

PROVINCE OF NOVA SCOTIA.

House of Assembly
Debates, 1920

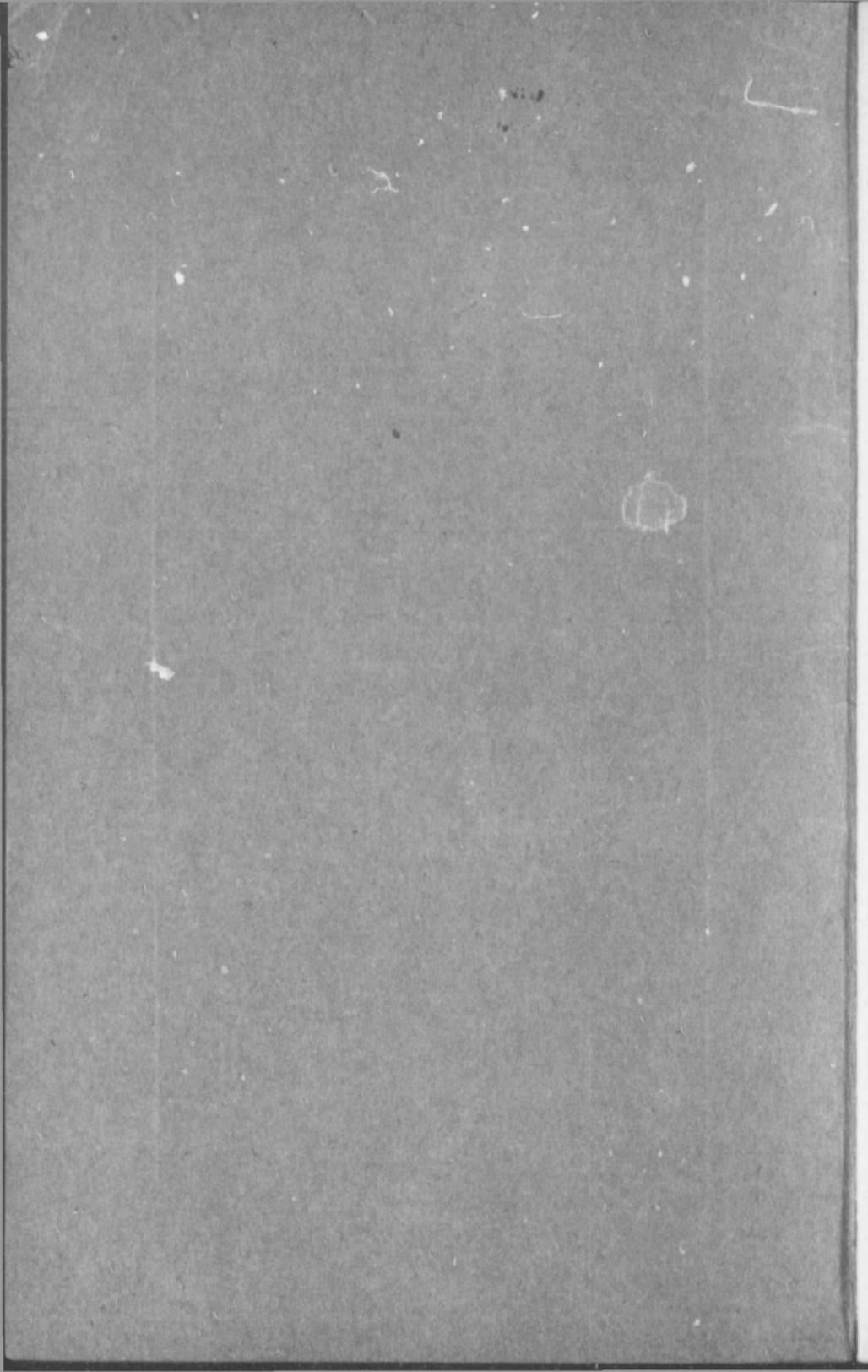
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SPEECH OF HON. H. H. WICKWIRE,
MINISTER OF HIGHWAYS.

HALIFAX, N. S.:
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COMPLIMENTS OF
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M. P. P.

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HON. H. H. WICKWIRE, Minister of Highways.

March 19th, 1920.

HONOURABLE MR. WICKWIRE by command of His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor laid upon the table of the House the Second Annual Report of the Provincial Highways Board. Mr. Wickwire, in presenting the report said:

Inasmuch as this volume contains the report of the Highways Board which was referred to in the Speech from the Throne and which has been adopted by the government, and further, inasmuch as in my humble opinion, its adoption by this House comprises one of the most important steps this legislature has been asked to take for a great number of years, I am asking the indulgence of the House and take this opportunity to make some remarks upon the report itself as well as upon the general highway conditions in this province.

It has occurred to me, sir, that in order to properly understand the position in which we find ourselves at this moment in Nova Scotia with regard to highway and bridge construction and maintenance, it is not only necessary we should have some idea what is being done in other provinces of Canada as well as in the States of the Union, particularly those nearest to us, but that we should have some idea of what has gone before in the history of Nova Scotia so far as road construction and maintenance is concerned, and with that idea in my mind, Mr. Speaker, I want to ask honourable gentlemen of this House to go back with me to the first settlement of this province. I want to point out where the first roads were constructed, how they happened to be constructed, how they were maintained and to trace the progress of road making in this province from that period down to the present time.

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

generally, but will make this province the envy of all parts of Canada from ocean to ocean.

As I have already intimated, there was very little attention paid in Nova Scotia to road construction up until the settlement of Halifax in 1749, because that really was the time when England obtained lasting control over this province and it was after that that the necessity was seen of building this road from Halifax to Windsor.

Early Construction.

Now, it may be of interest to members of this House, and I know it will be to the country, to look into the way in which these roads were constructed in order that we may, if possible, ascertain the view the people of the province took at that early day of the necessity for roads, and to compare it, if need be, with the interest at the present day with regard to the same matter. I find, for instance, in aid of one road at least in this province in 1749 or shortly afterwards, and in connection with the construction in different parts of the province of a few of the larger bridges—there were comparatively few bridges in those days—on one occasion at least a lottery scheme, something after the plan of the Louisiana Lottery, was started and the profits arising from that were used for road construction. I also find at that early date, before the coal mines were operated, because the people were forbidden to work at these coal mines, that a special dispensation was given to some Halifax men to mine coal in Cape Breton and the profits on that were used for the construction of the road from Halifax to Windsor. On another occasion a seizure of a large cargo of molasses was made—I don't know why in those days there should have been so large an importation of molasses, but at all events this molasses was seized and the proceeds used for road construction in different parts of the province. Of course there were some advantages in those days which we do not enjoy. These roads were largely military roads and constructed by soldier labour, labour which could be commanded, which cost very little; I think a shilling a day or something like that was paid to the soldiers who were responsible largely not only for the construction of the road from Halifax to Windsor but for the road from Minas to Port Royal. In looking this matter over and finding that road construction in those early days was performed in this way it has occurred to me that it would not be an improper thing in these days if we could utilize, not soldier labour in this country, but men from the penitentiaries, those who now compete with honest labour in various walks of life outside of such institutions.

