

Highway Commissioner Makes Annual Report on Highways

Economy and Efficient Service Are Keypnote of Commissioner's Policy

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(Highway Commissioner, New Trier Township)

For the past two years, as in the period preceding, the Highway Commissioner has succeeded in saving enough money from the Road and Bridge tax to pay for a mile of concrete road. The first mile was placed on Lake avenue west from the church on Ridge road in Wilmette to Locust road. This road has since been taken over as a state aid road and paved to Waukegan road with concrete.

During the past year 50 per cent aid was secured from the county for a concrete bridge over the Skokie ditch on Willow road. This bridge, besides being unequal to carrying the heavy loads sent over it, was costly to maintain.

The county drew up plans for an eighteen foot concrete pavement based on the latest designs of the state following the extensive tests made on the Bates road near Springfield. The township, without resorting to a hard road tax (the usual method employed), financed the building of this much needed improvement which runs from the end of the pavement on Willow street, Winnetka, to the township line at Happ road a few feet east of the west line of the Chicago and North Western railway.

Roads Hit by Traffic

The construction of the Lake avenue concrete pavement by the county imposed necessarily heavy burden on the township as the materials had to be hauled over roads and bridges not built to endure such heavy and constant traffic. Several roads, such as Happ, Avoca, Winnetka and Hibbard were completely torn up. The under structure of the Winnetka avenue bridge had to be entirely rebuilt. With Willow road and Lake avenue both open to heavy traffic this unusual expense will not again be necessary.

Reinwald avenue from Wilmette avenue to Locust road, after the graveling of the previous year, was reshaped and dragged and then oiled. Until late fall when heavy loads on narrow steel tires were sent over this road from one of the pits adjacent to it, this road presented an excellent surface to traffic, being smooth, dustless and impervious to water. Prior to the placing of the oil all low spots were filled with stone and rolled. The coming season will require a reshaping and a possible rerolling Winnetka avenue throughout, Harms road, and portions of Hibbard and Avoca roads were scarified, shaped, and rolled by county equipment in the employ of the township, the equipment used being larger and more expensive than the township was justified in purchasing for itself. The roads so treated went back into shape with little interruption from traffic and have since been maintained by the drag and a truck and man filling in small holes as they appeared.

Bring up Road Level

Considerable stone was necessary on both Winnetka avenue and Hibbard road as there were many points where the road level was either below the ground on either side or at the same level.

As soon as permission was gained from the county, the township forces were sent into the town of Gross Point where the roads were all graded and in the built up sections gravel placed and dragged into the roads. It was necessary to build a foundation in many instances and in one particularly bad spot 15 yards of stone was used to fill one large hole. Maintenance of these roads since taking them over has been almost constant until they froze just before the first of the year.

The road drags were employed wherever and whenever necessary throughout the entire township throughout the year.

Neither time nor money would permit the graveling or stoning of the whole surface of such roads as Wash-

ington avenue, Greeley avenue and Clover road after the county consent for the maintenance of the roads was gained, which consent followed the final dissolution of Gross Point as a village. Should the situation remain as at present, it should be the endeavor of the commissioner to place these roads in the best shape possible at the earliest possible date.

Roads Tax Rate Lower

It will be of interest to the taxpayer to know that the commissioner requested and received for this year a reduction from 66 cents to 50 cents in the tax rate for road and bridge purposes and believes that it should be possible to reduce this rate still further in succeeding years, without decreasing the amount of work done and without hindering the plan for saving out of this tax sufficient money to build more miles of permanent road as needed.

The winter of 1923-24 has been unusual in that stone patching and dragging of the township roads was possible to the very end of 1923. In the storms that followed the grader and plows were employed in keeping the roads free from the worst snow drifts. It has been possible to keep all the roads open even in the worst periods throughout the winter.

Through the cooperation of Mr. Woolhiser and other Winnetka officials it has been possible to continue the arrangement for getting cinders from the water works at Winnetka for the construction and maintenance of Hibbard road north of Elm street. The heavy rains of the late fall flooded the Winnetka Playfield grounds west of Hibbard road and not only inundated this road at that point but actually destroyed a section some 200 feet in length which has been replaced by crushed stone of considerable depth with top of cinders to correspond with the rest of the road surface.

Solve Drainage Problem

The west ditch on Hibbard road south of Lake avenue to the big east and west ditch south of Wilmette avenue was deepened nearly a foot last fall in order to take part of the water from Lake avenue so that residents on Lake avenue whose basements were flooded might be given such relief as was possible.

Because of the thorough cleaning of all township ditches in the previous year, only such work as was necessary to give better flow to the water was undertaken the past season. Next year's work should again be planned to include thorough cleaning of all ditches and, if possible, some chemicals should be used to destroy the weed growth in the bottoms of the ditches so that less frequent cleaning will be necessary.

Commends Tree Planting

The tree planting on Hibbard road by Mrs. Hibbard has apparently encouraged others to emulate her example. The subdividers of property on Willow road west of Hibbard road have continued the planting plan used on Willow east of Hibbard, except that, owing to the contour of the ground, they were compelled to plant on the lot side of the ditch as was done on Hibbard road. Under pres-

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