

investment. Some years ago I had the pleasure of listening to the Commissioner of Roads for the state of New York, and he made an extraordinary comparison. He said that over the ordinary country roads, such as they had in the state of New York before their new state roads were built, and such as we have in Canada to-day, or at least in Ontario, it cost about 25 cents per ton mile to haul a load, but over the roads of their new system the cost has been reduced from 25 cents to 8 or 10 cents a mile. Now, if we can cut in two our haulage cost on the immense tonnage that is drawn over our country roads, we can look with less apprehension on the yearly obligation of Canada to provide interest on our borrowings. The commissioner also made this statement, that it had been found on investigation that there was a loss to each rig used in hauling loads of 12 days per year. I want to present this case from the farmers' point of view, because the farmers are looking for better roads. There are about 750,000 farmers in the Dominion of Canada to-day. Allowing one rig to each farmer, and taking the statement of the commissioner as true, that there is a loss of 12 days a year for each rig, we have the tremendous loss of 9,000,000 days per year because of bad roads; and if we put the value of each rig at five dollars there is the tremendous amount of money lost by the farmers alone in Canada of \$45,000,000 a year. If that amount can be saved by the establishment of good roads in the Dominion of Canada we need have very little fear that Canada will be able to pay the interest on her debt.

The farmers of our country are demanding consideration; they are entitled to consideration, and recent events in the province of Ontario, at least, must convince us that they are able to insist on consideration. They are demanding a condition of affairs that will produce tangible results, making for better conditions of life on the farm. One of the greatest problems that is facing this, and the government of every democratic country is the problem of keeping the boys and the girls on the farms and it is conceded by those who have given this matter study that the greatest chance of success in this direction lies in making farm life attractive; that we can best and most easily succeed in solving this problem by bringing the life and attractions of the city, home to the farm. Good roads, I submit, will help to do this. They will link up the farmers' families, separated by distance because of the very nature of their business. They will link up the farm-

ing communities with the villages, and the villages with the cities. They will bring the life and attractions of the city home to the people on the farms. The loneliness of country life, its solitude, the isolation which the students of this question say is responsible for hundreds of abandoned farms throughout this country, will disappear with the inauguration of good roads. Good roads will certainly have a tendency to keep the boys and the girls on the farms, and unless the boys and the girls can be kept on the farm, and unless the right class of people can be drawn from the cities to the farms, the future of our country must be regarded with considerable foreboding. If, then, good roads will tend to increase the farm population, they will increase production, and must, of necessity, reduce the high cost of living.

Some years ago a commission was appointed, in the United States, to investigate the high cost of foodstuffs. The commission, after a lengthy and exhaustive investigation, reported that, in their judgment, 50 per cent of the problem of high prices was the problem of transportation and distribution; and they further declared that the lack of good roads added tremendously to the price of farm produce. Now, there seems to be a general impression that the farmers are rapidly becoming millionaires. I am not a farmer myself, but I have been in close touch with farmers all my life, and I know the conditions that exist on the farm; and I am therefore in a position to say that the idea that farmers are becoming wealthy is a fallacy. The hundreds of abandoned farms throughout the Dominion, and the thousands of farms that are not worked to anything like their full capacity, prove that this is so. The very fact that rural population is decreasing explodes the theory that farming is a profitable occupation. In the last ten years, I am informed, rural population has decreased by about 45,000, while urban population has increased by 2,500,000. That fact, if it is a fact, also goes to prove that farmers are not by any means becoming millionaires. Why, even in Ontario—Ontario that claims to be the banner province of the Dominion, and boasts of being the leader in progressive thought and progressive action—according to Mr. Black, the chairman of the Soldiers' Settlement Board, there are 300,000 less acres under cultivation to-day than there were ten years ago. That very fact is sufficient proof that life on the farm is neither profitable nor attractive.