

CONSTRUCTION OF GOOD ROADS OFFICIALS SHOULD ACT

Interesting Article Written by Fred C. Evans, Superintendent of Highways of Tompkins County, New York.

It must be a source of great satisfaction to farmers all over the country to see and hear men engaged in nearly all kinds of business striving and working for better roads. With the advent of better roads the farmers are profiting and will profit more than any other class of people. In my opinion the farming lands of Tompkins county have increased in value from ten to fifteen dollars an acre during the past year, owing to the improvements, both made and projected, to the roads.

It seems to me that the experiments in stone roads should be confined to the development of a proper wearing surface. Many of us know how to build stone roads, with the different kinds of binders in the top course; but the traffic should never be allowed to wear out the top course, or finished surface of a stone road. The original construction should have the best obtainable wearing course, and the work of maintenance should be directed to its preservation, so that no wear should ever reach the course below.

In the course of experimenting would it not be better to spend more money on the earth roads, with the materials that are in the roadways? All practical road makers know that sand and clay, properly proportioned and properly mixed, make a very good road. Why not do some experimenting with the other elements found in our country roads. Other surfaces may be found which will be cheap and serviceable.

Chairman Hooker of the state Highway commission says "all roads must be maintained." He is right, of course, but so sudden and so decided is the change from the old conditions that the farmers and many others hardly understand it yet. In Tompkins county, up to last year, it was a question of trying to get over all the roads with a road scraper in each town every spring, putting stone and sods in the roadway, and leaving the roads in that condition until the next spring. Scarcely any ditches were opened; old stone drains under driveways were clogged until you could not drive a match through them with a sledge; the water was thrown from the gutter to run down hill in the track, and ruin a road which might, by accident, have been well built.

The town superintendents and other town officials are now realizing what has been the matter, and in the future it seems as if there will be more care exercised in selecting men for road work. In the future men are likely to be selected, not simply because they are "good fellows," and popular, but because they are fitted for the position in a practical way.

No town superintendent should try to go over even one-half his town in one year, but should go over only that part that he can drain, widen and crown. The main roads should be twenty-four feet wide, with crown of two feet, and side roads should be twenty feet, with a proportional crown.

When an earth road has been straightened, drained and crowned the final finish to the surface can only be given after a rain, when it is muddy. Then put on a rut scraper, commencing at the gutter, and smooth toward the center, seeing that the dirt packs smoothly. This must be done quickly, as the surface will dry rapidly and when it gets too dry it only makes dust. This should be continued regularly and often, and whenever the road is in the least rutted, after each rain.

The town superintendents cannot attend to this branch of work. Even with twenty deputies, he could not properly care for the roads of his town. This work should be done by the farmers along the road. They should be regularly employed, and provided with rut scrapers. Usually this work is to be done when the fields are too wet to work in, and plenty of farmers can be found who will do it for 50 cents an hour. It is plain that if this method were carried out it would not be necessary to use a large road machine on the road once in ten years, and a rivalry would be engendered between the farmers as to which would keep his road in the best condition for the least money. When this condition is reached the problem of gutters is solved.

A farmer should have ethree or four miles of road, or less—what he is willing and able to take care of. If the work is done at the proper time,—immediately after rain,—and done well, the earth road will pack smooth, and the traffic will spread all over the road, and there will be no ruts. When there are no ruts in the surface of a well crowned road, the road is smooth and dry within a very short time after it stops raining, and the water is in the gutters.

Undoubtedly Frank D. Lyon, deputy commissioner of New York state, has said and done more to convince us all of the great importance of drainage than any other single individual, owing to his having made a life study of this work. We who are in the road business can do much to bring this and other important points to the front by asking all who travel the highways to look for the bad places and the mud-holes, and then to look for the cause. They will find it in imperfect drainage.

