

ways. At present, assistance is only given to county systems, the Government claiming uniformity in construction and facility of inspection. The township should not be hindered in obtaining assistance if its county council does not assume a county-road system, and there should be no objection on the part of the Government to dealing with any municipality which is willing to construct and maintain roads under the conditions subject to which the grants are made. County systems at present in existence may be extended to include mileage, which should receive assistance, but no township should be penalized because of the neglect or refusal of its county to adopt a system under which it will receive governmental assistance for its highways.

Middlesex Co., Ont.

CHAS. M. MACFIE.

### Second Prize Essay.

Good roads and good schools are a township's greatest assets.

Never before in the history of this Province of Ontario has there been such an awakening as to the value of good roads as there is at the present time.

In almost every municipality the question of better roads is being urgently pressed upon the council by the ratepayers, who are at last alive to the fact that good roads are no longer a luxury to be enjoyed only by those who are fortunate enough to live along some of the well-built country roads, but that they are an absolute necessity to the social and industrial life of every community. Because one lives remote from the city, is no reason why he should suffer the loss and discomfort of bad roads for many months in the year. The further one lives from market, the greater is the need for better roads to cut down the time, labor and expense incurred marketing the crop.

It is a fact, proved by investigation, that, where you find bad roads, schools are but irregularly attended, with a consequent backwardness in the progress of the pupils, which, in the end, reflects itself in the life of the community, for we must not forget that the pupil of to-day becomes the citizen of to-morrow.

We are all too prone to follow the line of least resistance, and when that resistance happens to be mud, axle deep, is it any wonder that we find the most populous and progressive districts where the good stone and gravel roads are to be found?

Each mile of stone or gravel road, properly built and maintained not only adds to the comfort and convenience of the people living near it, but it also puts an added value on every piece of property that lies near it, in some cases adding \$1,000 to the value of a 100-acre farm, and sometimes even more. So, from whatever point we view it, social or economic, it pays to build the very best roads that our resources will allow.

Good roads are as much benefit to the cities and towns as they are to the townships; in fact, to a very great extent, they owe their very existence to the roads leading into them. Who has not heard the oft-repeated remark of the city merchant, "Business is dull; the farmers can't get in to the city, owing to the state of the roads," and how often do we read in the fall and spring months market reports, "Very few farmers were on the market to-day, owing to the almost impassable state of the roads, and prices, accordingly, were much higher"? Thus, it can easily be seen how the city would benefit.

Toronto is showing the way in this respect, by expending \$100,000 on the roads adjacent to it, and will, without doubt, receive good returns on the

expenditure by increased business for its merchants.

The county roads are getting more and better care than the township roads. Especially is this the case in the counties where they have taken up the work in a systematic way, and receive the Government grant each year. But the Government does not go far enough, in my way of thinking. If the Federal and Provincial Governments would together grant a sum of money each year, a certain percentage of which was to be paid to all counties and townships where roads had been built during the year up to a certain standard, I think they would do more towards checking the depopulation of our rural districts than all the commissions they could appoint.

As to the relative cost and maintenance of a well-built stone or gravel road, so much depends upon local conditions, nature of soil, proximity to road-making material, etc., there may be a wide divergence of figures in different municipalities. In this township (Saltfleet) we have built some stone roads, and gravelled others. About ten years ago the township built its first stone road, on what was supposed to be at that time one of the worst pieces of road, through a very flat, low piece of land. This particular piece was almost impassable in the fall and spring. The ditches were cleaned out on both sides, and the road well graded, leaving a shoulder of loose earth on either side of a track eight feet wide, which was filled with broken stone to a depth of eight inches, crushed by the township crusher, and hauled on the road by the farmers' teams—the larger stones being put in the bottom and the screenings on top, the grader being used on both sides after it was finished, so as to leave the road in a shape to allow all surface water to drain off quickly.

This road was built with a great deal of misgiving, but, after having stood the test of ten years' hard wear, it has proved to be an unqualified success and a wise expenditure of public money, its cost being about \$1,000 for 1½ miles. Last year it was top-dressed with quarter-inch stone, at a cost of \$500 for 100 cords, crushed, hauled and spread. Before it was built, the traffic on it was very irregular, depending on the state of the road. It was a common occurrence in those days to see two teams on a load. Now, at all times of the year, unless when blocked with snow, the heaviest loads go over it with comparative ease; and, where at one time it was only indifferently used, it is now the main-travelled road in this district.

Since then the township has built about eight miles of stone road, at an approximate cost of \$8,000, paid out of the general fund.

It has often seemed to me that it would be a wise move, in the case of a township like this one, with no debenture debt, to inaugurate a good-roads scheme; have a by-law prepared to raise by debentures a sum of money sufficient to cover all expenditure in connection with the proposed new roads; advertise it well, so that the ratepayers would vote intelligently on it, and in the event of its carrying, appoint the best qualified man they could find as superintendent, to see that the ratepayers got value for money spent. In that way we could at least have some of the main roads built, and the comfort, convenience and economy that would accrue from it would more than repay the interest and sinking fund each year.

Nearly all townships in this part of the country have commuted their statute labor, at so much per day. This township is divided into four divisions, with a commissioner in each,

each having a road-grader for his use. The statute labor is commuted at 50 cents per day, and although we all think it sufficient to pay when the tax bill appears, it is not enough to keep the roads and bridges in a proper state of repair. We pay for all bridge material and work in building bridges, and for all material for culverts, out of the general fund. This doesn't seem to me to be the best way. I think the statute-labor rate in every township should be high enough to pay for all work done on roads and bridges during the year.