If we were able to take advantage of this labour, upon payment of a proper fee which might go to the families of the men incarcerated in these institutions, the labor problem would be less difficult. I may say that in some of the Southern States this practise is now being carried on with very considerable benefit to the roads as well as to the men who are employed.

Early Laws.

There were some early laws in this province which we have lost sight of and in finding them and looking back upon them I think we might perhaps even in this year of our Lord one thousand nine hundred and twenty get some light and benefit. As a matter of fact, a hundred year ago or more, we had a law upon the statute book of Nova Scotia which prevented a man from carrying more than a certain load with a tire less than eight inches in width under a heavy penalty. Loads of plaster could not be carried in the County of Hants except on tires at least eight inches in width. I think perhaps we could go back to that with some degree of benefit to the highways of this province at the present day. I find also about the same time there was a law upon the statute book which prevented a man from toting timber along the road, that is carrying timber on a pair of wheels and letting the logs drag along the road. It seems we must have retrograded a little bit in that matter because we not only find immense loads being taken in the early spring over the roads on extremely narrow tires, but we find people putting drags upon the wheels of their conveyances and tearing the hill sides down, with impunity, paying no attention whatever to the condition of the road itself and no attention to any law we may have to prevent such practises and it seems to me that we might look back to at least a hundred years ago for some inspiration as to what should be done at the present moment.

Then we find also that in those early days they had a very much larger amount of statute labour than we have had since. I find that a boy of sixteen years of age was obliged to contribute two days work on the roads and in those days he would have to contribute the work itself. Now, if we had such a law today that two days labour of a boy of sixteen years of age would probably be equal to a six-dollar annual contribution to the upkeep of the roads of the province. We find that a boy of twenty-one years of age who worked on the farm with his father was obliged to contribute three days labour to the maintenance of the road which would be equal today to a tax upon that man of nine dollars towards road construction in this

province. Then the owner himself was assessed in a way which must have been more or less fair. He had to contribute so many days for every yoke of cattle he had, so many days for every horse he had and so many days for this that and the other that he had on his farm. That is, the man who was using the road the most, had the most teams and most cattle contributed a larger share towards road maintenance than the man who had nothing of that sort. It seems, perhaps, a more equitable way at getting at what a man should contribute towards road construction than under the present system by which he has to contribute a per cent rate on the real estate valuation which does not represent the value of the property in any degree whatever.

In contradistinction to what was required of a man a hundred years ago we find now a man who is assessed at \$150, and there are great numbers of them in this province, hundreds and thousands of well-to-do people in this province who are assessed at only \$150 for road tax, upon which they pay 60 cents per head, scarcely enough to pay for feed of oats for a good team of horses at their mid day meal. And I want to ask what tax does a man pay in this country that he gets more return for than the road tax of 60c. which he is obliged to pay into the province of Nova Scotia. He is taxed \$150 on his farm on which he makes a comfortable living, he has been able to bring up his family and give them an education such as the common school affords and for sixty cents that man and his family and his man servant and his maid servant and his horse and all the other things that go with them have access to every mile of the public roads of the province and every bridge in Nova Scotia. What expenditure that a man is called upon to make gives him more benefit than he gets from the small road tax he is called upon to pay towards road and bridge construction in the province.

Early Progress.

Mr. Speaker, after the settlement of Halifax, and after the establishment of a more or less stable government in this pro-although it was not responsible government as we know it at the present day, we find the early Governors of the province year after year in their remarks in the Speech from the Throne perhaps we would call it, at the opening of the legislature, complaining about the condition of the roads and asking for substantial grants from the public treasury towards their construction and maintenance. We find from year to year, in addition to the statute labour of which I have spoken, the pro-

vince both under a responsible and irresponsible government gave small amounts towards road construction and continued to furnish from time to time small "assistance" as they called it to bridge construction, because I want to point out what perhaps everybody knows, that in those days and until comparatively recent days, not only was the burden of the construction and maintenance of roads laid upon the municipalities but the construction and maintenance of bridges in this country were also a municipal charge and the only thing they were able to get down to comparatively recent times was some "assistance" from the government towards road construction and some "assistance" from the government when there was a large bridge to be constructed, towards the construction of that bridge, so we find that if we go back to a period of a hundred years ago there was comparatively little progress in the construction of interior roads in this province. A glance at the conditions in some of the counties in Nova Scotia at a period of a hundred years ago or less, I have no doubt will be a matter of considerable surprise not only to honourable gentlemen of this House but to the country as well. I find at that time—a hundred years ago—the county of Yarmouth had no interior roads whatever; there was no road at all leading from Yarmouth to Digby and a person who wished to traverse that country was obliged to take the shore and go along the beach and wait until the tide went out from the various rivers which flow into the Bay of Fundy or into St. Mary's Bay from there to Digby. There was no mail route and if a man wished to send a letter from Yarmouth to Digby it was given to some person who was going to travel down that way and reached its destination some three or four weeks afterwards. There was no road from Yarmouth to Tusket, a most important settlement in the County, where today I believe we have one of the best pieces of road in Nova Scotia. At that time, even in the town of Yarmouth itself, now one of the most beautiful and flourishing towns in the province, the road where the main street now runs, wound along among the stumps, and in this country we find after that comparatively short period of time, perhaps the best system of roads, taking them altogether, in Nova Scotia.

In the County of Kings much the same condition prevailed as in Yarmouth. There were no bridges. Cornwallis River had to be forded in those days and is now spanned by a number of magnificent steel bridges, and we had not any interior roads to speak of. The County of Pictou as late as the year 1826 had no interior roads; travellers went through the interior by compass and by blazes on trees and people were frequently

lost in the forest in that county in trying to get through the interior part of it and it was only in 1851 that the highway between Pictou and Antigonish, the Marshy Hope road, was constructed. In Lunenburg County in 1820 the road from Halifax to Chester was recommended at the opening of the legislature by the Lieutenant-Governor in the speech from the Throne and as far as I can see similar conditions prevailed in all the other counties of Nova Scotia. Considerable progress has of course been made since those days and I believe, Sir, if we look at the matter from some standpoints, that too much progress has been made; that is, there have been too many miles of road attempted to be constructed. Under municipal conditions as we have had them in recent years it has been too easy for a man to have a road opened, with the result that we have in Nova Scotia today a very large mileage of what might be called personal roads which do not serve the public and which are useless and which in many cases even at this time should be closed up. They were able by getting neighbours to sign a petition and going through a formula which you all know very well, to get these roads opened by the municipal councils with the result that the highways which were of use to the people generally were more or less robbed of the labour and money which should have been expended upon them in the provincial interest.