A number of farmers in Tompkins county, who at first strenuously objected to having ditches opened in front of their houses or barns, have later opened them at their own expense, after having observed the benefits. I think that as a matter of fact, ninety-eight per cent. of the farmers of the county want good roads and are willing to help whenever they are shown how.

It is my opinion that more money has been thrown away on town highways, by ill-considered work than in any other way. It is not wise to start out with a large road machine, and scrape for a distance of four or five miles, when perhaps only one mile needs that kind of treatment, and perhaps that in several different places. This kind of work should be stopped.

I have known three men to go eight miles with two old planks on a wagon to repair an old plank sluice, and not return until night, incurring an expense of \$7.50, or \$2.50 per plank for placing, with the expectation of repeating the trip for the same purpose in about six months. This method of doing things must be eliminated, if we would have roads cared for with a reasonable degree of economy.

Most of the towns having state aid are raising money enough to have much better roads in a very short time, if it is expended to the best advantages. There has been too much money spent in the past in some towns, for fun, frolic and favors. This must be stopped, and real work done where it will do the most good.

We have some trunk lines and are to have more. The town highway work is to provide a way to get from the farms to the trunk lines. This can be done as previously indicated. When the town roads are all built up and the farmers are maintaining them, then let the towns buy stone crushers and road rollers. There are plenty of stone all along the highways and in adjoining fields which can be gotten with but little expense, and after that with capable men the maintenance of the roads is only a question of patience and pay roll.—"Good Roads."

HALLEY'S COMET.

If You Have a Field Glass You Can See It Above Sunset.

Halley's comet may now be seen on nights when conditions are favorable, with the aid of an ordinary field glass. The most favorable time to look for it is between 6:30 and 7:30 p. m., with the glass elevated somewhat above where the sun sets. The Harvard Observatory forces have the wanderer focused nightly on their big telescopes, and some interesting photographs of its development are being made.

Prof. E. C. Pickering, director of the Harvard Observatory, says: "The comet is at present in the twilight region. It is in the line of the sun, and its brightness is dimmed by the lustre of the great centre of the solar system. Besides, it has not yet attained its greatest size. When it makes its transverse of the sun it will have attained its maximum brilliancy. That will be on May 18th. It will be visible all through April, but at its brightest in May.

"About that time, if clouds do not obscure it, it will be a dazzling sight. About a third of the heavens will be colored with a fiery gold, its great flashes of light will play from one part of the heavens to another, and the scenes will be remembered for generations. Halley's comet has been noted for its brilliant displays.

"There is absolutely no danger to the earth from the comet. The earth is going to shoot through its tail like a cannon ball through our atmosphere. And we shall not notice the fact that we are traveling through a comet's tail. The idea that any harm will come from the poisonous gases is ridiculous. The gas in the tail is cyanogen. In order to become dangerous it would have to come into contact with a large mass of hydrogen, and that is practically all locked up in the water.

"When the comet is nearest the earth we shall be 14,000,000 miles away, and that is far enough to be out of mischief. Of course, the tail will reach us, and we shall pass through it. But we have done that before without any damage, and we shall do that again."

GAVE UP HIS ROOSTER.

The Binghamton Republican relates a reminiscence of Rev. W. J. Hill, who was pastor of Tunkhannock M. E. church in 1854-6. Rev. Mr. Hill was always a great fancier of poultry, and while pastor of a country church not far from Scranton he possessed a blooded Bantam rooster of which he was especially proud.

Englishman though he was, Mr. Hill had a keen sense of humor, and he extracted as much fun as any one from his bad bargain, although in relating the circumstances, he could not restrain a grimace as he exclaimed: "To think of all they ate for which they paid fifty cents, and I had refused \$2 for that rooster a few days before."

THE SPLIT LOG DRAG.

Its Use Explained Before a Lively Improvement Society.

Mr. W. B. Thompson, of Emira, N. Y., division engineer of the Northern Central railroad, made an address on "Good Roads" before a meeting at Millport recently.

