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The NATIONAL Good Roads MOVEMENT

By Weldon Fawcett



Testing Rock

A Good Road Maker

Road Engineer Testing Quality of Cement

A Fine Example of American Road Making near Savannah

Another important milestone in progress toward the goal of universal good roads in America will be reached at Cleveland, September 21-23, when the National Good Roads Convention will be held. This great gathering in behalf of highway improvement throughout the republic will be under the auspices of the most influential bodies in the country that are especially interested in this commendable cause—organizations and institutions such as the American Automobile Association, the National Grange, the United States government office of public roads and the American Roadmakers' Association. The conventions which have been held in recent years in furtherance of the crusade for good roads have shown a steady and rapid increase in scope, attendance and enthusiasm aroused, and there is every reason to anticipate that the big gathering at Cleveland will prove the most notable of all such assemblages and the most influential in results attained.

Up to this time America has been far behind Europe in the maintenance of good roads, as might be expected in the case of a younger nation, but with the tremendous awakening of the past few years to the necessity of highway improvement there is reason to hope that the United States will ere long be within hailing distance of the nations of the old world in the matter of its arteries of travel and commerce. Unquestionably the greatest road improvement has been the automobile. With the tremendous vogue of motor touring as a popular pastime has come an emphatic chorus for better roads—a clamor so loud and widespread that there has been an arousal of many interests that formerly paid scant heed to the needs of suburban and rural highways. Other comparative recent influences have spoken nearly as potent, conspicuously the development of rural free delivery, which means so much to all farming communities. The United States post office department has taken a firm stand to the effect that Uncle Sam cannot establish or maintain rural mail routes where the roads to be traversed are not kept in good condition, and, stirred to action by this obligation, the farmers generally are exerting themselves to an extent heretofore unknown in furtherance of the country-wide movement.

While the present movement for the creation of good roads that are really good is of comparatively recent origin, the evolution of America's road system has been going on since the days of the earliest inhabitants of the continent. The pioneer American road constructors were the mound builders, a few of whose trails are still in existence. Then came the Indians, who showed a disposition to utilize as trails wherever possible the paths made by buffalo and which usually extended along the ridges. The first road built by white men in America was at Jamestown, Va., and traces of it are still in existence. The

first road law was passed by the General Assembly in the year 1632. Public roads were first constructed from plantation to plantation; then from plantation to church, and, finally, a crude system of county highways was developed somewhat on the plan of roads in England.

George Washington was one of the earliest conspicuous advocates of good roads. As early as 1753, when he returned from his mission to the French forts, the future Father of His Country inaugurated the project for uniting the east and west by means of public highways. He continued his interest and activity in this field when he later attained to positions of power and influence in the new republic, and it was largely as the result of his recommendations that the early congress passed road legislation notably the act of 1805 providing for a road from Cumberland, Md., to the State of Ohio. The desire for improved means of communication which made itself manifest early in the

nineteenth century brought about the era of turnpike roads, operated for profit by individuals or corporations. The reign of such road companies was widespread when, about the year 1834, the plank road made its appearance and soon found much favor. For these roads three stringers, each six inches in width, were used. One was laid in the centre, the two others being on the sides. All joints were broken. Not only were these roads very satisfactory for the time being, but they paid a very high rate of interest on the investment.

Later it has come to be realized that road improvement and maintenance is very properly a subject for the jurisdiction and administration of the national, state, county and municipal governments, and various schemes have been devised for making the highways a public charge and for contributing the financial aid essential for their care. The national government has already appropriated more than \$14,000,000 for the construction of national

highways, and there are now dozens of bills before congress looking to the extension of such activities, some of the projects made appropriations to aid in the building of hard roads early in the nineteenth century. State aid, in the modern sense however, does not recognize toll roads, nor does it assume the entire burden of the improvement as was at first done in a part of New England. Rather is the present approved plan the one of apportioning the cost between the state and its local subdivisions. This scheme was first introduced by the State of New Jersey less than a score of years ago, and her example was quickly followed by Massachusetts and Vermont.