The Law Changes.

Now, I have endeavoured to show the condition of road construction from early times pretty well down to a date within the memory of us all. The road building programme went on in Nova Scotia for a number of years and consisted, as I have pointed out, of statute labour supplemented in some instances by government grants, with the municipalities, Mr. Speaker, being responsible for the construction of bridges. I want to say that even under the old system and before 1917 there were changes made in the law with respect to the expenditure of the provincial grant. We find in the first instance that the expenditure of this grant was controlled by members of the legislature and it is unnecessary for me to say that that led to a very considerable scandal in some counties in this province, the county which I have the honour to represent being one. The result was found to be unsatisfactory, it was found that we were not getting the benefit which we should get and as an alternative to the control of the expenditure by members of this House the control was given to the municipal councils and for some years the grant per county was handed out and divided up amongst the different roads of the county according to some system and the municipal councillors then divided it up into

job lots. I don't know that there was anything dishonest in any instance shown to have been performed by any municipal councillor, but human nature is human nature, and the result of that was that no extensive work of any kind was done. The holes here and there were patched up it is true, but under such a system it was of course impossible to have any forward policy for two reasons; first, the amount of division and subdivision of the money and second, the very small amount of money which was available in any event. Well, another change came and a new Road Act, was enacted in this province whereby a Road Division was added to the Department of Public Works and that Department undertook the road expenditure of this province and I do say I believe that was a wise movement, although there was some resentment at the time on the part of some of the municipal councillors. I believe it was a wise move and the condition of the highways after that time showed the wisdom of the change. Since that time one or two changes have taken place in regard to road construction in this province which are perhaps worth some consideration in trying to trace the history of road making in this province.

The Bridge Act.

When Mr. Fielding was Premier of this Province he took the responsibility, in reply to Petitions which almost swamped this House, and in response to what was known to be a very bad condition of the highways of this Province, of borrowing on two successive occasions the sum of \$300,000 each, making the total altogether of \$600,000, which was then spent upon the highways, and I believe that had it not been for the expenditure of this sum of money at that time, the roads of this Province would be in a very different position from what they are at this moment. That was the first big expenditure on the roads of this Province and I am bound to say it met with the approval of the people of the Province on more than one occasion since that time.

Another most important thing which has taken place in the road business in this Province since the time I have mentioned, was the Larger Bridge Act. In 1882 it was found the bridges in this Province, all of which at that time were wooden structures, were rotting and falling into the streams, and the renewal of these structures was a matter beyond the reach of the Municipalities, and so that time there was passed what is known as the Larger Bridge Act, which relieved the Municipalities altogether from the burden after that time of constructing and maintaining the larger bridges of this Province. I

believe that was a wise policy, and as a result of that policy we have today in Nova Scotia provided for almost all the larger bridges of the country, and we find our streams crossed today by a system of iron steel, and concrete bridges, which I am safe in saying are not equalled, certainly not excelled, by any Province in Canada, or by any State in the Union that I know anything about.

As a matter of fact, I have crossed bridges in the New England States myself, on their magnificent \$30,000 dollar a mile highway, which we would consider in Nova Scotia a disgrace to the back districts of one of our larger counties. We are getting pretty well down to the period of 1917 now, and I want to say that the construction of these bridges has made possible the recommendation to this House on this occasion of a forward policy in connection with road betterment and road extension, because if we did not now have this magnificent system of completed bridges in this Province we could hardly undertake the burden of providing large sums of money to construct our highways and maintain them in a manner which we have hitherto been unable to do.

Present State of Roads.

I want to make this statement here, Mr. Speaker, accepting full responsibility for it—I want to say this, that notwithstanding conditions in Nova Scotia in the years gone by; notwithstanding many of the difficulties which we have had to contend with, I do want to make this statement, and I make it without fear of contradiction, whatever may be said to the contrary, the roads of Nova Scotia today, mile for mile, are better than in any other Province in Canada, and better than in any State of the Union I have been in. We find in some of the other Provinces stretches of road of magnificent quality, costing more money than we can hope to provide in many generations for such a surface, and in many of the New England States, we will find these roads leading between large centres, and we will find the lateral roads in a most deplorable condition. I have been over roads in the State of Massachusetts within gunshot of the main highway—and in Connecticut and in New York States—that would swamp a goose. I say mile for mile, notwithstanding the difficulties we have been up against in Nova Scotia, and the things we have had to contend with, we have, mile for mile a better lot of roads than in any Province in Canada, or in any State of the Union I know anything about. I am free to admit their high class roads, comprising a small percentage of the highways, are very much better

than ours, or any we can hope to have generally within this generation, or perhaps the next, but I do want to say their bad roads are so much worse than our worst roads as to be almost beyond the power of description.

1917 And after.

We find that that was the condition of affairs in this Province down to the year 1917 when this Highways Act was passed. The Highway Act of 1917 which met with such a favourable reception in this House, was passed at the general demand of the people of this Province. Statute labour had become obsolete, it was conceived and made use of at its inception, at a time when people made their own clothes; when people made their own boots; but as conditions went along and labour changed, as farmers had all they could do to attend their farms, and as industries sprang up, it was found to be obsolete. I do not think there is a man in this Province of any experience who will not bear out what I say in that regard. In many of the Counties of this Province, where you would look for something else, Statute labour was not performed at all; in many others conscientious work was done, and in many districts conscientious work was done, but generally nothing was done in the way of continuity; one district might provide enough Statute labour to keep the road in that district in fair shape, but before you got to the next district you went over a section where there was no Statute labour available, and the people of the two districts would not step over one inch, and you went over a section of fairly good road and then a mile or two of abominable road to reach the other fairly good section. It was impossible to provide a consecutive system of highways of any kind of quality in this Province, and pursuant to a general demand the Road Act was the answer of this Legislature. We found on that occasion, and for some years previously that many, if not all the towns and cities in this Province were clamouring for a change. Banners were strung across the street in Halifax and many of the towns of the Province saying "we want good roads and are willing to pay for them." I don't know if they meant that; I am inclined to think, on account of some petitions that have come into the road department, that they did not mean it—and we measure a man's or a community's feeling in a matter of this kind, as in regard to other matters receiving the attention of men in the Province, by how much are they willing to put up to carry it through successfully. Nevertheless, at that time we had a distinct clamour from many of the towns and municipalities for good roads and their expressions of being willing to pay for them. We had resolutions from Boards

of Trade all over the Province asking that a change be made and Statute labour abolished, and that construction of the roads and bridges should be all gathered together under one head. We had resolutions from the Union of Municipalities, which is supposed to represent the last thing in Municipal ideas in this Province, not only asking for what we afterwards did, but recommending a distinguished member of that Union as a possible member of the Road Board which should carry out the provisions of any law which might be made; both of which recommendations were carried out by this House and Government. We also had even resolutions from the Farmers Association of Nova Scotia asking for a change and the abolition of the old conditions and the adoption of new, and the constituting of some progressive policy in this Province under which, with the new conditions of greater traffic and increased prosperity we might have a better system of highways in the Province than we have ever had before; and we also had the press of this country, I think without exception, demanding that something be done to get rid of the old state of things and adopting a new.

