

Early History.

I have taken some little pains to try and find out something about the early construction of roads in this province and I have found that perhaps the first road we had in Nova Scotia was necessarily in the vicinity of Port Royal, or what is now known as Annapolis Royal. But that road did not amount to very much, it did not go very far. It was built by the French for military purposes and was not extended afterwards to any very great distance. In fact, for a number of years after the settlement of Port Royal we had not any roads in this province; we had nothing but trails and the first road amounting to anything, so far as I can learn, from county histories and otherwise, was the road from Port Royal to the settlement of Minas, the French settlement round the borders of Minas Basin. Some time after that a road was constructed from Halifax to Windsor which was made largely for military purposes. But if we look into the early construction of those roads, the first ones in the province, we will find that as has occurred since, there was no attempt to have a proper survey, no attempt to have a proper lay-out. These roads followed the Indian trails without regard to proper location and unfortunately down to a very recent date the same system prevailed so that we find at the present time one of the great obstacles we have to overcome in road construction and betterment in this province is the fact, that we have no record of a road, no proper lay-out, no systematic survey and nothing done to locate a road properly.

For a long time after the settlement of Port Royal there was very little done in road construction in any part of Nova Scotia. That, of course, was due to the wars carried on here between France and England, the province being at one time in the hands of the French and at another in the hands of the English, so the attention of the early settlers instead of being devoted to matters of transportation was largely devoted to fighting for supremacy in this province. However, we find that of the early roads constructed in Nova Scotia those constructed by the French were of a much better quality than those constructed by the settlers here from the old country. It seems that the French of that day were, as they are perhaps now, the best road builders we have in the world. In fact we have heard the statement made, with more or less truth I have no doubt, that the good roads of France won the war and I hope, Mr. Speaker if this Act or plan which I am about to submit to the House is, properly carried out that the roads of Nova Scotia will not only win the approbation of the people of this province