

Engineering Department

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Good Roads Officers.

At the recent meeting of the Western Ontario Good Roads Association, the following officers were elected: President, Jas. Graham, Lindsay; Secretary, Lieut.-Col. Farewell, Whitby. Executive Committee—President and Secretary, P. G. VanVleet and A. W. Campbell, Toronto. Legislative Committee—Essex County, R. R. Brett, Essex P. O.; Wentworth County, E. Kendrick, Lancaster; Simcoe County, D. Quinlan, Barrie; Welland County, Warden N. Hogger, Welland; Victoria County, D. J. W. Wood, Kirkfield; York County, J. D. Evans, Islington; Ontario County, Peter Christie, Manchester; Oxford County, S. R. Wallace, Burgessville; Bruce County, Warden Robt. Watt, Wiarton; Perth County, L. J. W. Turner, Fullerton; Waterloo County, J. A. MacDonald, Branchton.

Campaign for Better Roads.

It is interesting to those who have been identified with the movement for better roads and better methods of road-making to note the steady progress that has been made by agitation in this connection during the past seven or eight years. For a time it was difficult even to secure a meeting for discussion of the question. Where meetings were secured, the object was more one of resentment than sympathy, and frequently these meetings were divided as to whether any discussion on road-making should be permitted, and not unfrequently were very warm speeches made, and threats and severe language used. It was often difficult to secure a man to act as chairman, and not always was the chairman a good roads man, and it sometimes appeared as if the chairman was unwilling to admit, in his introduction, that he knew or could recommend to their favorable consideration the speaker of the evening or his remarks. Many municipal councillors feared the agitation and refused to countenance or attend any of the meetings and it looked as if a councilor considered it municipal suicide to act as chairman at a meeting or to have anything to say favorable to the cause. In those days the popular cry was "oppose any agitation that reflects in any way upon the work that is now being done, or suggests that labor and money is in any way being misused or improperly applied or that insinuates that the present system possesses weakness or defect." The idea that

any man should presume to know more about the question of road-making than the most humble citizen in the land was impertinence, and that he should be able to instruct those in special charge of the road-work of the township was a rascally insult.

Where all possess the fullest knowledge of the question, wherein lies the wisdom of appointing an expert to give information on that particular matter? Who should know better how to fix the road in front of a man's farm than the farmer himself? was a question that required no answer. And so long as the people of that particular road were satisfied with its condition, why the anxiety on the part of others as to its improvement?

If one-half the people in the township did their statute labor faithfully and well, and the other half did nothing, whose business was it excepting the people of that particular township? If one man hauled a yard and a-half of gravel at a load, and another man only a wheelbarrow and a-half full, what difference did it make? If Jones took a contract from the council to do a piece of work for \$100 so long as Jones did the work, it should make no difference whether the work was properly or improperly designed or performed, so long as he made a fairly decent effort to comply with the terms of the contract. If the tax-payers were willing to pay for imperfect work or would just as soon pay for making a bad road as a good road, why shouldn't they be permitted to do so? If a township preferred bad roads to good roads, and were willing to be taxed for them in labor and money, why shouldn't they enjoy the privilege of satisfying their desire? If millions of days of labor and millions of dollars of money were being expended in the Province in a shiftless, ineffective and extravagant way, why should attention be called to it? And if as great an expenditure was being made on bad roads as would provide good ones, it was because the people wished it, not because of an improper system of taxation or ignorance of the principle of road-construction and maintenance. And then above all, how could a man younger than the oldest settlers be expected to know more about road-making than the people of their own township?

Undaunted by all these things, the agitation pressed on, not stubbornly or rudely, but quietly and convincingly, offering argument after argument,

producing evidence upon evidence, illustrating and demonstrating, always keeping old friends, constantly making new ones, urging for better and more economical work. Appealing to reason, judgment, local and municipal pride, a healthy and substantial sentiment soon appeared. Many of the trifling, unreasonable and, in some instances, nonsensical objections were removed. Prejudice was turned into sympathy until a genuine conviction was created for better methods, better work and a more careful expenditure, until to-day the people of Ontario are all advocates of the best methods, the easiest and cheapest way of doing the work, and the improving of the roads as rapidly as possible consistent with the means available for such purposes.

As an evidence of the keen interest taken, it might be interesting to mention the names of some of the leading county councillors in Ontario, who attended the meeting of the Western Ontario Good Roads Association, held on the 8th and 9th of September last, all anxious to assist in securing the best possible measures for road-reform. Among these were: A. E. Henry, W. J. Gibbs, Wm. Shannon, Ontario County; Jas. Graham, F. Shaver, Victoria County; Robt. Watt, Warden of Bruce; Dan. D. Quinlan, R. J. Fletcher, Geo. Campbell, Major G. W. Bruce, Robert Murphy (Warden), Simcoe County; A. McCallum, Jas. Curby, J. D. Evans, W. H. Pugsley, J. H. Kerby, A. Quantz, G. W. Powell, York County; Thos. Yeo, Daniel Reid, Alex. Ironside (Warden), E. Kendrick, Wentworth County; T. W. Turner, Perth County; J. C. Wilson, Halton County; J. Pickering, Peel County; L. Bowman, J. Hallman, J. A. MacDonald, Waterloo County; D. Ormiston, R. Mowbery, D. E. Pugh, Ontario County; S. R. Wallace (Warden), Oxford County; J. E. Brown, Essex County; Geo. Turner, Welland County.

Road Machinery.

An outfit of road-making machinery, consisting of a steam roller, rock-crusher, grader, scraper, sweeper, sprinkling carts, is one of the first requisites in making and maintaining macadam and gravel streets. Among the towns and cities in the Province to equip themselves with the more important implements are: Windsor, Chatham, London, St. Thomas, St. Catharines, Niagara Falls, Stratford, Berlin, Guelph, Galt, Ingersoll, Woodstock, Hamilton, Brantford, Owen Sound, Barrie, Toronto, Belleville, Peterborough, Kingston, Brockville, Cornwall, Carleton Place, Smith's Falls, Ottawa, Pembroke and Renfrew.