

Good Roads' Convention

A very important combined Convention on the subject of good roads in the United States will be held in Philadelphia, Pa., next month, December 9th to 12th. This comprises the 4th American Good Roads Congress; the 10th Annual Convention of the American Road Builders' Association; and the 5th Annual Good Roads Exhibition. The programme includes almost every problem connected with the important subject of Good Roads, and the Exhibition is promised to be unusually attractive. Canada is ably represented on the list of officers by Mr. W. A. McLean, C.E., Chief Engineer of Highways of Ontario, and also appears on the programme, a compliment to the Dominion, as the organizations are "American", and not International. The programme is as follows:

Subject A.—Organizations

1. Highway Officials, Their Duties and Powers.
2. Division of Expense, Responsibility and Authority Between Nation, State, County and Town.
3. The Relation to Each Other of the Contractor, Engineer and Inspector.
4. Details of Arrangements for the Use of Convict Labor

Subject B.—Construction

1. Determination of the Amount of Realignment, Grading and Drainage to Be Done in Connection with Road Improvement.
2. Factors Governing a Proper Selection of Road or Street Pavement.
3. Details of the Construction of the Various Kinds of Roads and Pavements.

Ten minute papers on the following subjects:
Earth Roads; Sand-Clay Roads; Gravel Roads; Water Bound Macadam; Bituminous Macadam and Bituminous Concrete; Brick; Concrete; Wood; Granite and Asphalt Block; Sheet Asphalt.

4. Unit Price and Lump Sum Contracts and Percentage Work.
5. The Testing of Material for Road and Street Construction.

Subject C.—Maintenance

1. Sub-Organization for Securing Efficient Maintenance.
2. General Methods of Repairs and Renewals.
3. Bituminous Surface Treatment and Dust Prevention.

Further particulars can be obtained from the secretary, Mr. E. L. Powers, 150 Nassau St., New-York.

CHILDREN AND HORSES

The following testimonial is condensed from a bulletin issued by the Illinois Bankers' Association:

"In a certain district the farmers decided to improve the breed of their horses. They formed a company and paid three thousand dollars for a very fine imported animal. Realizing that so valuable a horse ought to have intelligent care, they employed a good man at seventy-five dollars a month to look after him. Three members of the horse company comprised the school board for the district. Their most important duty in connection with the school consisted of selecting a teacher. The one they hired was a slip of a girl who hardly knew enough to boil water without burning it, but she had one qualification that proved irresistible to those directors—she was willing to work for thirty dollars a month."

Charter Amendments

The City of Toronto has decided to apply to the Ontario Legislature for legislation providing for:—

Assessment reform.

The imposition of a wheelage tax on all vehicles used in public thoroughfares and the regulation of the width of tires.

The placing of the medical inspection of schools in charge of the Medical Officer of Health.

Authority to pass by-laws to set aside defined districts for residential purposes only.

The imposition of a charge for the use of portions of highways by builders for the storage of material.

The licensing of public garages and civic control of the location of private garages.

Regulation or prohibition of operation of street pianos by females or children.

Extension of the act governing stationary engineers to include portable engineers.

An increase in the municipal license fee for circuses from \$500 to \$2,000 per day.

Appointment by City Council of a second representative on the Toronto Hydro-electric Commission who is not a member of the City Council.

A Mistaken Resolution

The City Council has again decided to seek power from the Legislature to abolish the system by which proprietors pay the cost of street paving in front of their properties. The idea of the majority is that the money required should be borrowed. It is unfortunate that such action should be taken. It is trusted the Legislature will not accede to the demand. When the Legislature limited to 1 per cent. of the assessed value of the real estate of the city the extent of the city's power to raise revenue, it practically made it necessary to borrow heavily to provide good roadways, parks, etc. Then much was borrowed and spent on street widening. The result was that for years so great a proportion of the annual revenue was absorbed by the debt charges, that with the exception of water and fire protection not a single municipal service approached the proper standard of efficiency. There has been improvement in the past few years; but even in 1912 of the annual revenue of the city available for use in its departments of \$7,592,000, quite 30 per cent. or \$2,342,000 was required to pay interest and charges upon the debt. What is left is not sufficient. Neither the streets nor the parks are kept in the condition that is to be desired. If the ordinary revenue is to be burdened with the charges involved by recent borrowings for street works and by borrowings for projected new works the amount available for the regular municipal services will again be reduced to an extent that will affect their efficiency. There would be neither economy nor wisdom in the situation. The system of compelling proprietors to pay for works that improve the availability or value of their properties is not wrong in principle, though it may in cases be inconvenient. It has been adopted and it had better be retained.—Montreal "Gazette."

Civic Pride

Every city needs a distinctive spirit which makes the people of the country sit and take notice. If the civic spirit has nothing back of it more than its pride it soon becomes rusty and useless; to become prominent it must be underlaid with a love which commands the combined energy and activity of all the people and a zeal which promotes the comfort and welfare of the people and the prosperity of every industry and business within its borders.—Halifax, N.S., Echo.