Act Unanimous.

I want to say just here, Mr. Speaker, I consider it was a very fortunate thing for this Province that we were able to submit to this House an Act which passed this legislature unanimously. So far as our friends on the other side of the House were concerned, they were able to see the absolute fairness of the provisions of the Act, and they were able to interpret public opinion on the matter so that when the Act passed the House it received the unanimous assent of members sitting all round the benches. I say that was a very fortunate thing for the inauguration of the Highway Board, and for the people of this Province. There was another fortunate thing I consider and that was in the selection of the gentlemen who were called upon to become members of the Highway Board. I want here and now, to compliment my friend, the Honourable Leader of the Opposition, for to him was due the selection of two of the distinguished members of the Board. I wish to compliment him on the selection he made on that occasion, and to say generally of this Board that it is composed of the very highest class of men in Nova Scotia; men of independence, who have given a lot of time and thought to the road problem in Nova Scotia and to whom is due the credit very largely of formulating the report, the particulars of which I am about to call to the attention of this House.

Duties of Board.

I do not know that it is generally known what the duties of the Highway Board are, and I propose for the benefit of some of us who may not have read over the Act, to refer at some little length to the duties of the Highway Board as at present constituted. "The Board shall, subject to the approval of the Governor-in-Council, appoint a Chief Engineer and such other Engineers, Officers, Clerks, and assistants as it deems necessary, for the due administration and carrying out the provisions of this Act, and shall fix the remuneration of each person so appointed."

Then "The Board shall, subject to such approval, make such rules and regulations as it deems necessary or desirable relating to—(a) the duties of all officers, engineers, and other employees appointed under this Act, and (b) the conditions and qualifications for employment as foreman, sub-foreman, mechanics, workmen, and teams, and (c) all matters incidental to the performance of any of the duties of the Board or of such employees."

"It shall be the duty of the Board and all such employees to perform the duties imposed by this Act, and such other or further duties in connection with the administration thereof as may from time to time be required by the Minister, or by any regulation of the Governor in Council."

"It shall be the duty of the Board:—To compile statistics and collect information relative to the mileage, character and condition of highways in the several Municipalities of the Province, and make such investigations relative thereto as it shall consider expedient. It shall investigate and determine upon the various methods of road construction and maintenance best adapted to the various sections of the Province, and establish standards for the construction and maintenance of highways in the various sections, taking into consideration the topography of the country, the natural conditions and the character and availability of road building materials."

And here is an important thing, which I do not think is generally known at the present moment:—"It may be consulted and shall without charge, advise the Municipal representatives or officers, and shall when requested advise and give information to such representatives or officers relative to the construction, alteration and maintenance of highways and bridges. It shall at all times assist in promoting road im-

provement throughout the Province, and prepare and compile useful information relative to road building and maintenance, which it shall disseminate by means of printed bulletins."

They are also required "to report annually to the Minister upon all work done and moneys expended under its direction; to prepare or cause to be prepared, such maps, plans, specifications and estimates as are necessary for all public highways proposed to be constructed, altered or repaired; to make such inquiries and reports as the Minister directs respecting any matter dealt with by this Act, or incidental or relevant thereto."

Then there are regulations with regard to the duties of superintendents, requiring the superintendents to properly qualify themselves to beneficially act as such. Then, the Board shall have the power to invite tenders by public advertisement or other public notice for performing any work under the provisions of the Act in any case where from the nature of the work it cannot be more expeditiously and economically performed or carried out under the direction of the officers of the Board.

Sources of Revenue.

I want also to again refer, before coming to the meat of this report, to the source from which we have hitherto been able to obtain money for the construction and maintenance of the highways under this Act. The first source was the Government grant which I have already referred to. The annual grant given by this Government for road maintenance for a great number of years, and which is not very material, varied little from year to year; in the second place, they have the Municipal tax which takes the place of the old Statute labour; in the third place, they have a new tax which was imposed upon the towns of this Province for very good reasons—I do not intend to go into them now—that was a new source but not a very large one up to this moment. Then fees arising from automobile registrations, which is really the only elastic source which we have had for road construction and improvement in this Province. It has grown very largely; it increased 20% or more last year, and I fully believe that at the end of the five year period our revenue from this source, although it is very far behind the revenue of some other provinces in this Dominion, but I believe at the end of the five year period our revenue from this source will have more than doubled. In addition to that we have the Federal aid. We have not received it yet and I propose devoting a little more attention to it, to go into

it at greater length; as to what it is, what it means, and what we are going to try and do with it.

The first year, the Road Board was appointed in January 1918,—they had during that year no greater funds at their disposal than had been at the disposal of the County and Provincial Road authorities for previous years. They were entirely new to the job and felt their way along to a considerable extent; they had the further difficulty of having the Provincial Engineer in a poor state of health,—in fact, being unable to give them such advice and information as might have been desired during that season; and as far as myself was concerned, I was not appointed until some months after the Board was constituted, and so far as the working of the Act for 1918, the policy was formulated and the men appointed and the thing was in operation before I had the honour of being appointed to the position I now hold. Even with the small amount at their disposal, and their newness to the office, I do say that some progress was made in the first year of the operations; some material progress was made in road operations in Nova Scotia during the first year under the administration of the Highway Board. Last year, the second year, of their operations, they had a little more money, and I do believe that more progress was made. I do not wish to take the time on this occasion to refer to localities where I know good work was done, and where I know that class of work could not possibly have been done under the old conditions, but I know they are within the knowledge of all members sitting in this House and I repeat that last year, with a little larger fund and with a little more experience, and an active engineer, a very considerable progress was made and many localities were furnished with a class of highway they could not have thought of under the conditions which prevailed previous to 1917. But some people thought after the first year that it was only a question of "ask and you shall receive." It was only a question of demanding money and it would be forthcoming. During a visit to a County in this Province, I was speaking to a Municipal Council. I returned to the hotel when an old gentleman Councillor came there and he told me the proper way to build a road from one point in the county to another point. I said, you are right, but do you know what it would cost? I said \$4,000 a mile, and where would you get the money? He said, "Aren't you paid to get the money? Go and get it". I said, "Do you want to pay any more in?". He said, "No." He said "that is what you are there for; go and get it". I said, "There is only one source of money, directly or indirectly"; he said, "That makes no difference, go and get it". It is an attitude which it is difficult to combat, and

it is difficult to follow the reasoning that goes on in that old gentleman's head, and until we have a surgical operation, or employ the good offices of the psychologist, we shall not be able to help the grouch of the old gentleman.

