

YORK PIONEER AND PRESENT

BY E. A. JAMES

ARTICLE 12 Early Legislation

Highway legislation was inaugurated in Upper Canada in 1793, whereby the Justices of the Peace were appointed highway commissioners. Road overseers, to act under the supervision of the commissioners were elected at public meetings. The overseers duties comprised supervision of all construction and repair work on roads and bridges, including work done by land-owners in accordance with the law requiring all men living in parishes or townships to contribute up to a maximum of twelve days labor to the roads free in each year. This was the beginning of "Statute Labor", which, with requirements modified from time to time to conform to altered conditions or changing sentiment, is still in force in certain townships of the Province of Ontario.

The roads thus laid out and constructed by the militia were handed over to the townships for maintenance under the statute labor system. As early as 1804 it was seen that without state aid they would become impassable, and numerous grants were made by the Province for their repair, as well as for new construction. These grants were expended under the supervision of specially appointed Commissioners, acting independently of the local Commissioners. In every case, however, the maintenance of the road, following these special expenditures was left in the hands of the townships.

As settlements developed traffic on the principal roads became heavier. Post-routes with regular coach schedules were becoming common and increasingly patronized. This increased traffic demanded a higher type of highway. Many substantial and expensive bridges were needed. The prevailing system of maintenance by residents along the roads failed to keep them in repair, and the next development was along the line of making the more heavily travelled roads pay for maintenance, and construction through the direct taxing of all traffic using them. Thus the toll-road came into being.

County Road System

Following the assuming of the roads by the villages, towns and townships, efforts were made from time to time to again establish a county system. The idea of county jurisdiction over the main roads rather than lesser municipal control was taking hold in many parts of Ontario. In the construction and maintenance of heavily travelled roads, the lesser municipalities were found to be too small a unit, resulting in great variation in the standards and quality of work. The construction of main roads to a uniform standard by the county was looked on as a forward step in the solution of an ever increasing problem. A number of counties had already adopted county systems and were reporting satisfactory results.

In 1899 a committee of the County Council was appointed to procure information with reference to a scheme whereby a system of county roads might be maintained by the County of York.

The committee thus appointed, realizing the magnitude and importance of the subject, in order to obtain as much information as possible and also to act in unison with other counties of the Province, called a convention of municipal representatives of the Province, on December 12th and 13th, 1899, to consider the question. The report of this convention was printed and distributed, and doubtless had much to do in bringing before the electors of the County the necessity of improved roads and the advisability of an early start on modern road building.

In order to take advantage of the Act for the Improvement of Public Highways, passed in 1901 by the Province of Ontario, whereby the Provincial Government agreed to bear one-third the cost of the construction and improvement of County Highway Systems approved by the Department of Highways, the following resolution was passed by the County Council of York in June, 1903: "That this Council be now resolved into Committee of the Whole to discuss the advisability of taking over and maintaining certain roads in the County as County Roads, and thereby receive a portion of the amount set apart by the Government for making good roads". This committee afterwards drafted a by-law which was submitted to the various township councils. More than one-third of the township councils of the county disapproved of the by-law, and, under the provisions of the Act covering such cases, it was necessary to submit the question to the rate-payers, which was done in January, 1904. The vote was light, indicating a lack of interest on the part of the electors as a whole, but the verdict was decisively against the proposal. The result by municipalities as given herewith is of interest as showing the temper of the electors at that time and the opposition to which the plan of County control of the main roads was subjected.

	For	Against
Etobicoke	141	171
York	337	500
Scarboro	77	214
Vaughan	74	322
Markham Twp.	66	152
King	38	171
Whitchurch	24	268
E. Gwillimbury	68	444
N. Gwillimbury	5	80
Georgina	25	236
Weston	57	52
Woodbridge	0	0
East Toronto	48	119
Richmond Hill	23	12
Markham Village	41	76
Stouffville	36	111
Aurora	84	12
Newmarket	53	34
Holland Landing	9	46
Sutton	10	66
Total	1216	3126

The matter then lay dormant for two years, but was brought up again in 1906, and then annually until 1908, but with no success. It was not until the December session of 1909 County Council that substantial progress was made towards the present scheme by the passing of a resolution

forming South York for County Road purposes and directing the Legislative Committee to meet the Council of the City of Toronto with a view to securing city aid for the improvement of leading highways.

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TOWNSHIP OF NORTH YORK.

Local Improvement Notice.
Addington Avenue Bridge.

1. The council of the Corporation of the Township of North York intends to construct a Local Improvement a steel bridge with concrete abutments, over the ravine on Addington Avenue, and intends to specially assess a part of the cost upon the land abutting directly on the work and upon the following land which is immediately benefited by the work.

(a) Both sides of Addington Avenue from 30th Avenue West to the north limit of the street.

(b) Both sides of Burnett Avenue from 150 feet west of the West Street Line of Stormont Avenue, to Addington Avenue.

(c) Both sides of Wentworth Avenue from Stormont Avenue, to Addington Avenue.

(d) Both sides of Stormont Avenue from 150 feet South of the South Street Line of Wentworth Avenue to Westview Avenue.

(e) Both sides of Burnett Crescent from Senlac Road to Addington Avenue.

(f) Both sides of Frontenac Avenue from Wentworth Avenue to the North limit of the street.

(g) Westview Avenue, from Stormont Avenue to the West limit of the street.

2. The estimated cost of the work is \$8000.00, of which \$2400.00 is to be paid by the Corporation. The estimated special rate per foot frontage is 60 cents. The special assessment is to be paid in fifteen annual instalments of 6½ cents per foot per year.

3. A petition to the said council will not avail to prevent its construction, but a petition against the work or the manner in which it has been undertaken, may be made pursuant to section 9 of the Local Improvement Act, to the Ontario Railway and Municipal Board, by a majority of the owners representing at least one-half of the value of the lots which are to be specially assessed therefor.

Dated at Willowdale, Aug. 30th, 1926.
H. D. GOODE, Clerk.



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A Community Asset

The need for the home town band, far from diminishing with the advent and rapid popularization of the victrola and the radio is greater to-day than ever before, and is increasing with every generation.

More and more forcibly are we being brought to realize that nothing can take the place of the band at community gatherings of every kind.

The strains of the Band's lively marches are heard throughout the town and all the citizens are drawn, more or less instinctively, to the centre of activity. The bright, lively music pleases and holds the audience, however large it may be, and does much to make the event a success.

No well-informed person will deny the drawing power of good band music. Have you not seen crowds of people gather on a Saturday evening in the main section of a town, listening to the local band concert?

And business men know how profitable such concerts are! They know by the material increase in their business. For instead of going in their cars to a near by city, the citizens gather to listen to the band, their spirits are pleasurable aroused, they spend their money in their own town and go home thinking that it isn't "such a bad place after all."

The town band has an almost universal appeal for everyone, everywhere, regardless of age, sex, wealth, time or place. Whether it be summer or winter, day or night, indoors or outdoors, when listening to the band one's spirits are quickened and civic pride, so necessary to the town's well-being and progress, is fostered.

Why not boost for this great community asset and build it as a permanent institution of the town?

Write for a supply of helpful information as to how to form a band, experiences of other bands, band contests etc.

An Editorial Advertisement inserted in the interests of more and better bands by the R. S. Williams & Sons Co., Limited, 145 Yonge Street, Toronto.

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