He prefaced his remarks by stating that while good roads had made very rapid strides in New York state in recent years, there is one branch of the subject where some suggestions might be of value, namely, the economical care of dirt roads.

He stated that he felt he had a message on this subject for the people, from the fact that he had devoted some time to the study of it and had had the privilege of discussing the matter very thoroughly with D. Ward King, of Missouri, a well-known authority on the subject. A description was then given of how Mr. King had discovered that by dragging a couple of logs such as are used to break off corn stalks in the spring, over his road he had improved the condition of it very much, and showed how from this humble beginning Mr. King had worked up to the tool which he now advocates and which is known as "The King Split Log Drag."

He stated that Mr. King had patented this tool, not with the idea of making money out of it, but to prevent unscrupulous people from monopolizing its use and that he now wished every road man and farmer in the United States to build himself a drag and to use it on his roads.

Mr. Thompson then told some stories of the conditions under which Mr. King first labored and showed how his persistence in the use of the drag had finally led to the very general use of the split log drag in Mr. King's immediate vicinity. He then stated that the drag is now in common use all over the United States and that four different states, namely, Iowa, Illinois, Missouri and Virginia, have legally recognized the "King Split Log Drag" and pay men to drag their roads at regular intervals and that after four years' trial, the state of Iowa had enacted a law making it mandatory on the road supervisors to have all dirt roads dragged.

He cited a case of one road supervisor in Iowa who has his force of road draggers so organized and reachable by telephone that he can have all the dirt roads in the township dragged within three hours after he issues a call.

The speaker then came nearer home and reviewed the history of the roads in Eldred township, Lyscoming county, Pa., where the road supervisor, Dr. Milnor, has been using the split log drag for the past two years with very marked results. He then read Dr. Milnor's history of "One year of road work under the split log drag system which showed how the constant use of the drag kept the roads in perfect condition with less expense than the old system. He stated that there are at present in the United States about 2,000,000 miles of dirt road, which must be maintained by some inexpensive method, and stated that unquestionably this method is the use of the split log drag.

It was then shown that the King split log drag ready for use costs about \$2.50, and that the cost of maintenance of dirt roads, with the split log drag, varies from \$1.50 to \$7 per mile per year, whereas under the old system the cost of maintenance was from \$35 to \$40.

A model of the King split log drag was then exhibited and its use freely explained and it was recommended that all present, who were interested, write to the agricultural department for Farmers' Bulletin No. 321 by D. Ward King, which covers very fully the construction and use of the drag.

CONFIRMS LIFE ON MARS.

A new canal on Mars, 1,000 miles in length, has been discovered by Prof. Percival Lowell of the Flagstaff Observatory, Ariz., and this is evidence, according to the astronomer, that the planet is inhabited. The announcement of the discovery was made to Prof. S. W. Burnham, of the Yerkes Observatory.

Not only did Prof. Lowell see the new canal, but he photographed it. Previous photographs of this region, made as late as last May, failed to show any trace of the new canal. The fact that it developed between May and September, when it was first observed, Prof. Lowell regarded as positive proof that it was artificial, and, therefore, that living beings exist on the neighbor planet.

"Prof. Lowell's discovery is of the utmost importance," said Prof. Burnham. "It seems to be the strongest confirmation yet obtained of the belief that there are living, intelligent beings on Mars. It is bound to cause a stir in the world of astronomy. Prof. Lowell's observations, covering fifteen years or more, have done much to reveal conditions on Mars. But this seems to be the most striking of his discoveries.

"Prof. Lowell's discovery is of the

markings on the planet are canals and that these canals are the work of living beings is the only one that fits all the known facts. Those who doubt Prof. Lowell's conclusions have been unable to assail them with any degree of success. Prof. Lowell is to be congratulated on his discovery."

WALKED IN WATER TO NECK.

Finding it Cold the Girl Walked Out Again.