The New Plan.

Now, as a result of two years experience the Board has submitted to the government a report advocating a very decidedly forward step in the road business in this province and there are one or two things in connection with the report, before going into the main part of it, to which I wish to refer. The first part refers to the good work done by the late engineer, Mr. Yorston who, since his illness, has been consulting engineer of the department and it also refers in complimentary terms which are deserved I believe, to Mr. Roland, who succeeded him as Chief of the Highway Department and his selection will meet, I am sure, not only the approval of this house but of every one in the province who is acquainted with him. He has proved of most valuable assistance to this province. The report also refers to the marked improvement of the highways during the past year and also to another matter which forms part of the new plan for bridge and road construction and maintenance and that is the separation of the Road Department into two branches; one branch will have exclusive charge of road construction and the other will have exclusive charge of the bridges of the province.

A short time ago I referred to the magnificent system of bridges which we have in this province, the capital invested in which must be upwards of four million dollars at the present time, and if they had to be constructed today or reconstructed would cost perhaps twice that amount. We have felt that we have a very large investment in these bridges and we should have them placed under the exclusive authority of some competent man, with whatever staff was necessary, because we have too large an investment there and they form too important a part of the road system of this province to be allowed to suffer in the slightest degree, so it has been recommended by the Chief Engineer, that the Department, for the reason I have mentioned, be divided into two parts. The next thing of importance, is the programme they are submitting and which has been adopted by the government and which I am now presenting to the house. This programme, I may say, involves a five-year programme and plans will be prepared, if we succeed in having this report adopted by this House, which will cover a period of five years and will involve an ex-

penditure of about *thirteen millions of dollars* during that period. Now, it may very properly be asked, why do you submit a five-year programme; why do you not submit a one-year programme as has always been the case in this province. Well, Mr. Speaker, the answer to that is that the Federal aid covers a period of five years. Under the Federal Aid we are getting 40% of a fund to which we are obliged to subscribe 60%; we are getting that fund from them year by year for five years. I want to say that that fund will not lapse in any year if it is not taken up, but you cannot anticipate it and take two years in one although if you waited until the completion of the five year period you may get the whole thing.

Dominion Aid.

I want to say something about this Dominion aid. Several things have occurred since the House last met in that connection and it is only right that whatever information I may possess in regard to the matter should be placed within the reach of honourable members sitting round these benches. As is well known, the Dominion Government appropriated the sum of \$20,000,000 which was to be divided among the provinces of Canada for road purposes. That sum was to be divided into five to be available to the different provinces for five years. There are several things in connection with this Dominion aid which should be known. In the first place, the class of roads upon which this money may be spent is determined by the Federal Aid Commission. The class of road, the quality of road that is to be built is determined by them and there are many conditions and qualifications which they have laid down by Order-in-Council which must be observed by any province before it can get the benefit of the Act. I may read, Mr. Speaker a few of the conditions and I want to point out that they expressly say that any province before applying for aid under this Act shall provide a five year programme so far as their money is concerned and that is the reason why we have coupled up with that a provincial programme that shall extend over the same period.

"Each Provincial programme shall include, first, roads having greatest local agricultural and commercial importance, and second, roads having both local and general importance and these programmes shall be so adjusted and arranged that the whole shall be correlated and form, as far as possible, a general system of inter-provincial highways." That is to say it is possible under the Dominion Act after having submitted your programme, after having shown what you expect to reach at

the end of the five-year period, to ask them for aid this year at what might look on the face of it like isolated points in the province, but with the view at the end of the five-year period, of having the gaps filled up and having such a system as they refer to in this Order-in-Council. This programme shall be satisfactory to the Minister that is the Minister of Railways and Canals at Ottawa.

Then it goes on to say, and it is necessary for me to read this in order to justify some remarks I may have to make at a certain stage—it goes on to say:

“Each application for aid shall be embodied in a project statement, on forms which may be had on application to the Commissioner of Highways of the Department of Railways and Canals, which shall contain the following information and exhibits:—

In order to show you the great detail which is required and consequently the very considerable addition to the Highway staff it is necessary for us to take on in order to comply with the conditions—which I am not objecting to—I will quote the conditions laid down by the Federal government:

(a) The purposes the undertaking will serve, and why it is in the public interest:

(b) The character and extent of traffic, present and prospective on the road:

(c) How the undertaking relates to the provincial programme:

(d) A statement of the type of construction or improvement it is proposed to make, together with a report of the engineer of the Provincial Highways Department, endorsing the adoption of the proposed type and the design thereof as being the most economical and practical in the public interest his reasons therefor and a full explanation of any special or unusual features thereof:

(e) The administrative control of the responsibility for the undertaking:

(f) The source and method of procuring the necessary money for the undertaking; and the extent to which interested municipalities contribute thereto:

(g) Plans in standard form to be prescribed by the Minister and in detail following accepted engineering practise together with a sketch map showing the position of the proposed project on the general programme map of the province.

(h) Specifications in standard form to be prescribed by the Minister setting forth the proposed type and method of construction, materials to be used, and other essentials in such detail as to afford complete knowledge of all steps to be taken in carrying out the project.

(i) Copies of the form of contract to be used together with all documents referred to therein or made a part thereof, and,

(j) Estimated cost of the project, giving schedule of quantities and the estimated cost of each item in detail.

So you see, Mr. Speaker, we have to go to very considerable trouble and we have to gather a great deal of information, of a useful character I am bound to say, and we have to conform to a great many conditions before we are able to take advantage of this Federal grant.