There are three different and distinct methods of carrying out good roads operations under state direction, each practice having its adherents among the states. Most popular of the various forms of procedure is that known as the "centralized" which is in use by such states as California, Colorado, Massachusetts, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island and Washington—states within the borders of which are to be found many of the finest roads in America. Under the centralized system all the plans, specifications and estimates for road work are made by state authorities. These latter also award all the contracts, no matter in what part of the state the work is to be done, and they likewise inspect and superintend the work of construction as it progresses.

The second system has some of the features of the plan just described, but the duties and responsibilities of road improvement rest to a greater extent with the local authorities than with the state officials. This plan, known as the "co-operative system," is in vogue in such states as Connecticut, Maryland, New Jersey and Virginia. "Local" systems, the general scope of which is indicated by the name, are in use in the states of Delaware, Illinois, Iowa, Maine, Michigan,



Logan W. Page Director of U.S. Gov't Office of Public Roads



Impact Testing Machine for Brick



A Model American Good Road

being very pretentious and contemplating the construction of one or more national pikes extending entirely across the continent. Congress is also being urged to give some of its memorials to the nation's heroes the form of commemorative highways instead of statues or monuments, the foremost suggestion along this new line being the proposal for the construction of the great Lincoln Memorial Highway from the national capital to the battlefield of Gettysburg—the two localities most prominently identified with the career of the martyr President.

About half of the states of the Union that have set out to improve the public roads are now proceeding under county and township systems, a few states have provided merely for investigation on the part of the state, and have not yet done anything very tangible in the way of actual road work; yet others have provided for a state highway commission, while a larger number have appropriated money to be allotted to the various counties, providing they spend it under state supervision. New Hampshire has been active in road building since 1800 and Kentucky

Minnesota, Missouri and Vermont, some of these states road material is furnished by the state and in some of the states it is the policy of the state to give a small appropriation to each county for road building, provided the county will, in each instance, do its work in accordance with state specifications.

That the movement for good roads is yet in its infancy insofar as practical results achieved are concerned is attested by the fact that there are upwards of 2,225,000 miles of public roads in the United States. Up to date only about 176,000 miles of these roads, or little more than 8 per cent. of the total have been improved. Such roads as have been improved have, for the most part, been surfaced with gravel, but there is an increasing disposition to use stone and special materials for surfacing. It is claimed that with the people of the United States spending as much as \$80,000,000 a year for road construction the country has not been getting its money's worth in the way of highway improvement. This is one of the objects of the present good roads crusade—to not only secure liberal appropriations for road betterment, but to insist on systematic direction and supervision by experts that will insure full value for every dollar expended upon the public roads.

IT WAS COMING TO HIM.

Mr. Henderson—Here's where you've been just rung your doorbell. Can you say anything else for you?

Mr. Henpeck (loaded)—Yesh—Me rung for the hie—ambulance.

HIGHER.

Mrs. Hixon—The woman in the apartment got a new hat yesterday.

Mr. Hixon—Yes, and of course you want one just like it.

Mrs. Hixon—No, indeed. It only cost eight dollars.

Shingles from a Tree 1,100 Years Old.

A lumber company at Buckley, Wash., recently sent out a number of shingle shingles that were cut from a tree 1,100 years old.

The tree from which the shingles were cut had 370 rings, which fact denotes that it was 370 years old when it fell. The stump of a tree which grew over it has 750 rings, and at this could not have started to grow until some time after the first fell. It is practically certain that the original tree was thriving in A. D. 800, which was 300 years before the discovery of America—Popular Mechanics.

Of Two Evils, the Lesser.

There are other destructive forces in nature, and even earthquakes have rivals. This happened at the time of the trembler at Charleston, South Carolina, several years ago. A resident of the shaken city, while he felt that his duties required him to remain there to do what he might for the sufferers, sent his six-year-old son out of the danger and confusion to the printer's grandfather in New York. Three days after the boy's arrival the Charleston man received this telegram from his father: "Send us your earthquake and take back your boy."

