



**HASTINGS COURT HOUSE, 1961—** New half million dollar Hastings county court house and administration offices seen above are to be officially opened Wednesday. In new building architects have combined good taste with modern efficiency. Offices are light and airy, while courtrooms and county council chambers are fully air conditioned.

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## County Files Being Moved to New Home Show Toll Roads Not Modern Gimmicks But Old Device Used When 'Not in Funds'

Toll roads and bridges, increasingly common in recent years by reason of the millions of motor vehicles on the public highways, are not a modern gimmick introduced to extract even more money from the long suffering taxpayer.

On the contrary, toll roads were known in the Belleville area more than a century ago and Hastings county records show where, back in 1848, council authorized the construction of a plank road leading out of Belleville with provision for collecting tolls to pay the cost.

All this is brought to light as old records are dug out of dingy vaults at Shire Hall in preparation for the move into new quarters at the new county court house building.

In a "compilation of by-laws of the county of Hastings" printed back in 1851 it shows where during the February sessions of the District Council in 1848 a by-law was passed authorizing the construction of a 16-foot wide plank road from Belleville to Canniff's Mills (now Cannifton) the plank to be used thereon to be four inches thick.

And because the District was "not in funds" the same by-law authorized the collection of tolls to pay for the construction for the plank road.

Not all of the old records being taken from vaults at Shire Hall are to be placed in vaults at the new building.

**BURN 'TONS'**  
Those not required are being destroyed and County Clerk Erle S. Denyes says "I must have burned tons."

But to get back to the wooden roads and toll gates.

Terms of the contract for building of the plank road to Cannifton were that the contractor was to receive tolls from the road for a period of 12 years to recompense him for costs of construction.

Tolls to be collected on the three-mile stretch of roadway were 6 pence for a wagon or cart drawn by two horses or oxen, with two pence for every extra horse or ox.

The toll for a wagon or a cart, drawn by one horse or ox was four pence.

Toll for every horse with rider was three pence for each and every head of horned cattle two pence and for each and every hog or sheep one pence.

### FUNERALS FREE

A provision was that each and every team, cow, horse, sheep and hog, would be allowed to re-pass free in the same day, and also that all funeral processions would be allowed to pass through free.

According to Mr. Denyes, the work of early county legislators was made up largely in the provision of roads and schools.

Some of the school sections laid out more than a century ago in the southern part of the county are unchanged in area even today.

Before the formations of counties and districts early in the 1800's, law was administered over the municipalities by what was known as the Quarter Sessions.

The quarter sessions were abolished in 1859 and in 1842 ten men representing the communities in the south part of what is now the county of Hastings met in the court house at Belleville to form the District of Victoria.

The first act of the district council was to set up school sections in the different townships.

District wardens at that time were appointed by the Legislative Council. The first district warden was William Hutton who served until 1849.

### COUNTY BORN IN 1850.

Then, under the Baldwin Act of 1849, the present county system was set up and Hastings county had its birth in January of 1850. The first county warden was Edward Fidler.

The present Shire Hall, seat