Another thing is, unless a specific agreement is made to the contrary, all work under this—all payments under this—will only be made where the work is the result of tender and contract, although I understand from the Commissioners that there are cases, which may readily be conceived of, of short pieces of work where you could not get a man to contract for it, a competent man, except at an exorbitant figure. There are cases where you might be able to take advantage of this without tender. They make various other recommendations with regard to the maintenance of these roads after they are put into good shape. I want to tell you, before doing this we are obliged to enter into an agreement with the Federal authorities to maintain such roads as have been constructed with their aid, and that is part of our programme. In this connection we have had many conferences at the request of the Federal Minister; it has been my duty on three different occasions to talk these matters over—myself and the engineer at Ottawa—and since that time two members of the commission, Mr. Mc-Grath, formerly Fuel Controller, and Mr. Mullarkey, have visited Nova Scotia and had a conference with the Road Board and Government and they have seen different kinds of roads that we have been endeavoring to construct in this locality and I think we have a complete understanding of what their

requirements are and I am sure from my experiences with them, they give assurance of rendering every reasonable aid to us in what they term our laudable ambition to procure a much better system of highways in this Province than we have had. Another reason why it is impossible to meet the expectations of many people in this province and build whole roads through the country in one year, is the labour question. We have found in the years gone by, and perhaps that feature was a little more exaggerated than it has hitherto been in Nova Scotia, but we found we had to be very careful; we could not fix a wage that would take the men away from the farm, when the farmers were clamouring for men to help put in and gather the crops; we could not fix a wage to make it attractive to take man away from the mills and other operations that make up the industrial life of the country; so that it would be impossible if you had all the money required, on account of the labour situation alone to carry out any very great extensive system of road construction in this Province in any one year. Another thing is, the five year programme gives the engineers an opportunity of being ready and looking forward and being prepared with the next season's road operations and to know just exactly what they are going to do, instead of having to wait and see what the road appropriation is going to be, and then scramble and try to get to work at the last moment. It gives them an opportunity ahead of knowing what they are going to do and thus they are able in a more efficient manner to carry it out. I want to say that if we succeed, as I believe we will, at the end of this five year period, in putting the roads of this province into the condition contemplated under this report of the Highway Board, if we succeed at the end of five years in doing that, we will have made greater progress in road construction—we will have constructed a larger percentage of roads in this province than they have constructed after years of experience in many of the States of the Union, or any Province in Canada, whose road programme I know anything about. If we take five years to do what we contemplate, we will have done more than has been attempted in any province of Canada or any State in the Union. There are some preliminaries in this report that I want to refer to. In the first place, under the old dispensation we had district engineers,—three; one for Cape Breton, one for the Eastern and one for the Western part of the Province. We have abolished the office of district engineer, but we have been forced to employ in order to comply with the Dominion Act and get these facts and make plans and so on,—we have had to divide the province into ten residences, each in charge of a resident engineer. It is unnecessary to go into details because the facts will all be found in the Re por

which will be laid on the table of the house after I have finished. The appointment of these engineers is made necessary by the Dominion Act and we are ready to take advantage of that fact by supplementing the Dominion Act a little further by a programme of our own. Another thing, we found that the county superintendents in many instances had more than they could attend to and they have not been able, by reason of the large area of many counties to cover the ground and give that assistance to foreman in pointing out proper ways to go about their work that we would have wished. Consequently, we are recommending an increase in the position of superintendent. That will not involve any particular expense because instead of being a yearly official, it is proposed they shall be employed for the time they are actually at work. Another thing, they have made in accordance with the requirements of the Dominion Act, a classification of the roads of Nova Scotia, and this is the classification:

Classification of Roads.

Class 1. Includes that mileage of roads heretofore generally known as trunk roads, or those roads connecting counties, and also all the county roads of chief importance, the total mileage of which will be about 4,000. I want to say right here, we have hitherto regarded the road mileage in Nova Scotia as something like 18,000; we have taken the trouble, without going to any expense other than equipping our superintendents with speedometers, to obtain a more accurate estimate, and have come to the conclusion that the real road mileage does not exceed 15,000 very much, the hitherto proclaimed mileage of some counties being excessive.

Class 2. Will include the rest of the roads 11,263 miles. Then they go on to say: "It is not intended that this classification shall remain fixed or unalterable, but that there shall be some elasticity about it,—thus, if any road under Class 2 develops a traffic, it may be placed in Class 1, the factor being the traffic the given road is called upon to bear."

Here is the recommendation as to Class 1 roads: "In addition to reconstructing and completing to Federal standard an average of 180 miles yearly, we should, under the Provincial programme reconstruct and improve a further 60 miles annually of the Provincial Trunk Roads for five years." There would then be left 2,800 miles of Class 1 roads requiring treatment. The recommendation is that 560 miles of these be taken in hand each year for five years at an average cost of say \$1,500

per mile, which amount should bring these roads to the point of surfacing with gravel or other suitable material.

Regarding Class 2 roads it is recommended that preliminary work to the extent of \$500 per mile be undertaken on 1,000 miles of these roads annually for the next five years.

We figure that this programme will construct 9000 miles in five years of the quality of roads I have mentioned; and the Board say next: "With the completion of such a five year programme the road question in its most pressing phases would be solved."

I believe if the 9000 miles of the roads of this province were put into the shape contemplated by this report in the way suggested that the other roads are of so little importance that the Highway Board is quite right in saying that the road problem in Nova Scotia would very largely be solved. But we don't propose to leave it at that because there is something else. But before going into that, I want to inform the House that it is estimated there will be required to carry out this programme I have just detailed, that is to say for the 180 miles under federal aid, we will require to carry that out to provide the sum of \$450,000 a year; for the second 60 miles a year to Federal standard we will have to provide \$240,000; the amount necessary to reconstruct 560 miles each year of Class 1 road is \$840,000 a year and the amount necessary to reconstruct 1000 miles each year of Class II roads at \$500 per mile is \$500,000 a year. The amount necessary to provide machinery for construction purposes as needed, to accomplish this work will be \$500,000; amount necessary each year for machinery for maintenance and patrol purposes is \$75,000; or an annual requirement altogether of \$2,605,000 or a total in five years under this head of \$11,025,000.00.

Secondary Roads.

I say, Mr. Speaker, they are not leaving the matter here. The question may very properly be asked, what will become, while these roads are under construction, what will become of the roads which will not be completed until the second or third or fifth year as the case may be and how are you providing for the fixed expenses. Well, now, it is proposed that there shall be voted annually the sum of \$1,078,150.00. It will require \$100 per mile for roads that have been brought up to Class 1 standard and \$50 per mile for the care of *all other roads* and by this programme it is believed that *we shall be able to provide for every mile of road in Nova Scotia at least \$50 a mile* which is now

under construction of a higher order. That is to say that whereas hitherto we have had per mile for road construction in Nova Scotia considerably less than \$30.00 we will have \$50 per mile.

Comparisons.

I was speaking a little while ago about being able at the end of that period to have 9000 miles or considerably over fifty per cent of our roads in this condition and it may be of some interest to honourable gentlemen to show what percentage they have been able to put in that condition in the United States of America where in many of the States for many years an advanced road programme has been going on. For instance, take the State of California where road construction is comparatively easy compared with Nova Scotia, not only on account of climate but on account of wealth and other things. They have only succeeded up to now in making 2.9% of their roads to this standard. The State of Virginia only 11%, West Virginia 5%, Connecticut 22% Rhode Island 34% and Massachusetts the largest, 47.5%. The States nearest to us and where conditions are more like our own, Maine 14.5% New Hampshire 14.1% and Vermont 15.7%.