Emerging from the waters of the Walkkill River, a young woman fully dressed, even to an expensive fur hat, boarded a car on the Middletown-Gosheh line at Midway Park Monday night and unconcernedly took a seat while water ran in streams from her clothing. When first seen it was thought that a woman's hat was floating on the water, but presently the hat began to lift and a woman walked out of the water to land.

Detectives Wilson and Young were on the car and took charge of the girl. She was comely and appeared to be about seventeen years old. She could not be made to utter a word and when the car reached Middletown she was hurried to police headquarters, where a roaring fire was built to dry her clothing.

Later it was discovered that she was Caroline Metzner, said to belong to a well known New York family. She has been a patient at the Middletown Sanitarium for a short time. She had had partial freedom. She boarded a car and went to Midway Park, where she walked into the water up to her neck. Finding the water cold and filled with ice she walked out again. She refused to say a word to any one and nothing could be learned about her family.

THEY WON'T TELL THEIR AGE.

Savings Bank Clerks Have Trouble with New Clerks Depositors.

On the first of the year the savings banks are particularly busy with folks opening new accounts. But just because they are new accounts the depositors are not necessarily young folks. Perhaps that explains why the clerks have difficulty in getting new women depositors to tell their age.

One bank worker says it is no joke to try to get some of the women to give information about their ages. They are very apt to hesitate and then to say they can't exactly recall the year in which they were born, but that their age is about so and so.

"Now, as a matter of fact, they know perfectly well the number of the right year, but in the confusion when they are trying to conceal it, they can't just make the right subtraction," said the bank clerk.

A Case Worth Trying.

Mr. F. Philander Towersby, a most excellent citizen, though not noted for lavish prodigality, received recently a consignment of very rare Tokayer Ausbruch. He sent one bottle of the delicious wine to Justice Fordyce of the Supreme Court, who happens to be one of the most eminent connoisseurs in America, and with the bottle sent a note asking his Honor's opinion of the vintage.

Mr. Towersby received next day this reply:

"My dear Sir,—I beg to thank you for the confidence you repose in my judgment as shown by asking for my opinion.

"But inasmuch as I am a lawyer, many years of training and experience make it impossible for me to give an opinion on anything but a case."

Another Mother-in-Law Story.

Two great excitements of the East Ender are weddings and funerals, but the greater of these is the funeral. The whole of a poor district will be agog to see the funeral of a neighbor, and if perchance a man, woman or child has been so happy as to meet with a violent death in the factory or in the street, they turn out in their thousands in every possible variety of dress and undress to do honor to the virtues of the departed neighbors. It is an unhealthy kind of interest, this morbid excitement, but such as it is it pays a most important part in the life of the poor. A man of my acquaintance had lost his wife, for whom, I am sorry to say, he had no great liking, was told by his friends that he would have to ride in the mourning coach with his mother-in-law. Now, although there was little love lost between his wife and himself while she was alive, he had still less affection for his mother-in-law, and so he obstinately refused to consent to this arrangement. Finally, he gave way with the utmost reluctance.

"Well," he muttered, "if you say I must, I s'pose I must, but it'll spoil all the pleasure of this day."—Percy Alden, in *The World-Traveler*.

Chance for a Bandmaster.

Conway, which is in need of a bandmaster, has issued the following advertisement: "He must be a cornet player, and between performances he will be required to act as a range finder, inspector of hawkers, boats and carriages, storekeeper and such other duties as the town clerk may from time to time direct."

Britain's Lost Forests.

Ever since the abolition of the wooden navy we have been a singularly sapless people in the matter of tree planting while it would seem that we have never learned the lesson that the most solidly prosperous land is that which makes the utmost use of every acre.—English Estates Gazette.

DOG A TRAIN BEARER.

Lifts His Mistress's Skirt When She Walks Over Wet Pavement.

