

civilization has a close dependence on the state of the highways. I once heard it said that three of the most important questions affecting mankind were religion, education and transportation, and as one could neither go to church nor to school without roads leading to these places when we undertook to improve the roads we were really engaged in the most pious work.

A farm adjoining a good road will sell for a higher price and is worth more than one on a poor road. There is a great advantage in having a farm within reasonable distance of a railway station. So much so is this the case that the matter of the distance from the railway has a very material effect on the price of land. Anything grown on a farm has little value unless it can be transported to a market, and many homesteaders look to the improvement of means of communication to give a value to their homesteads which they have not now. Anything that will facilitate the ready access to market from the farms cannot help but add to the value of them, and good roads are as essential a part of the machinery for doing successful business in the country as suitable houses, stables and other improvements which farmers recognize as being absolutely necessary.

So much money is wasted in transportation over bad roads that it is cheaper to improve the roads than to leave them as they are, and money invested in roads will give a return of the greatest dividends.

In many sections at certain times of the year the condition of the roads prohibits people from getting about and people lose their interest in current events, become dissatisfied and are not in a position to carry on their business with the enthusiasm which is so necessary to make a success of it. Bad roads react in this way so as to affect all the departments of life and improving the roads indirectly raises the standard of living all along the line.

**History and Development.**—For many years such traffic as existed in Saskatchewan followed along the historic Hudson Bay trails, which had been used by the supply trains of the Hudson Bay Company voyageurs for more than two hundred years. These trails led across country in various directions following the highest and most suitable land, and skirting the rivers between the various forts of the company. When arrangements were made between the Hudson Bay Company and the Dominion of Canada, whereby the latter took over the lands of the West, one of the provisions of the agreement was that the company were to be allowed to carry on their trading operations at their various forts. Later the Dominion passed laws whereby any public travelled road or trail which existed prior to the subdivision of the land could thereafter be reserved for highway purposes and surveys made of the same. In a few cases surveys have been made and rights-of-way have been retained, thus fixing them for permanent roads.

On the advent of the Canadian Pacific Railway in the early eighties several trading centres and towns developed, such as Moose Jaw, Qu'Appelle, Regina, Moosomin, Swift Current, Maple Creek, etc., and for a number of years trails led out from these places in every direction, in many cases replacing the old Hudson Bay trails.

About 1890 there commenced an immigration which has gradually grown larger until in the last few years it has become a regular flood, and has had the effect of covering nearly the whole of the southern part of Saskatchewan with settlers. This has been attended with considerable railway development with the resulting coming into existence of new towns and market places. As the settlers commenced to break up the land many of these old trails have been ploughed up, as in most cases they run across country in the most direct and suitable lines, no attempt having been

made to follow surveyed allowances provided for roads. In the rougher parts of the country, which are sparsely settled, many of them are still in existence and are being used, but the traffic is adjusting itself to new conditions brought about by settlement and railway development, and follows the most suitable road allowances.

When a railroad is constructed through a new section of country a new string of towns or shipping points is created. It is found that traffic immediately abandons all its old lines and around each shipping point a new system of roads develops and is immediately necessary. The lines along which traffic will develop are the most direct lines that are suitable leading to these new towns, and immediately a lot of improvements are necessary to facilitate traffic over these new lines. I have heard it boasted that the Canadian Northern Railway have averaged more than a mile of railway brought into operation per day for the last seven or eight years. As this means a new town or shipping point about each week, and as the other railroads are carrying on a similar development, and as each new town or shipping point necessitates the improvement of a system of roads leading to it fit for the traffic, one gets some idea of the problem the various authorities having in hand the improvement of the roads have to cope with.

Traffic on these new systems may be divided into two classes, that between the towns which is ordinarily light traffic, and that from the country to the town. The first usually follows approximately parallel to the railway, while the more important lines followed by the latter are the most direct lines from each town out into the country, and as nearly as possible at right angles to the railway. In some cases both kinds of traffic follow the same lines as from a town on one railway to a town on another railway, and in these cases a very heavy traffic may develop and an important road come into existence. In many of the more advanced and wealthy parts of the country a new phase of traffic is developing. Many of the farmers and townspeople now use automobiles, and the traffic from town to town by this means is increasing and rendering these roads more important. There is thus a traffic developed that is not so local in character as the ordinary traffic of the country and the lines which it seeks to take are more of the nature of through lines between the larger towns, cities, summer resorts and other such objective points.

**Organization.**—The authorities provided for undertaking road improvement work in the province of Saskatchewan are the provincial government and the local authorities, such as councils of cities, towns, villages, rural municipalities and local improvement districts. There is no well defined limit to the jurisdiction of these various authorities. In practice the local councils, which collect taxes for the purpose, direct their expenditure of these taxes within the limits of their municipalities. The provincial government build nearly all the bridges required and attempts to confine its expenditure to construction of main roads, and the construction or reconstruction of important works that are beyond the means of the local authorities. The maintenance of all the roads devolves on the local authorities.

There is no recognition of a statute labor system in the province, but in many municipalities the farmers are employed by the councillors to work on the roads for a few days in the year and the payments made for this work are returned in lieu of paying taxes. This is practically equivalent to a statute labor system. In the newer parts of the province, where the settlers are just commencing, if the local authorities are going to do anything on the roads, this is about the only feasible plan, as these settlers are not in a position to pay their taxes in cash. In many of the older