There is another thing I wish to point out in this connection that while none of these States, although some of them have been working at this problem for more than five years have succeeded in getting more than 50% of their roads first class condition; of the roads that have been resurfaced less than 6% have a surface of a better quality than gravel and less than ten per cent of the roads of the whole United States have any kind of a surface and less than two per cent are suited to heavy motor traffic. I have taken these figures from an American publication and our friends across the border are not in the habit of saying anything to stultify their efforts.

Difficulties in Nova Scotia.

If the programme I have outlined is carried out we will be able to put a greater percentage of our roads in good condition than has been done in any province of Canada or any State in the Union. No doubt there are difficulties in the way and I wish to refer to some of them. In the first place we have an excessive road mileage in this province. We have a road mileage in this province which is almost as great as that of the State of Massachusetts with its immense population and great wealth, a road mileage altogether in excess, I believe, of our acreage. In Massachusetts they have a similar road mileage

to our own. Let us look into another comparison. In Massachusetts with a mileage about equivalent to that of Nova Scotia they have an automobile fund available for road purposes of over three million and a half dollars; in Nova Scotia we have but one hundred and fifty thousand dollars. In Quebec their road mileage is very little over double ours while their available funds for road purposes out of motor fees amount to about a million dollars. The Province of Ontario with a little more road than Quebec has an automobile fund of over a million and a half dollars, so you will see that when we put our hand to the plough we are having some courage and we are up against some difficulties that are not to be reckoned with in larger and more populous and wealthy centres on the continent.

Another thing that we have to put up with in Nova Scotia, and I believe our Province in that regard is worse than any Province or State, and that is climatic conditions. Owing to the constant freeze and thaw in this Province, in Spring and Fall, it is almost impossible for some time during that period to provide any system of road, no matter what they are made of, which will withstand the climate conditions. In fact, it would be impossible and impracticable, I believe, in Nova Scotia, in the face of what I have seen in some of the New England States, to put down a concrete way, because you will find in some of these States where the climate is not as severe as ours, conditions are deplorable, and these concrete roads are broken and cracked and in a bad state of repair today. Climatic conditions in Nova Scotia are harder upon roads, and a greater difficulty to overcome in construction and maintenance than in other Provinces of Canada or in the States of the Union. Another thing which takes a great deal away from our road fund is the innumerable water courses. I do not know of any State where there are as many small streams and arms of the sea coming in as in Nova Scotia. These all have to be bridged and looked after and renewed and the consequence is that they take a very large amount of money from the available fund which would otherwise be put on the surface of the roads. Another thing is the long distance between centres, and we have to build roads between centres, in many places through districts from which there is no revenue whatever; in order that people can get from one centre to another we have to build expensive roads in a country like that from which we get no revenue.

Another difficulty we have had to put up with, and I have already mentioned it,—we have in many cases no lay out of the roads. In many places people have encroached on the road and moved their fences out and made road construction very

difficult. We have provided against that very largely by Acts which have been passed through the House, but, nevertheless, when you are carrying out a policy it is nice to get along as smoothly as possible and without having to put into operation any drastic laws which we have been compelled to make on account of conditions as we have found them.

Another thing that is not generally appreciated is the value of the dollar. You cannot get done today for a dollar what you could get done five years ago for forty cents and I don't think that fact is fully appreciated. We really up to now have not had, owing to the fact of the depreciation of the dollar, as much money to expend on the roads as we had ten years ago. That fact, I think, in some instances is overlooked by our friends in the country. Then there is the greater traffic; enormous traffic,—growing all the time; motor cars extending to places that people never went before, and it has increased 20% during the past year and, as I have said, if it increases in the way which we predict in the next five years, Honourable gentlemen understand what kind of roads we will have to have to carry that traffic. There is a tendency to evade all these things. I see automobiles going around today with last years signs on indicating they have not yet paid this years fee; they do not seem to take into consideration the welfare of the roads depends on the good faith of our automobile owners.

Encouragements.

I must say that we have had some other things which are of an encouraging nature. It was my good fortune during the summer to attend the gathering at a leading town in the province of the commercial travellers, and I am glad to be able to say that the unanimous opinion expressed by those gentlemen, who have a great opportunity for knowing the condition of the roads, was that there was a very considerable improvement. I want to say also that many of the automobile societies have expressed to me the same view. Another sign that the people of this province are anxious to have better roads and are willing to pay for them, is the action of many of our towns in borrowing money in order to put down semi permanent roads. I am glad to know the effect in many towns has been to increase the price of real estate as much as 25% in one year. When towns see the necessity as well as the benefits and are willing to spend their money, I believe it should be a matter of encouragement to the Highway Board and to members of this House to go on with a similar policy so far as the province itself is concerned. Then there is another matter for congratu-

lation, and I wish it extended a little bit further, that several counties have voluntarily increased their road tax. Annapolis led the way in this regard and voluntarily increased its tax from 40c. to 50c. on the \$100, and again from 50c. to 60c.; Guysboro, I am glad to say, is another county which has voluntarily done the same thing and increased the tax from 40c. to 50c. This year the Cape Breton district has done the same thing. I wish to congratulate these counties on this very forward step. Perhaps some of the other counties do not know the benefits accruing. The Road Board has passed a resolution stating that every county that voluntarily increases its tax will get dollar for dollar more in expenditure than the county that does not do it. We are trying the Carnegie idea; it is a sign that some of the Counties have seen the benefits of good roads and what the Road Board after two years has tried to do, and they have voluntarily raised their tax for the purpose of expenditure on the roads within the limits of those counties. Even the criticisms, even the hurry up call we have, is encouraging because it shows the people are anxious as quickly as possible to have the roads in this country put into better shape. The acceptance of all this carries with it the question of responsibility; a measure of Municipal responsibility, and I trust before the five year period has passed that the benefits under the amended legislation which we are bringing in this year,—will be more widely appreciated and that many towns not incorporated and Municipal Districts will take advantage and come in and ask us to help them, they being willing to help themselves. The only thing I can say is, these people should be encouraged to use the roads well; they should be educated up to the point that the public highway is necessary to carry on a business or farm or anything else; as is necessary as the mowing machine, the hay cart or anything that assists in production or in the transportation to market, they should be encouraged, and taught in every possible way to take better care of the highways which we are seeking to provide in this manner.

Criticisms.

