended, in Upper Canada, for their improvement on statute labour.*

The Rev. Isaac Fidler, writing in 1831, says: 'On our arrival at Oswego, I proceeded to the harbour in quest of a trading vessel bound for York, in Canada, and had the good fortune to find one which would sail in an hour. I agreed with the captain for nine dollars, for myself, family and baggage, and he on his part assured me, that he would land me safe in twenty-four hours. Our provision was included in the fare. Instead of reaching York in one day, we were five days on the lake. There were two passengers, beside ourselves, equally disappointed and impatient. The cabin of the vessel served for the sitting, eating, and sleeping-room of passengers, captain and crew. I expostulated strongly on this usage, but the captain informed me he had no alternative. The place commonly assigned to sailors had not been fitted up. We were forced to tolerate this inconvenience, the sailors slept on the floor, and assigned the berths to the passengers, but not from choice. The food generally placed before us for dinner, was salt pork, potatoes, bread, water and salt; tea, bread and butter, and sometimes salt pork for

* Trout.