

Good Roads as an Investment

THE greater part of Governor Deneen's inaugural address is devoted to a discussion of the good roads movement, a subject that is of interest not only to the dwellers in rural sections, but to those of cities and towns as well. His plea contains so much that appeals to all that we take pleasure in reprinting the bulk of it.

I call your attention to the condition of the country roads in this state. In this direction our state has made less progress than in other matters of great public importance. Little permanent advancement has been made since the organization of our state in the matter of road building. The conditions existing are primitive. Not more than 2 per cent of the entire mileage of our country roads is permanently improved so as to be suitable for traffic at all seasons of the year.

It is estimated that it costs 25 cents a mile per ton to haul farm products to market over earth roads. This is at least double what it costs the farmer in those European countries in which there are good roads. Experiment has shown that a horse can draw twice as much on a well-made gravel road and four times as much on a smooth stone road as on a well-made earth road. The difference between cost of moving crops in European countries and the cost here, which is 12½ cents a ton per mile, multiplied by the aggregate number of tons of our products, constitutes an enormous and useless tax upon our principal industries. The loss involved is paid for by our whole people, because the vast bulk of all the products of our state must be first moved over our bad country roads to railroads, steamships and markets. We can better realize what this means when we consider that it costs as much to deliver a bushel of grain ten miles to the railroad in Illinois as it then costs to carry it a thousand miles by rail.

Other states, confronted by like conditions, have made greater efforts than Illinois to remedy them. In our state the local authorities are hampered by an insufficient supply of money and lack of suitable material for making permanent improvement in the roads, and too frequently by a lack of scientific knowledge of road building. The labor performed maintains for one season only a passable condition of the roadbed. It is estimated that \$2,000,000 is expended annually in this state for this purpose, with

It is not necessary to advance any argument to show that the burden of road-making should not fall on the farmer alone. The road is a public highway. It is a state road. Its maintenance and improvement is a matter of general concern. Other states are attempting to solve this problem by what is known as the "state aid" plan, in which the burden is borne by the whole people.

Within the last ten years Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, Pennsylvania, Delaware and California have established highway commissions, and are assisting the counties, towns and townships by "state aid." New York last year appropriated \$600,000 as "state aid" for road building. That state has appropriated altogether \$2,065,000 for "state aid." At the last session of the New York legislature an act was passed proposing a constitutional amendment which provides that the state may bond itself for \$5,000,000 a year for ten years for the building of wagon roads.

In 1903 Pennsylvania created a state highway commission and appropriated \$6,500,000 to be apportioned among the different counties as "state aid" in proportion of mileage of roads in each county, and to be expended during a period of six years. Under a call issued by the last legislature of Ohio a state good roads convention was held at Columbus Feb. 15, 1904, which convention adopted resolutions in favor of a "state aid" law then pending before the legislature.

Massachusetts appropriates annually \$490,000 for

"state aid." It has appropriated already for the building of roads the aggregate sum of \$4,940,000. Its last legislature appropriated \$2,250,000 to be expended for state highways during the next five years. New Jersey appropriates \$250,000 annually toward the building of good roads. It has appropriated during the last ten years \$1,515,168 for that purpose. Connecticut appropriates \$225,000 per annum as "state aid." Since 1895 it has appropriated \$1,538,910 for that purpose.

A recent legislature in Florida set aside for the improvement of wagon roads the Indian war claims, which amount to \$500,000. The last legislature of Rhode Island appropriated \$100,000 for the construction and maintenance of highways under the direction of the state board of public roads.

Vermont appropriated annually about \$89,000 for a like purpose. Departments of highways for the gathering of information regarding the construction and maintenance of good roads and the devising of plans to effect a beginning of such work have been established in California, Delaware, Idaho, Maine, Maryland, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, New Hampshire, North Carolina, Oregon and Tennessee.