Clipped and blanketed dogs, French poodles, pugs and such excite the contempt of the average person who likes dogs of a more vigorous sort. These folks also have a dislike for the small dog that is trained to carry packages or what not. Those who do not like this use of a really very fine animal should have seen an exhibition on a New York street one wet afternoon recently.

A woman was about to cross the street followed by a small and mean looking pet dog. The pavement was wet.

She called to the dog and the dog trotted obediently up and took the hem of her skirt in its teeth. Then staying just far enough behind to keep all the skirt clear of the street the dog followed her across.

Some other woman going along said: "Isn't that cute?" A man who saw the performance remarked: "Poor beast."

Plainer Speech Needed.

The late Bishop Potter once, in his early days, had occasion to officiate at a christening in a small fishing village. The proud father, a young fisherman, awkwardly holding his first-born daughter, was visibly embarrassed under the scrutiny of the many eyes in the congregation, and his nervousness was not decreased by the sudden wailing of the infant as they stood at the font.

When the time for the baptism arrived, the Bishop noticed that the father was holding the child so that its fat legs pointed toward the font.

"Turn her this way," he whispered. But the father was too disconcerted to hear or understand.

"Turn her feet around," the Bishop whispered again. But still there was no response.

The situation was fast becoming critical, when an ancient mariner at the back of the church came to the rescue. Putting his weather-beaten hand to his mouth, he roared across the room:

"Head her up into the wind, Jack!" And she was headed.

A Bitter Jest.

By the will of one of the trustees of the Cambay Baptist Chapel, Cheltenham, the testator directed that £100 was to be paid to each of the deacons of the church who attended his funeral, the legacies, however, not to be for their personal benefit, but for the advantage of the fund of the church. The funeral took place on Saturday last, and the intention of the deceased not having been disclosed, not one of the nine deacons paid the last mark of respect to his remains which the testator evidently expected they would pay. The church is now mourning something more than the loss of one of its trustees.

Wagner Fooled the Critics.

Here is a story of Wagner's visit to London in 1855. After the first Philharmonic concert the critics reproached him for conducting a Beethoven symphony without the score. At the second concert, to satisfy his audience, Wagner had a "partition" on his desk, which he frequently consulted. The critics declared the improvement was marked. The score, however, was Rossini's, "Barbier de Seville."

Dressed for the Concert.

Heinrich Conried was telling how bad the old-fashioned concerts were sometimes. "An old Chicago millionaire," he said, "called upstairs to his daughter:

"What a time you girls take getting ready for the concert! Look at me—a bit of wadding in each ear, and I'm ready."—Success Magazine.

Glory.

How many metals make the bronze of Corinth? Insults on boards or on paper, the spot of ink or charcoal or mud, the dress of heart, of mind and of body, the dirt of calumny, all these under the sun, dry, harden, turn into bronze solid and brilliant—a pure bronze, which is called glory.—Catalie Mennes.

Sounds "Taps" on Mayor.

A "striking" ceremony marks the expiration of the Grantham (England) mayor's tenure of office. The robe is stripped from him, the chain is taken from about his neck, and with a small wooden hammer the town clerks taps the ex-mayor on the head in token of the demise of his authority.

Origin of "Yankee."

The word "Yankee" is derived from a Cherokee word, Eankke, which signifies coward and slave. This epithet of "Yankee" was bestowed upon the New Englanders by the Virginians for not assisting them in a war with the Cherokees.

The Call of Companionship.

You often hear a lonesome child say: "I want some one to play with!" Elderly people often become lonesome and want some one to play with, but are afraid to say so.—Acheson Globe.

Some Heavy Swells.

"Society is like a wave," comments a contemporary. He then explains why but misses the main point, which is that there are some heavy swells.—San Antonio Express.

Real Pathos.

There is nothing so pathetic as the efforts of a dull mind to produce bright speech.

Ocean Depths Rich in Radium.

Deep-lying sediments of the ocean are often exceptionally rich in radium.

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