

ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT.

A. W. CAMPBELL,
O.L.S., C.E., M.C.S., C.E.

A County Roads Convention.

The action of the council of the County of York, at its session held last month, arranging for a convention of delegates from all of the county councils in the province, to discuss and decide upon a uniform system for making and keeping up the leading highways in the province, is an important step as well as an evidence of the substantial growth of the movement for better roads.

Many councils have, within the past couple of years, taken up the question of county roads for consideration, Victoria, Peterborough, Glengarry, Wentworth, Dufferin, Oxford and others. The County of Grey also considered the question at its last session.

A proper consideration of a county road system involves a careful consideration of the whole question of road improvement, and in order that the most useful and profitable plan for keeping up the leading thoroughfares may be adopted, it is well to have the question discussed from every standpoint, and is necessary that the fullest possible information should be obtained before any changes are made.

It is not enough to say that every county council is capable of devising a scheme most suitable to their requirements, because the conditions and requirements of every county in the province are so identical that one system should be applicable to all. In the interest of all, the best should be adopted.

To secure this, it is wise that a convention of delegates from every county council should be held to decide upon this system. The County Council of York, after having gone into the subject, became convinced that it was vaster than they had anticipated. Providing the ways and means, framing the plan of roads to be comprised in the system, levying a tax, supervision and management, and all such details, involved the expenditure of much time and thought, and it was at once seen that the difficulties arising in their case would no doubt arise in other councils, that a gathering of representatives, each with some special knowledge of the different points, would be the easiest form of solution, and at once profitable to every county in the province.

A proper connection of the work and its systematic performance, connecting concession, lateral and main roads in every township, is necessary. A proper connection of these main roads in every township in the county is desirable, and the ideal is only reached when a proper connection of main roads in every county throughout the province is obtained.

If a county system is to be adopted should the towns and cities be assessed? If a uniform system for improving the leading roads is adopted, should provin-

cial aid be required? These are matters which can more profitably be considered by a convention of county councils than by these bodies separately. It is to be earnestly hoped that when this meeting is called it will be met with a liberal response from every county council, being assured that whatever the result may be, the cause of better roads will have been advanced by the discussion.

County Roads

It is all well, and just, that the maintenance of little travelled roads, those which serve only a few farmers, or a small neighborhood, should rest upon the immediate locality using them.

But there are other main roads which receive the traffic from the roads of lesser importance. Upon these main roads travel concentrates more and more as the market centres are approached. The maintenance of these leading highways in consequence becomes expensive, and the funds available in most cases are insufficient to keep such heavily travelled roads in a satisfactory condition.

For these roads, it is only just that the means of maintenance should be gathered from the entire district served, not from the farmers alone who happen to own the lands adjacent. This is a matter which can only be remedied properly by controlling these leading roads under a county road system.

Not only so, but under a county system a portion of cost of road building is levied, in the county rate, against the towns and villages within the municipality. This is only fair and just, as towns and villages receive equal benefit with the farmers from good main roads. The statutes too should be so amended as to permit a tax for county roads being levied against cities as well. When towns, villages and cities assist in paying for roads, a matter which it is in their own interest to do, the roads will be vastly improved, and the farmers who now bear the entire cost, will receive a just measure of relief.

There are few roads gravelled or otherwise metalled in a manner that combines both economy and good service. If there is good service, it has been obtained at an enormous waste of metal. If it has been cheaply done, then the other element is lacking. There is a large annual waste throughout the townships in the manner and material with which they build culverts, sluiceways and bridges. A great many townships, are still totally without modern roadmaking machinery, and few have a full equipment. Most townships, in addition to statute labor spend an annual appropriation of from one to three hundred dollars, aggregating in a term of ten years from ten to thirty thousand dollars. This is a large sum, too large to be spent indiscriminately and without efficient and responsible supervision.

Naming Streets.

In cities and large towns it becomes a necessity to have the names of streets prominently placed at the street corners, while in smaller towns and villages where this is now neglected, it would be found a convenience worth the trifling cost. The common method of placing the names of streets, is in black letters with a white ground, painted on a narrow board or slat, which is attached to the corner house, the fence, a tree, telegraph post, lamp post, or other post extemporized for the occasion.

It has been suggested by a writer in a Sarnia paper that the names of the streets be stamped in the cement concrete sidewalks at corners, when the walks are being laid. There is a considerable part of the year when the names would be obscured by sleet and ice, but the plan is one which would be simply effected and would serve a useful purpose.

This purpose is to accustom the people of the municipality to the names of the streets, so that the localities may be more easily described. It is true that it would not be very useful to a stranger in the place to be told that a person whom he wishes to find, lived on a certain street, if the only way of ascertaining the street was to dig up the ice and snow at every corner until he found the right street. But when the names of the streets are known to the people of the town, inquiries are more easily answered by anyone whom a stranger may meet on the street.

Names of streets are just as necessary as names of men. Streets may be described—"the street with the little red house on the hill" or "the road in front of Mike Conavan's tavern." But it would be equally convenient to describe the Mayor by some distinguishing characteristic such as "the fat man with the bald head and a scar on his nose." Names are, in any case, merely a matter of convenience, to save long descriptions and to avoid ambiguity.

In the case of streets, it is a matter worth the attention of every municipal council to adopt some measure to teach the citizens the names of the streets, and if possible, to have these names in as prominent a place as possible. The latter is not the sole object, however, and if only such means can be adopted as will save awkward descriptions among citizens like "the street with the green fence and the yellow gate on one corner" in place of a simple "Mary Street," a useful purpose will be served. And the councillor to whom the credit of such a step is due, will have earned some measure of gratitude from his supporters.

Police Magistrate S. E. Mitchell of Pembroke, has entered suit for the sum of \$750, for rent of the place he uses as an office and for stationery, with which he supplies himself as a dealer in school books and school supplies. The town solicitor has been instructed to defend the suit.