In Illinois the last legislature enacted a law for the appointment of a good roads commission to investigate the question of good roads and determine the best methods by which the burden of road building may be equitably distributed among all the people, such as by federal, state and county aid. That commission was directed to report its findings to this assembly, together with a bill embodying the most advanced thought on the subject of road building.

The report will be submitted to you. In considering the recommendations which they may make, I desire to direct your attention to the feasibility of the use of convict labor in connection with the subject of good roads.

There are confined in our state penitentiary 3,000 prisoners. Under the present law in relation to convict labor opportunities for their employment are and will be limited in various ways, so that but 25 per cent of the available time will be consumed in the performance of all the work permitted to them under the law. It is a beneficent provision of our law that prisoners are sentenced to labor, because no punishment ~~which our state would permit~~ could be quite so severe as that of enforced idleness. Work is a necessity for health and reformation. This is everywhere recognized, but it has been difficult to provide for them work of such a character as would not impose a punishment upon the law-abiding citizen by reason of the unnatural conditions of competition which convict labor creates.

Information has been furnished me by experts in the matter of road building and the cost thereof to the effect that a suitable stone road could be built at a cost of less than \$1,000 a mile in the county should the material be delivered free by the state. Following the plan of issuing bonds in payment thereof, spread over a series of from seven to ten years, as adopted elsewhere, the burden upon real estate within suitable road districts taxable for such purpose would be very light.

Under such a system the cost to the state would not be great. The convict is a charge upon the state. He must be supported whether he works or is idle. The additional cost to the state for machinery, transportation, etc., would be comparatively small. I therefore suggest that you consider whether or not it would be advisable for the state to undertake to utilize the labor of convicts in the manner outlined.

In the event that you determine that such an application of convict labor is not feasible, I urge you, through your committees, to gather information and devise a plan which will meet the approval of our people and enable our state to make a beginning in this great work.

A Cynic's Sayings

As you sew so much you rip.

A lie in time saves nine.

A thing of duty is an-oy forever.

One touch of nature makes the whole world squirm.

Matri-money is the root of all evil.

Necessity is the mother of contention.

Sweet are the uses of diversity.

A word to the wise is resented.

Where there's a will there's a law suit.

Think of your ancestors and your posterity and you will never marry.

Hell is paved with big pretensions.

"Mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other." Look out!

Pride will have a fall bonnet.

Pride goeth before and the bill cometh after.

Tamper not with fledged fools.

Young widows in ashcloth and sashes.

To-morrow would be sweet if we could kill yesterday.

There is no soak without some fire water.

When folly is bliss, 'tis ignorance to be otherwise.

A lie for a lie and a truth for a truth.

Fain would I write yet fear to pall.

In one's old coterie may one sport the old pantry and vestry?

Misery loves company, but company does not reciprocate.

Look before you sleep.

If the wolf be at the door, open it and eat him.

Many are called but few get up.

It's a strong stomach that has no turning.

Those that came to cough remain to spray.

Friendship is more to be valued than love, for love is a thing a man can buy and a woman can get for nothing.

Naught is lost save honor.

Saint heart ne'er won fair lady.

Silence gives contempt.

People who love in glass houses should pull down

Honor is without profit—in most countries.

A church fair exchange is robbery.

Fools rush in and win where angels fear to tread.

A rich man can get the eye of the beadle.

Consistency, thou art a mule!

Economy is the thief of time.

A bird on a bonnet is worth ten on a plate.

Displays are dangerous.

Let him now speak or hereafter hold his piece of information for a good price.

The poor ye have with ye always—but are not invited.

What is home without another?

A fool and his honey are soon mated.

It is better to make friends fast than to make fast friends.

A little widow is a dangerous thing.

There's many a sip 'twixt the cup and the lip.

Many hands want light work.

A friend in deeds is a friend indeed.

All that a man knoweth will he tell to his wife.

He that is surety for a stranger shall be wiser the next time.

He laughs best whose laugh lasts.

As thou hast made thy bed, why lie about it?

Absinthe makes the heart grow fonder.