

PRACTICAL ROAD PLAN.

A Suggestion for Obtaining National Aid That is Neither Visionary Nor Unreasonable.

The state aid laws of New Jersey, Maryland, Massachusetts and New York, which provide that the whole commonwealth shall bear from one-quarter to three-fourths of the expense of all highway improvement and that the rest shall be borne by the freeholders in equal proportion and the counties in which the work is done, have proved very successful and popular, so that now these states are noted for the many miles of excellent highways they possess. Other states may well follow the example.

If, now, a similar plan for national aid in road building were proposed, it should stand a good chance of being adopted. Suppose, for instance, a bill were introduced in congress providing that the general government bear one-quarter of the amount expended by each state or territory in building city streets and country highways that conform to specifications approved by a government commission and that are built according to the recommendation and approval of state and territorial highway commissions. Such a measure would, very likely, be enacted into a law, after the usual amount of opposition from contrary interests that is always manifested towards bills involving the appropriation of large amounts of public funds.

The offer of the government to stand one-quarter of the cost of highway improvement in every city and state would be a powerful stimulus to every community to improve its streets and wagon roads. In order to obtain the 25 per cent. from the government it would be necessary for each state or territory to have a highway commission whose duties it would be to determine which roads should be improved, where new ones should be built and perhaps actually to do the work with hired gangs of men or to let contracts to local constructors. This would systematize the work and open a way to have the most important roads improved first and all the work done on a definite plan. The remaining three-quarters of the cost could be divided according to the law of each state among the counties and the abutting land owners on the roads improved. A central bureau to be established in Washington, or the present bureau of road inquiry, should be required to draw up standard specifications for the construction of roads from all the different kinds of paving materials in order that when the roads are built they will be really good ones that will not be in constant need of repair and so that the states cannot demand from the government any money for the system of "working out" road taxes on the common dirt roads.

If every one of our 50 states and territories did \$2,000,000 worth of road building and repairing annually, under such a law, the government would have to pay only \$25,000,000 of this, which is not an excessive amount compared with the many millions annually expended by the government upon river and harbor improvements and canal work.

The government experts have carefully estimated from statistics gathered from all parts of the country that the farming, mining, manufacturing and commercial interests of the United States sustain an annual loss due to bad roads, in the ways mentioned above, of not less than \$600,000,000 annually. Spending \$100,000,000 a year on road building and repairing, it would take the country six years to spend an amount equal to one year's losses, and, supposing that with the repairs on existing roads and the construction of new ones every mile of new road cost \$5,000, we should have 20,000 miles of new macadam road of the best kind in the country each year, or 120,000 miles in the six years, equal to an average of 2,400 miles for each state and territory, which would have reduced the losses so much that the saving would have paid the whole cost of the work.

As soon as we have built an average of one mile of first-class road for every 24 miles of bad road now existing, we will annually save enough from the losses above mentioned to equal the government aid of \$25,000,000 given to the states; and as soon as every mile in six of our bad roads of to-day is made into a hard, smooth stone or gravel turnpike the annual saving will equal the annual total expenditure of \$100,000,000 by all the states and the government combined, so that from that time on we may consider that our road improvement is not only costing us nothing, but is actually saving us more money as the work goes on.—Cleveland Cycling Gazette.

Respect Their Idols.

While repairing a temple, the Chinese cover up the eyes of the idols, in order that the deities may not be offended at the sight of the disorder

NATIONS HAVE WAR CHESTS.

Vast Sums in European Treasuries Laid Up for Times of Strife.

A source of amazement to continental politicians is the facility with which Great Britain obtains the money to carry on the South African campaign. Even our severest critics acknowledge that in no other country could the many millions already voted have been obtained so readily.

This is all the more wonderful to them when they remember that in the sense they understand it England has no war chest to fall back upon. The explanation is simple enough. England, being the richest country in the world, her credit stands high, and she is able to raise vast sums at a moment's notice, says the London Daily News.

The case is different in France, where they have something like \$10,000,000 worth of gold and £50,000,000 worth of silver ready for war time. The Austro-Hungarian bank possesses about £30,000,000 for a like purpose, while Germany clings to the old-fashioned system of maintaining an actual war chest, containing £6,000,000, at the fortress of Spandau. It is also estimated that Russia has ready at least £10,000,000.

Financially, Europe is prepared for the day that pessimistic prophets say is drawing nigh—the day when wild war shall run riot throughout the eastern hemisphere. There is at least \$155,000,000 waiting for the time when the war clouds shall gather, and in a great war it is tolerably certain it would all be spent.

