

**NO. 54, TENTH ANNUAL  
REPORT OF THE  
MASSACHUSETTS HIGHWAY  
COMMISSION, JANUARY, 1903**

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MASSACHUSETTS  
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JANUARY, 1903.



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## Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

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*To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in General Court assembled.*

The undersigned commissioners, appointed under the provisions of chapter 476 of the Acts of 1893, entitled "An Act to provide for the appointment of a Highway Commission to improve the public roads, and to define its powers and duties," and under the provisions of chapter 474 of the Acts of 1900, entitled "An Act relative to the Massachusetts Highway Commission," herewith submit their tenth annual report.

W. E. McCLINTOCK.  
HAROLD PARKER.  
JOHN H. MANNING.

BOSTON, MASS., JAN. 1, 1903.





**ANNUAL REPORT**  
**OF THE**  
**MASSACHUSETTS HIGHWAY COMMISSION.**

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In accordance with the provisions of the act of April 10, 1901, appropriating for the construction and maintenance of State highways, \$100,000 became available for the use of the commission on Jan. 1, 1902. On April 1, 1902, the sum of \$500,000 was appropriated by the Legislature for the same purpose, and with the condition that \$100,000 should not be available until Jan. 1, 1903. The commission, therefore, has had the sum of \$500,000 which could be used for work during the year. In addition to the \$100,000 held over from the appropriation of 1901, considerable sums allotted for expenditure during that year were actually disbursed during the year 1902, unavoidable delays having prevented the completion of several contracts.

Additional lay-outs were made during 1902, amounting to 281,498 feet (53.32 miles), bringing the grand total up to 2,275,141 feet (430.9 miles). The number of miles of road finished during the year was approximately 57, making a total of about 415 miles of completed State highway at the end of the year 1902. On most of the remaining 16 miles laid out but not completed the work is in various stages of progress, although in a few instances no work will be done under the contracts before the coming spring.

Since the passage of the "small town act," in 1900, 39 miles of road in the "small towns" have been improved.

**MEETINGS OF THE COMMISSION.**

The commission has held 65 meetings at its office in Boston during the past year, besides many others at different points in the State. The regular county hearings provided for in the statutes have generally been well attended.

From the testimony of the selectmen the commission is much pleased to report that the macadam roads built by the towns since 1894, and independent of the State roads, measure in the aggregate about 560 miles.

The method adopted two years ago, of dividing the State into three divisions, is still continued. Working under this system, the commissioners are becoming thoroughly acquainted with the existing conditions in all parts of the Commonwealth, and can better understand the arguments presented by representatives of the different municipalities as to the merits of any particular road.

Much time has been devoted to the study of town roads, and advising with the local authorities as to materials, methods and cost.

By far the larger part of this work in each division can be done by one commissioner. In doubtful cases the whole Board acts, and views are taken when necessary.

In carrying out this part of the work, examining State roads and investigating petitions, the Board during the year has travelled over about 1,500 miles of road, in addition to the individual work in each division. These trips have been taken during all seasons of the year, many of them in the spring, when the frost was coming out and the roads were in their worst condition. The information thus obtained is of great value to the commission. In the course of this work visits have been made by different members of the commission to 288 cities and towns. Two or more visits have been made to more than one-half of these places.

#### CONTRACTS.

All work done by the commission must be done by contract, either with the town or city authorities, or, after due advertisement, with private contractors.

During the year 87 contracts were entered into, of which 27 were with town or city authorities and 60 with private individuals or corporations.

Little that is new can be said about this part of the work. With the increase of experience of both engineers and contractors, better work is being done, and with less friction. The bids have been fairly low, but in some instances there has

seemed to be a misunderstanding as to the requirements of the commissioners. Especial study of these cases has been made, with reference to clearing up the doubtful points; and it can safely be stated that, on the whole, the work has been prosecuted honestly and with reasonable diligence. It has been necessary to enforce the provisions of the "liquidated damages" clause in some of the contracts. The cost of engineering is necessarily large in this kind of work. Ample time is intended to be given in all contracts to complete the work. If the work drags, and the services of the engineer are required for a longer time than was contemplated, the contractor is called upon to pay the extra cost, unless the cause of the delay is beyond his control.

The surveys have been more carefully worked up, drainage and other details more thoroughly studied, the specifications corrected to render them clearer, and, in fact, everything possible has been done to direct the contractor wishing to bid, so that he may make his figures intelligently.

About the usual number of towns have taken contracts to build State roads, and but few cases of dissatisfaction have arisen under these contracts. The commissioners still believe this feature of the work to be of great value to the towns, as it gives the experience needed in the proper prosecution of their own road building.

#### PETITIONS.

The total number of petitions for the location and construction of State highways up to the date of this report is 604. Forty-three new petitions were received during the year 1902. These petitions cover 1,566 miles of road, and they are from 281 towns and 25 cities. The petitions received during the past year cover 97 miles of road not previously petitioned for.

#### STREET RAILWAYS.

Adjusting roadways and street railways to give the maximum good with the minimum cost has required much study and many conferences between the commission and officers of the different railway companies. There appears to be a growing inclination on the part of the street railway officials to do better work, and the friction is no more than should be expected to