

## PART V.—ROADS AND HIGHWAYS.\*

**Historical.**—The early roads were auxiliary to water routes as avenues of transportation. They were used during the summer season, when portages were necessary to avoid obstacles to river and lake travel, and during the winters, when ice prevented navigation. Even the extensive system of waterways of Eastern Canada was an inadequate means of communication between points of settlement in a rapidly growing colony, and the need for overland routes manifested itself in the introduction of the system of common roads which prevailed under the old *régime*. Not only did the crude early roads serve the needs of the settlers, but also those of the British, French and American armies during the numerous campaigns. Soldiers were frequently employed, in times of peace, on road construction in different parts of Upper and Lower Canada.

The first important highway in Canada extended along the north shore of the St. Lawrence from Quebec to Montreal, being gradually completed with the growth of the French settlements. In Upper Canada, one of the earliest roads (Yonge St.) was that from Toronto to lake Simcoe, completed in 1794 under the direction of Governor Simcoe, the work being done by the Queen's Rangers. This road not only gave access to the area north of Toronto, but also provided a more convenient route than that of the Ottawa river from the trading posts on the Upper Lakes to the centres of population along the St. Lawrence. Montreal was joined to Kingston by road in 1816, and in the following year to Toronto. Thereafter, other highways to inland settlements, from points served by water routes, began to increase in number, as it became apparent that they were essential to the commercial life of the country for transporting supplies to the settlers and bringing their products to the central markets of the colony. The system of posts, which had been established about the beginning of the nineteenth century, necessitated passable routes between the various points, and by 1827 a through road was available between Halifax and Amherstburg, comprising for the most part the old Kempt road, the York road, Dundas street and the Baldoon road. From this trunk line of communication branch roads extended north and south to the more important centres of population in the two Canadas. The cost of construction of these roads was high, and travel by stage coach was tedious and costly. As late as 1850 some points in central Ontario were still inaccessible to any vehicle. Later years, however, have brought with them improved methods of construction and a resulting reduction in expenses, together with an improvement in the wearing qualities of the more important highways.

**Recent Highway Development.**—The growth of motor traffic during and since the War has greatly stimulated the movement for increased and improved road construction. Good roads associations assisted by the automobile clubs are to be found in most of the provinces for the education of the public in the need for improved highways. With the rapid increase in the percentage of motor car owners to the population (see pp. 737-738) the demand for improved roads became insistent after the War. Furthermore, the advantages to be gained by attracting touring motorists have been a powerful incentive to governing bodies to improve trunk roads and scenic highways within their jurisdictions. One sphere where the motor car has been of special economic advantage has been in rural areas, where its speed and economy are a great improvement over the old horse-drawn vehicle.

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