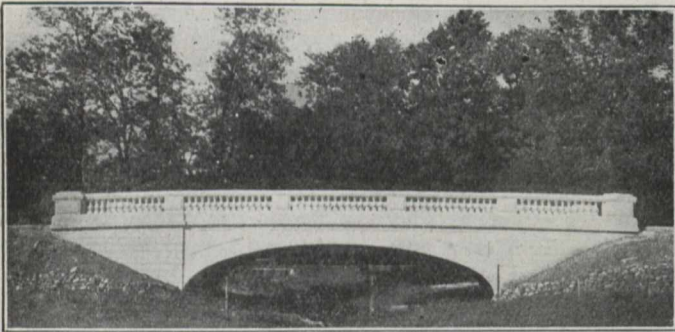


AMERICAN ROAD BUILDERS' ASSOCIATION.

By E. A. James.

The American Road Builders' Association which held their 8th convention at Rochester, N.Y., November 14th to 17th, was organized in 1902, as the American Road Makers' Association. In 1910 its name was changed to the American Road Builders' Association, and it was chartered, without capital, under the laws of New York. At a meeting held in New York City in August of this year, the constitution and by-laws were changed so as to extend and facilitate the work of the association, and changes were made in the methods of administering its affairs.

The objects of the association are the bringing together of those engaged or interested in road and street work, the dissemination among its members of information relative to such work, and the holding of conventions for the study and discussion especially of the problems of organization, construction and maintenance arising in the carrying out of highway improvement. Its scope is national and its membership, which at first consisted chiefly of state highway officials, now includes also engineers, contractors, city, town and county highway and street officials, members of farmers' and automobilists' organizations, public men and others who take an interest in the subject of roads. Its membership includes many of the foremost authorities on road and street work in the United States and Canada.



Type of Bridge Used on the New York Good Roads System.

Since its organization the association has held seven annual conventions, the first at Detroit, Mich., and the subsequent ones at Port Huron, Mich.; Hartford, Conn.; Pittsburgh, Pa.; Buffalo, N.Y.; Columbus, O.; and Indianapolis, Ind. An exhibiton of road building equipment and materials was held in connection with the Columbus convention in 1909, and was repeated at the Indianapolis convention last year.

The association has five classes of members: Active, honorary, associate, contributing and life. The officers for 1910-11 were: President, Harold Parker, Boston, Mass.; First Vice-President, Samuel Hill, Seattle, Wash.; Second Vice-President, Nelson P. Lewis, New York, N.Y.; Third Vice-President, James Owen, Newark, N.J.; Secretary, E. L. Powers, New York, N.Y.; Treasurer, W. W. Crosby, Baltimore, Md.

Rochester, the meeting place for 1911, has a population of 225 000, with an area of 20.86 square miles and 202 miles of paved streets, and 148 miles of unimproved streets.

The convention opened at 11 o'clock Tuesday. The president, Harold Parker, of Boston, Mass., presided. Mr. C. Gordon Reel welcomed the delegates. Mr. Reel spoke as follows:

It was with keen regret that I learned on Saturday morning that it would be impossible for either Governor Dix or Lieutenant Governor Conway to be with us to-day to extend

to you a cordial and hearty welcome to this convention. Their absence is unavoidable on account of important public matters which demand their personal attention. I am, however, much gratified and honored to be delegated to perform so pleasant a duty as that of welcoming you to our Empire State.

Our system of state and county highways leaves much to be desired. In the first place largely because of the provisions of our Highway Law, we have not built any sort of a comprehensive continuous system of trunk lines, but on the contrary have built little disconnected roads here, there and everywhere throughout the state without reference to through lines of travel. This condition will be materially remedied by this year's legislation, and if certain amendments to the Highway Law can be effected next year, it will be possible for us to build a system of state roads which will really serve the people.

As regards the construction of the roads themselves, a woeful lack of judgment was shown in building one kind of road practically for all kinds of traffic conditions. The result is that many of our roads were built in such a way as not to be able to withstand the traffic they had to bear, and conversely altogether too expensive roads were built in rural districts which did not meet the local requirements. Complaints come into our office daily about roads built for farmers' use which are so slippery that horses cannot keep their footing and the people have to either drive through the fields or scramble along the shoulders of the roads the best way they can, and, strange as it may seem, a much cheaper kind of road would have been entirely satisfactory and serviceable. There is, therefore, an opportunity for the present Commission to work a great benefit to the state by simply building roads of the right kind to meet local conditions, and there is a further opportunity to greatly reduce cost by using local materials, labor and machinery.

Question of Maintenance.—The burning question with us, as I suppose it is with all of you, is that of maintenance. We have been deceiving ourselves into the belief that we were maintaining roads when, as a matter of fact, we were not maintaining them at all. Any system of maintenance which allows a road to wear out and require complete rebuilding and resurfacing is not maintenance. Nothing can be more axiomatic than that if maintenance is to maintain, the structural strength of the road itself must not be impaired. You can get some idea of what our maintenance charges are when I tell you that our system of town roads costs six and one-half million dollars this year, sixteen hundred thousand of which the state paid, and that our system of state and county roads cost almost a million and a half for maintenance and repairs alone, twelve hundred thousand of which the state paid. The state has, therefore, spent almost three million dollars this year for maintenance of state, county and town roads and with the great extension of state and county roads and considering their rapid deterioration as now built, the amount the state will have to contribute will reach ten million dollars a year upon the completion of the contemplated system.

If the present commission is to best serve the interests of the people in the state it must be empowered to build roads where they are needed and of a kind and at a cost which comport with the local requirements.

I again welcome you and sincerely hope that your deliberations will result in much progress and lasting benefit to this all-important cause, which is so near the heart of every citizen.

Welcome by Mayor.—Mayor Edgerton spoke as follows:

It is a pleasure to be here this morning and to extend to the Road Builders the welcome of the citizens of Rochester. We have a beautiful city, with beautiful homes; a clean city morally and for fear no one else will say so, I will say myself that we have a good, clean city government. We have