CROWDING INTO THE CITIES.

Rural Districts in England Are Rapidly Being Forsaken by the People.

The depopulation of the rural districts of England is beginning to cause serious concern to the government. From statistics recently collected it is learned that in 1801 36 per cent. of the population lived in towns of 1,000 inhabitants and upward, whereas in 1891 64 per cent. of the population inhabited towns exceeding 4,000 in population. The rural population in 1891 on 31,577,000 acres was only 5,534,000 persons out of a total population of 29,252,525. It will be seen from these latter figures, says a London exchange, that less than one-fifth of the whole people live in the country and are engaged in rural occupations. Lord Avebury, in commenting upon these figures, ascribes the decrease of rural population to the failure of the country schools to foster interest in country life and objects, there have been other causes at work, however. The great development in the pleasures and recreations of town life, the increased interest in politics, agricultural depression, miserable labor wages and last, but perhaps not least, the local tyranny of squire and parson, have contributed to this result. It is perhaps yet to be seen whether the development of local government will have the desirable effect of making country life more interesting and tolerable.

HAY IN ROUND BALES.

Packed in This Shape It Occupies Less Space and Has Other Advantages.

Hay as well as cotton is packed in standard round hay bales being 18 inches in diameter and 36 inches in length. Such a bale packed at the press under which it would be put up would weigh about 200 pounds; as packed for export such a bale would contain about 275 pounds. There is put up for army use a bale of the same diameter, but only 18 inches in length, which contains approximately 140 pounds of hay.

In the cylindrical bale a given quantity of hay is got into less than half the space that it would occupy in a square bale; and there are asserted to be other advantages, including freedom from mold, preservation of the sweetness of the hay and greatly reduced combustibility. Thousands of tons of hay in cylindrical bales have been shipped to the American army in the Philippines, and large quantities of it have been used by the British army in South Africa.

LETTERS FROM PEARY.

Were Written in March and Last and Were Addressed to His Wife and Mother.

Letters from Peary, the arctic explorer, for his wife and mother, who died recently, were received the other day. They were accompanied by others from Dr. Dedrick, his surgeon, from Mrs. Dedrick, and from Samuel Warmbath, the members of the Stein party, who is remaining for a second year at Cape Sabine, for his wife in Malden, Mass., and his mother, in Russian Poland. None of the letters contains any news. The one from Peary is dated March 2, 1900, and is from Cape d'Urville, Grinnell Land. It says that divisions of his party had started for Fort Conger. The latest word, dated March 31, which has just been published, reported that the divisions had all arrived at Fort Conger.

ing to letters received the divisions intended to push northward from Fort Conger.

Dentistry for Sheep.

A shepherd of New South Wales has tried dentistry for sheep with great success. He had a valuable ram which found great difficulty in masticating its food owing to the loss of teeth. Artificial teeth were inserted which enabled the animal to masticate its fodder.

Giving Aid to Swiss Poor.

In some Swiss vineyards nearly the whole harvest was left last month to the poor of the neighborhood.

WAS A BORN FIGHTER.

Prince Christian Victor Did Not Flinch on His Being of Royal Blood.

The grandson of Queen Victoria, Prince Christian Victor, who died of fever in South Africa a few weeks ago, was a soldier born, who owed nothing to rank, but obtained his advance in recognition of his military ability. He knew everything about Tommy Atkins, from the enlisting fees down to the canteen extortions, which he labored to abolish. In his room at Winchester might be found nearly double the number of books on tactics and drill usually found in an officer's quarters, and the majority were well thumbed. But he was no prig. He enjoyed every hour of his life, except that he was much hampered by insufficient private means, and his brother officers and his men simply idolized him, says a London paper.

He once told Lord Wolsey that the only advantage he ever derived from his royal rank was that it always got him accepted when he volunteered for active service. In the last ten years he served in six campaigns—a rare record—and he constantly obtained deserved recognition for valor. Somehow, commanding officers never felt hampered when they had him under their command, as was too often the case when a royal prince insisted on seeing a bit of fighting. Prince Christian Victor was simply the smartest officer in the king's royal rifles and a rattling staff officer. As son, as brother, as officer, as sportsman, as an Englishman he was honorable and honored.

QUEER SIAMESE MUSIC.

An Octave Which Differs from Our Own and Has Seven Equal Intervals.

