

In 1896 the Government thought it wise, in order to assist the Association, to select some one man who had had some experience in road building, whose duty it would be to go into the various municipalities of the Province, examine the condition of the roads and streets, examine the system of public expenditure and the principles upon which these roads and streets were being made, advise with the municipal councils as to the best plans to be followed, consult with the street commissioners and with the path-masters in the rural districts, and in every way give advice and instruction in order to bring about the best possible results with the money and labor expended. I happened to be chosen for that position. For some six years I had charge of all the roads in the Counties of Elgin and Middlesex, which were public roads, and for five years following that I was City Engineer of the City of Saint Thomas, during which time nearly three-quarters of the streets in the city were macadamized. For ten years I had given my time almost exclusively to the construction of roads in the rural districts and streets in the city. The Government, of course, imagined that on account of my long experience, although a young man, I must have some knowledge of the true principles of road construction; they carefully examined these roads and streets and were satisfied that the results produced were amongst the best, and that is why the position which I hold was created, and those are the duties which I have to perform. In order to carry out the work of this Association successfully I am satisfied that some such course should be taken here. In the Province of Quebec a plan was laid down similar to that of Ontario, and MR. CAMBRAUD, who is a very practical man indeed, goes about, as I do in Ontario, discussing the question with the local and municipal authorities and advising and getting them to follow improved plans. We are very apt to think that when we know a little about any particular work, even that of road making, and we are placed in a position of responsibility and trust, we must naturally pretend to know all about that particular work. Now this is the greatest mistake that we can possibly make. We may for a time fool the people; we cannot fool ourselves. I believe I know as much about road making and street building as any man in this audience, yet I am not beyond learning something about these subjects, and probably before I leave this city — and I hope that such will be the case — and before I leave this meeting, or series of meetings, I will receive