

Webster's Dictionary refers to the word "Corduroy" as a piece of strong, tough fabric with a raised strip or ridge. The cloth was held in utter disdain by boys, especially on the farm. They felt more or less humiliated when they had to wear corduroy trousers and rough cow hide leather boots (not shoes) with the toes protected by a copper plate.

Remember the corduroy roads? In pioneer days, the days of our forefathers, these roads could almost be classed as luxury but to many farmers they were an abomination and caused many a farmer to utter a few cuss words, probably under their breath for the majority of pioneers were God fearing, Christian men who attended church regularly and attended prayer meetings.

Corduroy roads came into being when farmers had to take some kind of a passage way through swamp land. Trees were stripped of their branches and felled in such a manner as to fall directly across the swath cut out to become a road. They were laid side by side over swamp land and at first nothing was put between the logs and farm vehicles bumped their way across. It was a rough passage.

As time went on gravel was hauled and the logs covered, but as these logs sank in the mire under the traffic, some of them actually sank into oblivion and they are there today, although covered with layers of gravel and topped by a bituminous substance and in many cases the black mulch is now covered with asphalt.

Truly labour was the lot of man in early pioneer days. When Township Councils were formed, many of the farmers worked long days on the roads.

The term statute labour came into being and farmers performed statute labour on the roads in lieu of paying road tax, for they had a very meagre amount of money. A farmer with a team on the roads was equal to three days statute labour and if a hired man was employed, then the farmer was chalked up on the tax books as having had four days labour. Eventually statute labour passed out as the township councils undertook the work with hired crews and as progress continued and the motor car became king of the road, county councils assumed control of many roads and still in the era of progress

the provincial government took over and established the provincial highways.

One of the best versed men regarding all the changes and evolutions in road building in this district is Jasper Forman, who is a native son of Fenelon Township in the Long Point area.

He talks glibly and in an interesting manner about the days of his forebears, the days of corduroy roads, of statute labour and pathmasters.

"It is amazing and almost unbelievable the evolution which has taken place," said Mr. Forman, who speaks with authority as he was for years a member of township councils and a member of the County Council of Victoria. "These pioneers were wonderful men, they worked long hours, up at

the crack of dawn and to bed by candlelight. There was no thought of strikes in those days—the word was unknown, but these men had plenty of brawn, a great deal of determination and courage.”

Continuing, Mr. Forman said: “They were wonderful men and women, — how they cleared the land of timber and rocks, built rail fences and stone fences, planted, cultivated and reaped bountiful harvests. I think it well to dwell on these memories in this our Confederation year. Truly they built better than they knew,” added Mr. Forman.