Prof. Stump and Neesen, of the Berlin university, have concluded some interesting experiments regarding the peculiarities of Siamese music, says the Scientific American. The Siamese musical octave differs from our own in the fact that it comprises seven equal intervals. The sounds, though perfectly harmonious, are somewhat curious. While the Siamese court troupe was at the zoological gardens in Berlin these two professors decided to record these musical tones in their natural sound to such exactitude that the faintest variations might be clearly defined. In the earlier experiments the ordinary phonograph was employed, but was proved to be unsatisfactory, owing to the unpleasant constant rasping reproductions which always accompany phonographic reproductions and which in this case destroyed the distinctness of the sounds. A telephonograph was then employed and the results were all that could be desired. By means of this apparatus the sounds are so clear and the gradations so faithfully recorded that it is a difficult matter to distinguish between the actual recital by the troupe and its telephonographic reproduction.

Searchlights on the Ranch.

Even the western cowboy has come under the spell of the electric power, and a ranch in Lower California and Mexico is to utilize a local water power for the generation of electricity, for lighting, harvesting, pumping, etc. The chief innovation will be the use of searchlights on the mountains overlooking the ranch to prevent cattle raids. The operator of each light will be suitably armed with long-range weapons and provided with a signal code by which he can flash information to the other watchers. A telephone system, embracing all portions of the 16,000 acres, will be another convenient method of raising an alarm.

A VALUABLE REPUTATION.

He Had Been Lying for Twenty Years and Had Made a Name for Himself.

"A business matter took me out west last fall," said the well-known attorney, who was in a reminiscent mood, relates the Detroit Free Press, "and I took advantage of the opportunity to make a trip into the mountains for a week's hunting. I hired an old man to act as a guide and do the cooking, and I enjoyed myself to the utmost. The mountains were full of big game, but the state had lately passed a law prohibiting the killing of deer, which was particularly aggravating, as we

were continually running across them. Now I am a respecter of the law—unless I am retained on the other side—and I found it hard work to refrain from shooting at the deer that presented themselves as if they knew that they were free from danger. But along toward the last our meat ran out, and I told the old man that we would have to have some fresh meat even if we had to kill a deer. He agreed with me, and it wasn't ten minutes later that a deer sprang up ahead of us. I wasn't prepared for him, but the guide was, and he made a clean miss, much to his disgust. That was the last deer that we saw, and we returned without having broken the law. But no sooner had we arrived at the point where we had started from than the old man was arrested for killing a deer, and I took it upon myself to defend him, as I knew him to be innocent. I took the stand in his behalf, and thinking it best to make a clean breast of the matter, I admitted that he had shot at a deer, but missed him. Then I put the old man on the stand to corroborate my testimony.

"You admit having shot at the deer?" said I, when the old man took the stand. "That's what!" he answered. "And you missed him?" I continued. "No, sree!" he shouted. "I killed him, b'gee!" "That took the wind out of my sails and I collapsed, the result being that the old man was fined \$25. "After the trial I took him aside and asked him what he meant by swearing to a lie and convicting himself. "See hyar," he answered, "I've bin lyin' fer 20 years about never havin' missed a deer 'thet I shot at, an' ye don't think 'thet I would ruin my reputation fer \$25 do ye?"

MAINE'S CANNING INDUSTRY.

One Hundred and Seventy-Five Factories That Pay \$1,400,000 a Year in Wages.

According to the report of Hon. S. W. Mathews, state industrial and labor commissioner, the Pine Tree state is the champion sardine canning community of the country and is third on the list of states that can sweet corn. In fact, Maine is the only state engaged in the industry of putting up small herring and other suitable fish as sardines. There are about 175 canning factories within its borders, the value of which is about \$1,214,900, and give employment to 15,000 operatives. The amount of wages paid in 1899 was about \$1,400,000; to the farmers for corn, \$331,000, and the value of the entire output of all the factories was \$5,306,089 during the year, quotes the New York Sun.

Over 11,000 acres were planted to sweet corn in 1899. The canning of clams, blueberries, apples, beans, squash, pumpkin and small fruits seems to be on the increase, according to Mr. Mathews' report, and he does not see any good reason why the industry should not increase largely in the packing of these articles. He also says that it appears to be generally conceded that the corn, apples and berries of Maine are superior in quality to the same products in other states, owing, doubtless, to climatic conditions. In every kind of canning men, women and children are paid remunerative wages, and the canning factories give to many poor families their only opportunity for earning money.

WILL LAST TWENTY YEARS.

Durability of a New Kind of Cloth to Be Manufactured by Mills in England.