Stevenson Bad Speller.

One of the most polished and painstaking of English authors regarded correct spelling as a totally unnecessary accomplishment. In his introduction to R. L. Stevenson's letters, Sidney Colvin writes: "I have not held myself bound to reproduce all the author's minor eccentricities of spelling and the like. As all his friends are aware, to spell in a quite accurate and grown-up manner was a thing which this master of English letters was never able to learn."

Warned of Father's Death.

There was a peculiar coincidence in connection with the sudden death of the Alkham (Kent, England) village blacksmith, Mr. James Pay. His daughter, who was in service with a doctor in a neighboring village, went to her mistress on the day of her father's death, stating that she had a feeling that she must go home. As the girl seemed anxious, her mistress allowed her to go, and she arrived home in time to witness the death of her father. 20 minutes after he had been working at his forge.

THE ADVENTURES OF A BAD HALF DOLLAR

Continued.

THAT WAS A RASCALLY TRICK SHOWING THAT BAD HALF-DOLLAR ON ME—GUESS I'LL CALL ON SMITH.

ROBERT SHOW MISTER TIMMIS YOUR NEW BANK!

LEH?

HAS HE GOT ANY MONEY?

HERE'S A HALF DOLLAR, SONNY.

IT SERVES SMITH RIGHT, BEGGING MONEY FOR HIS SON. WELL, HE'LL NEVER KNOW WHERE THE BAD HALF CAME FROM.

WE AIN'T GOIN' TO OPEN THE BANK TILL IT'S FULL UP.

SO OLD TIMMS PUT IN A HALF. THAT'S TOO MUCH FOR A B.Y. PAPA NEEDS CAR FARE AND CIGARS ANYWAY.

A BAD HALF! THE OLD SKINFINT! I'LL PASS IT OFF ON THE CONDUCTOR. ALL RIGHT—ALL RIGHT!

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When It's a Nude.

"The Bather" was the title of the young painter's picture, the first that he had ever shown. It hung, unnoticed, on the line.

"But," said his friend, "you have done nothing to draw a crowd!"

"I've done my best work," said the young painter.

"Fudge," was the retort. "Work draws, but there are better magnets. At the Paris exhibitions every artist, until he makes a name, uses some device to keep a crowd about his daubs.

"A painting like 'The Bather' always, in Paris, has the model, very beautifully dressed, strolling idly back and forth near it. The resemblance between her and it is at once perceived. And the result is the greatest curiosity—an immense crowd—a tremendous hit."

To Save Horses from Fire.

When a horse is released from his stall during a fire, says a technical paper, he will not leave the stable, for the stall is the only place in which he believes himself to be safe. A new patented device, which consists of a pipe running through the stall to the outside of the stable, is designed to cure this. In case of fire a turn of a handle brings a hose nozzle into position and a stream of water pours over the head and shoulders of the horse, which drives him into the gangway, from which it becomes a comparatively easy matter to lead him into the street.

At One Shot.

A sportsman of great imaginative gifts and fond of telling his exploits, related that at one shot he had brought down two partridges and a hare. His explanation was that although he had only hit one partridge the bird in falling had clutched at another partridge and brought that to earth entangled in its claws. "But how about the hare?" he was asked. "Oh!" was the calm reply, "my gun kicked and knocked me backward and I fell on the hare as it ran past."—The Sketch.

Forgot.

Ryer—Why so sad, old man?
Dyer—Somebody promised to loan me \$10 to-day and I've forgotten who it was.

UMBRELLAS.

Umbrellas—that's the idea you're after. Every man and every woman wants a particular nice one as "private property" as well as a commonplace one to lend now and then. We have them in all grades both men's and women's sizes in the fine natural wood, mother-of-pearl, horn, gun-metal, silver, gold, carved ivory and Dresden handles the strongest and best. Umbrellas made and the closest rolling—from \$ 1.00 to \$5.00 at Paton's. 12-18dtf.

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