ROADS, STREETS AND SIDEWALKS

How Shall We Best Preserve Improved Streets.

During the last half dozen years the effect of the financial panic has been to make it practically impossible for property owners to pay for costly improvement of streets. While the lack of business has made it very hard for laboring men, not unfrequently the strain has been still greater upon employers than employes. In our natural sympathy for labor, we often times forget that the employer may suffer even more, and this is especially true if his property happens to be loaded with debt. The shrinkage during a panic does not diminish the amount of indebtedness and therefore doubly diminishes the chance of borrowing money; but now that business is picking up, the property owners or men in business will doubtless be willing and more than willing to tax themselves to secure better streets and roads. The people along Port Clinton avenue have authorized through our council an assessment of some $35,000 to improve their street. But this is only the beginning and we trust it will not be forgotten, as it seems to have been in some previous instances, that the street after being improved will immediatley begin to deteriorate and wear out.

A certain doctor of divinity once wrote,

"As soon as we begin to live, we all begin to die."

The same principle applies to most things in the world and especially does it apply to improved streets. As soon as they are improved they begin to need repair and they should have it at the expense of general taxes.

It is eminently proper that the citizeus of Highland Park should carefully consider the best means and methods of preserving these streets which property owners are taxing themselves so heavily to improve. One of the first problems to discuss is that of the relative width of traffic tires. Is the wide tire or the narrow tire best on improved streets? Again granting that one is better than the other for the improved street, will the same relative advantage apply in case of the unimproved street? Again, which has the lesser traction, or, in other words, which is most favorable for the owners who gain their livelihood by the use of traffic wagons?

We shall be glad to hear from any of our readers who have investigated this question and have any items of importance and can give us through the columns of the NEWS LETTER information of value.

In the mean timewe will cite one experiment. It was made in Onondaga county, New York, some six or eight years ago.

The distance from the limestone quarry at Split Rock to the reduction works in Geddes is about four and one-half miles. This road is made in the following manner: Rough refuse from the quarry and also to some extent field stone were broken into pieces two or three inches in size and spread over the road. This layer was covered with unsifted quarry chips and a crown given to the roadway of about six inches in a width of 16 feet. Wagons for hauling the stone were made with wide tires and with axles of different lengths. The front tires were four inches wide and the distance between centers of front wheels four feet five inches. The rear wheels had tires six inches wide and the distance between centers of rear wheels five feet eight inches. The result, of course, was that the hind wheels did not follow in the track made by the front wheels. Constant use of these wagons has produced a smooth and compact surface throughout the whole length of the road. Opinions before the trial varied as to what would be the probale result, but it proved eminently in favor of the new method. Loads of stone of from four to eight tons' weight constantly hauled over the road have produced no perceptible wear, and the cost of hauling has been greatly reduced.

Communicated.

EDITOR OF NEWS LETTER:—

I have been noticing the articles in your paper on roads, streets, etc. I have made some calculations in the matter and have reached the conclusion that whenever there is a council the majority of whose members will spend a little less time in personal bickering and instead will recognize a little more seriously the rights of the people who pay taxes, I shall be glad to get their consent to try an experiment somewhat along the line of the NEWS-LETTER's suggestions. I am disposed to believe that in the main your articles are sound, perhaps not in some details.

I should like to try 500 or 600 feet as a test. I think I can make a street improvement for about one dollar a linear foot, 50 cents on each side (perhaps for less) some what after the plan of macadam. I will agree to keep the streets in good condition for five years, both the origital cost and the yearly repair being at my personal expense. I am satisfied that I can keep up the repairs for less that 4 per cent of the interest on the difference between one dollar per foot and five dollars per foot, which is about the average cost of a fairly good macadam street.

I make this proposition for the purpose of experimenting. I will not ask for nor do I care to take any of the central streets of the city. On the other hand I do not propose to take some far outlying street which has little or no travel.

Be careful of the seed you sow. Geo. B. Cummings has a supply of "Perpetual Green" lawn seed coming this week, the same brand he has handled for several years. 20cts. a pound, $2.75 a bushel.

"The Combine" had an article in their last week's Waukegan organ on the filter business, "filtered" out of the Scientific American. Why not print some of the aphorisms from Poor Richard's old Almanac; they would be just about as pertinent. The fact is the people of this city know whether they want a filter or not and we think they will let our little political machine know about it too when they can get to the polls.

Best of shoe repairing at reasonable prices at Blomdahl's.