We are differently situated here from the average township, as part of it lies on the mountain, and part below the mountain, bordering on Lake Ontario, where we get all the gravel used on the roads below the mountain. The county road runs through this part, which, of course, enables us to use the statute-labor fund of the property owners living along it on the other road in the division, to their advantage. I have not said very much about the improvement of the mud roads that can't be stoned or gravelled.

I think we are all aware of the great benefit it is to them to have them well graded, with good ditches and culverts wherever needed.

The automobile is perhaps the greatest destroyer of our roads, and as such, I think the owners should be made to pay their share of the keeping up of the roads. They are a benefit to every taxpayer in the country, and everyone of us should be willing, in a greater or lesser degree, to share our responsibility in making our roads the best part of our transportation system, instead of leaving them the worst part, as they are now.

If it is right for the Government to assist, by grants of various kinds, in building the railways and waterways of our country, surely it is necessary for it to assist in building the roadways, for, without the latter the two former would be useless. While each forms an important part in the country's transportation system, by far the most important part is that of our roads, and yet it is the most neglected. Why is this the case? Simply because the farmers generally have remained passive on this subject. Just so long as we are willing to travel along in the same old rut, just so long will we be allowed to do so.

It behooves us, therefore, to impress strongly this great necessity upon our township, county, provincial and federal representatives, that they may do all in their power to bring about this long-delayed but much-needed improvement of our highways.

HUGH BERTRAM.

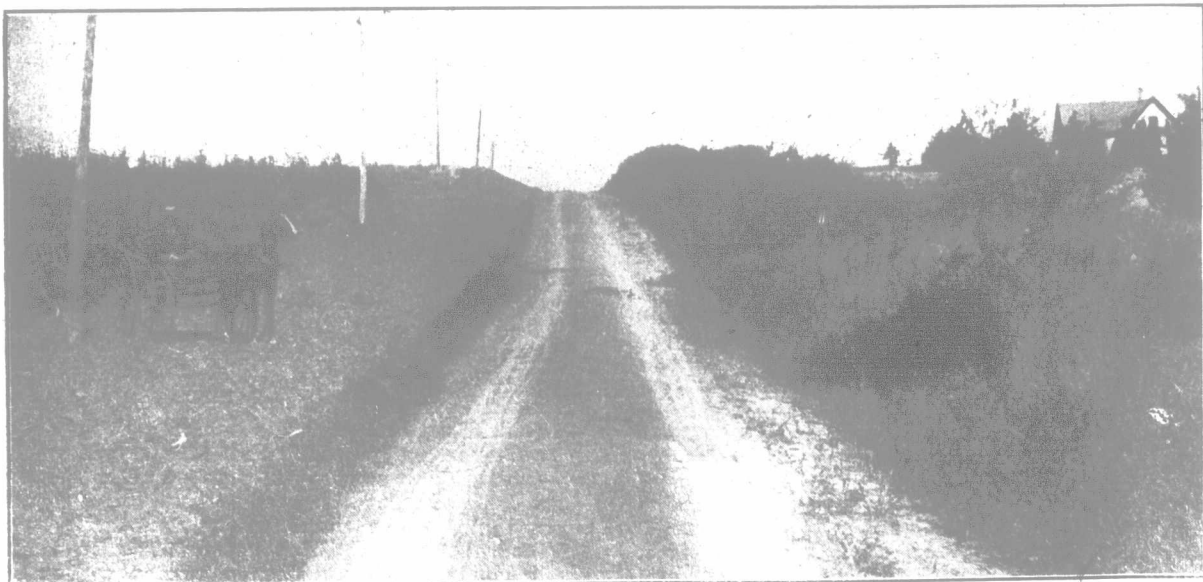
Wentworth Co., Ont.

### Third Prize Essay.

You have very opportunely called for suggestions on the road problem of Canada in the same number of "The Farmer's Advocate" in which you publish "Where the Money Goes." I trust your readers will see the connection, and use their influence in opening up new and better channels for the public expenditure. With the advent of the mechanically-propelled road vehicles of the present day, it is a question worthy of the attention of all thinking men, whether the money bestowed so lavishly on railway companies to develop their systems, might not be more wisely and profitably expended, in giving not only the rural population, but the whole community, public highways which, if properly and permanently built, would enable rural and city life to co-mingle, to the undoubted advantage of both, socially and economically. Of course, our railways have their place, and are essential to the development of the country, but why should \$600,000,000 of the people's money go to assisting private enterprise, while the hardest-working class in the country are struggling through the same mud as we had before confederation? A railway is a close corporation, while a public highway is for the good and benefit of all who use it.

From the social standpoint, the muddy impassable road need no comment to those of us who live more than a mile from town. The impossibility of keeping oneself, the carriage, the harness and the horse clean; the long, slow, tedious drag through a mile or two of slough, or the equally taxing and, to the gentler sex, agonizing bumping and jolting over frozen ruts and lumps; the wear and tear and racking of the wheels and springs; the chafing, bespattering and soiling of nice clothes—who can wonder that the farmer's wife, after the return of a hundred and one things to be done during the day, cannot muster up courage or strength for such a mode of reaching social relaxation?

Perhaps the economic side appeals more forcibly to the farmer. Spring and fall, the two seasons when the farm season is more in requisition than at any other season of the year, for procuring farm outfit and implements, building material, seed, fertilizers and manures, in the spring, and the disposal of the products in the fall—two seasons when the farmer is more than at any other time, in need of a mode of reaching social relaxation. These are the times when



A Contrast in Roadsides.

The left side is plowed and the soil prepared for seeding. The other has been allowed to grow up to weeds and brush, and has been a source of trouble and expense to the farmer.

The contrast in the roadsides is one of the crying needs.