Of course there have been some criticisms made. In one locality you may hear a criticism that all the money has been spent on what are called the trunk roads; in another locality that all the money has been spent upon bye roads, but I think any honourable gentleman who will take the trouble to analyze the figures in this report which is about to be tabled will come to the conclusion that there has been a very equitable distribution of the road money over class one and class two roads, and of course the future will take care of itself because we are

providing double the means for the bye-roads than we ever had in Nova Scotia heretofore.

Expense of Administration.

Another thing that is not generally known is with regard to overhead and administrative expenses under the Highway Act and I think Mr. Speaker, and honourable gentlemen when I give the figures as they have been given to me by the accountant in the office, that it may well give you, as it gave me, some surprise. Under the old Act before 1917, when we were getting a provincial grant of \$230,000 to \$250,000 a year, it was of course necessary in administering the road and bridge fund that engineers should be employed and an office staff should be employed and it cost 10.06% to administer that grant. In the first year of the Road Act when we had very little more funds it cost for overhead expenses 7.06% and this last year, 1919, the total administrative expenses had become 6.07%. I have heard people say it cost all the way from 50% to 70%. However, that is the financial statement prepared in the office and I think will be received with some surprise by honourable gentlemen sitting around these benches. When talking about the expense of administering the present Highway Act we did not take into consideration the cost of administering the old Act; we did not take into account the expenses of administering statute labour.

For instance, take an ordinary county where there were some 400 districts under the old law. Each of these road districts had what was called an overseer and in picking out that overseer they generally picked out the man who carried the most assessable property, a leading man, to be the overseer. He was relieved from his highway tax. Suppose each of these overseers had four days work to do; that would be 1600 days worth say \$3.00 to \$3.50 per day; multiply your days of road work by \$3.50 and see where you are. We are saving money today. So if you compare what it cost to administer the old statute labour in the way I have suggested with the present system you will find, that with our superintendents and so on, we are really making a saving in cost of administration. Of course I admit that the more money that is spent the lower the percentage of overhead cost will be, but I am pointing out nevertheless the decreased figures for overhead as prepared by the department.

I believe our people are coming to realize that there is a real interest in the road matter for them. I had the pleasure

last year of attending the meeting of the Union of Municipalities in the town of Yarmouth and a very distinguished college professor was making an address and calling attention of the public generally, calling upon them to take more interest in the State than they had been doing, to sacrifice self a little more and give a little more to the State of their time and brains and so on and in order to illustrate the point—and I think it illustrates very well the road situation in Nova Scotia—he told a story which I thought was a very good one. He said there was a little parish just outside the city of Portland unable to support a regular minister and their customs was to send a deacon into Portland on Saturday to see if he could procure someone to come out and preach to them. Generally he was successful but on one occasion he could find no one but a distinguished New York preacher who had a very large and fashionable church and he was ashamed to go to this man and went home empty handed and put the matter before the deacons and they told him to go back and see this preacher. He did and the distinguished man said he would be delighted and on Sunday morning he harnessed his horse and took his little girl along with him and took the child to the pulpit with him and preached to thirty or forty people as if he had been preaching to a thousand in New York. At a certain stage his little daughter, who was familiar with church proceedings, spoke up, "Dad, you havn't taken up any collection." He quieted her but presently she again called his attention to the fact that he had taken no collection. They got through however without taking a collection and the minister went down and in the porch he observed a box for offerings for charitable purposes and he put his hand in his pocket took out fifty cents and dropped it into the box. The deacons gathered round him in the churchyard and thanked him very kindly for the service and told him it was their habit in that place to give the man who preached the entire contents of the box at the door. So they unlocked the box and took out the fifty cents and gave it to him. Then the minister got in the team and started for home and after a while the little girl said to him "Dad, if you had put more in, you would have got more out, wouldn't you." And the moral of that story may be applied to more things than to the clergyman speaking in a small country parish.

Perhaps it would be proper for me at this stage to refer to the benefits to be derived from good roads but I hope it is not necessary to say anything to the people of this country about the benefits of good roads. Everybody knows that a good road brings a man nearer to his market, nearer to his store, brings

him nearer to places of amusement which is important in these days when help is scarce and young people flock to the towns for the sake of the amusements to be had there; it brings him nearer to his doctor, nearer to his school, brings him nearer to his church and it saves money in teams and harness, he can take bigger loads, make quicker trips and altogether better roads make country life very much more agreeable than ever before and will prove, we believe, a very large factor in contenting the young men of this country to stay on the farms where they may have lives of pleasure and profit rather than flock into the towns under conditions which are in many cases almost unendurable.

A Good Act.

I have very little more to say, but I do want to say this: I believe that this Road Act we have in Nova Scotia is the best Road Act on this continent, and I want to tell you the reason for my belief. We have Road Acts and systems in every province in Canada. We have Road Acts in the various states of the Union; but there is no Act I know anything about that pretends to do what the Road Act of Nova Scotia aimed to do, that is, to look after every foot of road and every single bridge in this province. The other provinces boast of their State highways, but they are leaving the country roads to the municipalities, leaving the bridges to the municipalities, and placing all their forces on building trunk roads connecting large centres; in Quebec, Ontario and the various States of the Union, that policy is being conducted by them and they are leaving the rest to the municipalities; whereas under the Road Act of Nova Scotia we have taken the bold step—the bold step of seeking not only to provide passable trunk roads, but taking up the higher standard of providing for every mile of road and every single bridge and culvert; and I believe for that reason the Road Act of Nova Scotia is the most progressive of any province in Canada or any State of the Union, and I am backed up by gentlemen from other provinces with whom I have talked and eminent road engineers of various States of the Union with whom I have consulted. There is no other way—under no other law can we provide the machinery to take care of all the roads of the province and the bridges, be it burdensome and difficult—than by such an Act as we now have in Nova Scotia. During the last two years of the war, 1918 and 1919, had it not been that we had this road Act in Nova Scotia, had it not been that we were doing the road business under different conditions from the old, on account of labour conditions we would have

had no road work done at all, and the roads would be in a worse condition at this moment, with the greater traffic, than they have been for many years.

Conclusion.

Such are some of the road problems in Nova Scotia and the plan submitted by the Highway Board and approved by the Government to meet them.

I commend it to this House and Province with full confidence that it will be received in the spirit with which it has been prepared—an independent determination to procure as quickly as circumstances will permit a system of highways in this country without a rival, which will be a source of pride and satisfaction to our people.

To those who may be disposed to approve, I ask sympathy and aid in carrying out a policy which I believe will be of vast benefit to the province and I desire to point out to the pessimistic, if any, that we have here the men, the brains and determination, backed with sound public opinion, capable of carrying to a successful conclusion even such an ambitious and forward policy as it has been my very great pleasure to present.

I beg leave to move that this report do lie on the table of the House and at a future day I will move for its adoption.