

President Squire then introduced Col. Sohier, of Massachusetts, who spoke on federal aid. Col. Sohier paid a tribute to the roads of France, where highway construction began in 1836, and where, up to 1916, there had been constructed no less than 371,000 miles of macadam, 24 ft. wide, on a 66 ft. road allowance, and with a maximum grade of 5%.

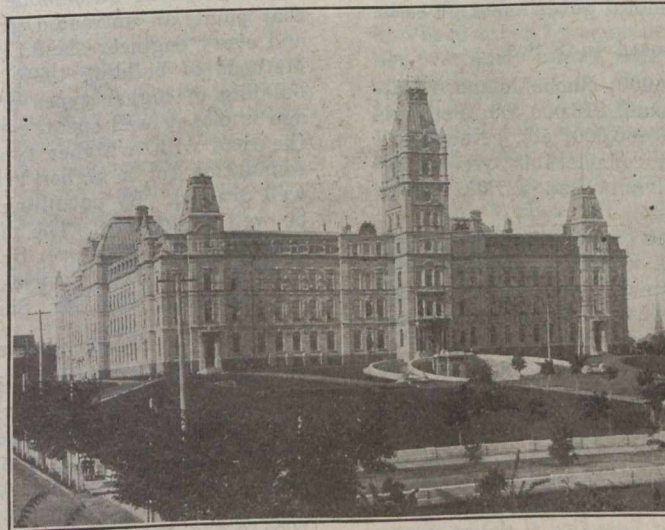
Napoleon had built roads for the defence of the lives and property of his people; they were built by the national government with the labor of the soldiers, and decades later they served their purpose at Verdun. Six thousand motor cars a day saved the battle for France until light railways could be built sufficient to carry the requirements of the defending army.

Col. Sohier referred to the English road system in complimentary terms, and spoke of having travelled over a hundred miles of asphalt road, beautifully laid. Under the English system, the counties contribute \$1,600 a mile a year for the maintenance of the trunk highways, and the sixteen boroughs and the county of London, which make up what is known as the city of London, contribute \$2,200 a mile a year. This is not all maintenance, said Col. Sohier, but is partially used for the reconstruction of old roads. The English government found that the counties were unable to stand the total expense of road-building and maintenance, and the government is now aiding them very largely. In France the cost of transportation per ton per mile is 7 cents, in Massachusetts 25 cents, on all farm produce.

The question, then, said Col. Sohier, resolves merely into this: Are we going to have a certain number of good roads on main trunk lines or not? If so, the little community cannot pay the bill, and the government must help. On the Mohawk Trail, in Massachusetts, the grading alone cost \$20,000 a mile. They spent \$500,000 on this road for the sub-grade alone, and when surfaced the cost will be over \$1,000,000. The road is 25 miles long, and is entirely within three townships. The cost of the road exceeds the total value of the property, both real and personal, within these three townships. Each township must maintain 80 miles of its own roads, besides 6 or 10 miles of the Mohawk Trail.

It is impossible for the townships to levy any tax rate which would permit this financial drain without the state coming to its aid. It is this sort of thing that drove Massachusetts, New Jersey, Connecticut and other states to admit that the state must assist in building the main roads through the smaller townships. Financially, state aid in Massachusetts means that 56 to 60 of the townships pay 82% of all the state tax, and 300 townships pay only 18% of the state tax, and that the townships of less than \$1,000,000 value pay only 2% of the state tax, yet in these townships there are over five thousand miles of road to be taken care of, and many main highways go through them.

Col. Sohier told of the remarkable extent to which trains of motor trucks were used in shipping heavy freight of all kinds in the United States during the war. He also told of the disastrous effect this heavy and fast traffic had on roads which had not been built for it. This traffic was inter-state, and the damage done was a national matter, and it had led to larger aid by the government of the United States. The government found that it must treat the poorer states the same way that the state of Massachusetts found it must deal with the poorer townships. The states of Massa-



THE CONGRESS WAS HELD IN THE PARLIAMENT BUILDING

chusetts, New York, Illinois and Pennsylvania pay into the national fund for road-building much more than they get out of it.

Eight states pay over 60% of the tax and have within their boundaries less than 10% of the roads that will be aided. Massachusetts pays 8% of the tax and gets back about 1 3/4% of it. That led some of the states to wonder whether federal aid would be a good thing or not, but they decided that good roads are national questions and not local, and that the richer states should help the poorer in order that there should be through roads of equal standard wherever required by the traffic.

In Massachusetts over 200,000 motor cars were licensed last year, for which over \$2,000,000 fees were collected, every cent of which was spent in the maintenance of roads, but many of these roads run into Maine, New Hampshire and other states, where they cannot be built and maintained by



OFFICIALS FROM EIGHT PROVINCES AND THE DOMINION GOVERNMENT ATTENDED THE ROADS CONGRESS AT QUEBEC