

WOULD OPEN NORTH FOR TOURING CARS BY TRUNK SYSTEM

Delegation From North Seeks Grading of North Bay- Cochrane Highway

CONNECT LOCAL ROADS

Thousands of Visitors Would Be Attracted From Trans- Canada Road

Ontario's Northland will probably soon be opened to motor traffic. Effort is being exerted to have the isolated local systems of roads in the Northern districts between North Bay and Cochrane co-ordinated by a trunk highway, and the results of several conferences which have been held recently, and which culminated in a delegation from the North to the Provincial Government this week, point to the possibility of those districts being made accessible this year.

Dr. P. E. Doolittle of Toronto has been largely instrumental in bringing the proposal to its present stage. Two weeks ago he was invited by members of several Northern Boards of Trade and municipal bodies to go North and arrange a deputation to visit the Hon. Beniah Bowman, under whose jurisdiction colonization roads are placed. As a result, some 30 delegates, representing Englehart, New Liskeard, Powassan, North Bay and a number of other Northern municipalities came to Toronto this week and learned that every effort would be made to grade a trunk road through from North Bay to Cochrane. The deputation would have been larger but for an untimely freight train wreck which blocked the railway south of Cochrane and prevented the Cochrane delegates from arriving in time.

Seek Means of Access.

The conference held with Hon. Mr. Bowman was attended by representatives of the Board of Trade of Toronto, and Mr. G. M. McWilliam, President of the Ontario Motor League, as well as by the Northern delegates. Former requests for the grading of this road have come almost entirely from the North, but in this instance the Northern request was strongly supported by the Toronto organizations. It is realized that the attractions of those districts are very great and that potential tourist traffic in great volume awaits some means of access. Formerly, Dr. Doolittle pointed out, the cry had been for some means of outlet for Northern cars to the southern parts of the Province. The growth of the touring habit had reversed the point of view entirely, and now there was a strong demand for some means of access for visiting cars.

Systems Are Isolated.

Dr. Doolittle went north to look over the various districts and view them from the point of view of their potential value for the attraction of tourists. He travelled over the greater part of the territory between Cochrane and North Bay and gathered much data on the road situation and the need of, and justification for, the building of the highway. Between North Bay and Cochrane, he pointed out, there are a number of isolated systems of local roads. All winter long, as an instance, a motor bus service has been operating over a graded road between North Bay and Timmins. Between Cobalt and Cochrane there are several similar stretches of road and the only step necessary to render these roads accessible to the outside world is the linking up of the

systems by a trunk route. The road, itself, would not be a permanent, high class highway, but would be built after the plan of the present existing colonization roads. In the southern sections there is a plentiful supply of natural gravel and stone for surfacing. Through the clay belt the road only requires grading, since the soil substance is sufficiently firm to afford excellent roads. Roads such as these serve the greater part of the Prairie Provinces, and it was over a similar type of road on the former "missing link" of the great northern highway that the Michigan Pikes Association made a successful journey three years ago.

Cars Cannot Get Through.

As the system of roads exists at present, nothing larger than a toboggan can possibly get through. Surveyors are now working in various parts of the long stretch planning the most feasible route for the highway, and taking other steps toward the ultimate co-ordination of the disconnected roads.

The route, it is pointed out, bears a definite relation to the section of the trans-Canada highway running from the Sault east to Ottawa. That road was completed last year by the filling in of the forty-mile gap on the Ottawa-Pembroke-North Bay section, and at the present time forms the logical outlet for tourists from the United States reaching the Sault by way of the Dixie Highway. Until three years ago the Dixie Highway, which now carries an immense volume of tourist traffic, came to a sudden end at the American Sault. American motorists making use of the route generally turned their cars back at the border or, at the most, made limited excursions into Canada over the roads in the immediate vicinity of the Canadian Sault.

Outlet From Dixie Highway.

Three years ago the Michigan Pikes Association came through Ontario and formed the first body of cars to break a trail through from North Bay to Sault Ste. Marie. Since that time the road grade has been improved and kept in good condition, and traffic from the northern end of the Dixie Highway now has an outlet through to North Bay. The completion, last year, of the ungraded portions of the North Bay-Pembroke road extended the outlet still farther, and it is now possible for cars to travel through to Pembroke and Ottawa, where connection is made with the Ontario and Quebec Provincial systems.

The additional fact that this stretch forms an important section of the trans-Canada Highway will result in a large volume of traffic, mostly tourist, being drawn from the Dixie Highway easterly. The northern districts have great attractions for the tourist and it is expected that there will exist a natural desire on their part to travel farther north from the trans-Canada route. In addition to the fact that the territory is widely known because of its mineral deposits and pulp products, it has a summer resort feature. Lake Temagami, Dr. Doolittle pointed out,

has a shore line approximately 500 miles long. Already a summer hotel has been established on the lake, and many of the small lake districts abounding have scenic features that will attract numbers of visitors.

Permit Easy Ingress.

So long as the lake districts remain inaccessible by road they cannot be patronized. The grading of the road, it is pointed out, will permit easy ingress by cars using the trans-Canada route, and it is expected that material development will follow.

While no definite promise has been made by the Colonization Road Department, the delegation has been promised that the matter will be given the fullest consideration. It is regarded as probable that the grading will be undertaken this year.