If the plans of certain English capitalists do not miscarry it will be possible ere long for the economical parent to purchase a suit of clothes which may be passed along among his sons for the fifth of a century, says the Chicago Chronicle. Mills are now being built in England for the manufacture of this kind of long-wearing material, which can be turned out in almost any color wanted. Think of getting a suit of clothes that will last for 20 years; that will cost only a third more than a suit costs now, and that will be absolutely waterproof without appearing to be so. Revolutionize is rather an overworked word, but it fits this case exactly. Instead of singing: "Papa's pants will soon fit Johnnie," the refrain will run: "Johnnie soon will wear pa's pants," for when pa once begins to wear these extremely useful articles before Johnnie has got out of dresses he may continue to wear them for the next 20 years, and by that time Johnnie will have grown up to them. The same with little Mary and her mother's skirts. Instead of cutting down the garments for the girl the mother will wear them for a generation or so and then turn them over to her daughter.

Oil from the Ocean.

Eight million gallons of rock oil are pumped each year from under the bed of the Pacific ocean.

COMMITTEE-ROOM CHAT.

Senator Lindsey, of Kentucky, describes himself and Senator Caffery, of Louisiana, as "the only democrats remaining in the senate."

The shortest biography in the new congressional directory is that of Congressman Allan Langdon McDermott (dem.), of Jersey City. It is 3 1/2 lines long. The sketch of Senator Depew is the longest—50 lines.

Speaker Henderson is said to be dissatisfied with the portrait which he sat last year. The face, he thinks, is a good likeness, but he objects that the artist has put a man's head on a boy's shoulders.

For many years there has been a funny man in congress, sometimes two or three. In the present house John Allen, of Mississippi, enjoys the honor, having held the position for about a dozen years. His predecessor was "Sunset" Cox, and Champ Clark will probably be his successor.

Senator Towne, of Minnesota, appeared in Washington one afternoon recently with his neck swathed in bandages. "What is the matter?" inquired a solicitous acquaintance. "Boils," was the reply. "and they come from one of two causes—bad blood working out or an ingrowing excess of senatorial dignity."

Senator Hale, who in a general way has hitherto been looked upon as an exemplar of what is proper in male attire, horrified his colleagues the other afternoon by appearing among them wearing a high hat and a short coat—a combination supposed to be permissible only on the East side of New York.

It is not generally known, perhaps, that Senator Pettigrew, of South Dakota, has a son who has been fighting with the Boers. He is a lad of 20 years of age, who joined some 400 volunteers for service in the Transvaal. They were driven into Portuguese territory and there disarmed and the Dutch government paid their passage home.

ALL SORTS.

The area of tea culture in India at the end of 1899 was over 516,700 acres.

The bones of an average man's skeleton weigh 20 pounds. Those of a woman are probably six pounds lighter.

Gout is rarely known among the working classes of Ireland. Their immunity is thought to be due to the fact that their food consists largely of potatoes.

Honorary rank in the army is not new to women of royalty, but it is interesting to learn that a woman has been raised to the rank of general for personal service and merit. During the campaign in the Philippines Gen. Ageja won a commission in the revolutionary army, organized a force of 2,000 men and led them in a number of actions against the Spaniards.

Joseph G. Lang hypnotizes by telephone. His friends doubted his ability and called for a demonstration, which was given in the presence of "a leading physician, whose dignity compels him to withhold his name." Lang's subjects were at a receiver three miles away. He first of all got them under control, and then ordered his subjects to make political speeches, to dance and to do various other feats. They obeyed him. When he woke them up they declared that they had felt nothing different from their experiences when Lang had hypnotized them before in the usual way.

WHAT THE WORKERS TELL US.

Maine has 175 factories in which fish and vegetables are canned.

In 1890 the mineral production of the United States amounted to \$619,000,000 and in 1899 to \$976,000,000.

The American red gum wood is now being largely employed in London for street paving purposes.

The Danes export the best and highest priced butter in the world, and for their own use buy cheap butter from the United States.

Boston is the headquarters of the copper-mining business of the United States, and makes a tidy profit on it. The Boston copper companies paid \$23,383,100 in dividends in 1900.

The pulpy mass called bagasse, which is left after the sugar cane has been crushed and squeezed dry of its saccharine matter, and formerly was burned and got rid of as a nuisance, is now used for the manufacture of paper.

A recent European invention is a process for making artificial sponges. The method is based on the action of zinc chloride on cellulose, by which spongy compounds similar to starch are produced. These articles, when placed in water, swell and in an atmosphere sufficiently dry soon become hard again.

Paper from Rye Straw.

Experts who have examined rye straw are of the opinion that a very high grade of paper, not only adapted to newspapers, but suitable for books as well, can be made from that material, of which Louisiana produces thousands of tons that are now got rid of as a waste product.