GOOD ROADS

PROSPERITY IN GOOD ROADS

Future Development of Country Must Begin With Improved Highways to Relieve Congestion.

There are today some 2,500,000 miles of rural roads in the United States. Of this amount perhaps 12 per cent could be classified as improved, while only about one-fourth of one per cent can be said to be suitable for the carriage of heavy-duty motortrucks. And in the face of this condition it can be said without chance of contradiction that the future development of the United States rests upon the roads.

The past few years have witnessed a tremendous turnover in transportation from the railway to the highway, says Roy D. Chapin, former chairman of the highways transport committee of the council of national defense. The congestion which prevailed during the war made necessary the commercial utilization of the highway to an extent thought impossible a scant few years ago.

The motortruck, little known before the war, sprang into prominence as a commercially practical form of transportation, and while the fighting has ceased the need for the motor truck remains with us, more insistent than ever before.

Within certain limitations the freight car of the highway is more efficient than the rail carrier, and because of it it may be taken as a permanent form of transportation and one destined to have a large influence on the movements of trade in the future.

The hour has struck when the fast-moving efficient motor vehicle of commerce must replace the horse and the costly terminal charges which prevail upon the short-haul branches of the rail lines. Already the motortruck has become a "feeder" to the railroad; shortly it is destined to aid enormously to the profitable long hauls, while entirely or very nearly so eliminating the unprofitable spurs.

Railroad men generally recognize the new movement and welcome it. Street railway men, not so keenly alert to its possibilities as a feeder to their lines, have yet to take the fullest advantage of the opportunities which it presents.

But back of the motortruck rests the road. While the highway as such is of little interest to those outside of the engineering field, as a means for transportation it becomes of vital importance to every citizen of the United States, whether he be in profession or trade, a minister, a merchant, a doctor. High and low, rich and poor, the road comes into contact with all of us and upon its relative efficiency depends to a greater extent than most of us dream the ultimate cost of all that we eat, wear, have.

"No one knows how much the country pays for cartage," said William C. Redfield, secretary of commerce, recently, "but anyone who looks into the question is pretty sure to find out that the figures are larger than he thought it would be.

Yet cartage is but one phase of road costs. Poor roads mean isolation, which in turn mean fewer possibilities for education, fewer opportunities for wealth, lower real estate valuations as well as increased costs of supplies. Every sound, fundamental economic reason speaks out for the durable road, just as it protests against the poor, inadequately constructed highway.

Despite these facts, which will be verified by all who have studied the question, despite the fact that the official government figures placed the hauling over the highways at 2,000,000,000 ton-miles in 1917, our roads are today all that they should not be. They are inefficient, inadequate, antiquated.

IMPROVE TO SAVE HAULING

Hardening Surface, Reducing Grade or Shortening Distance Brings Farm Nearer to Town.

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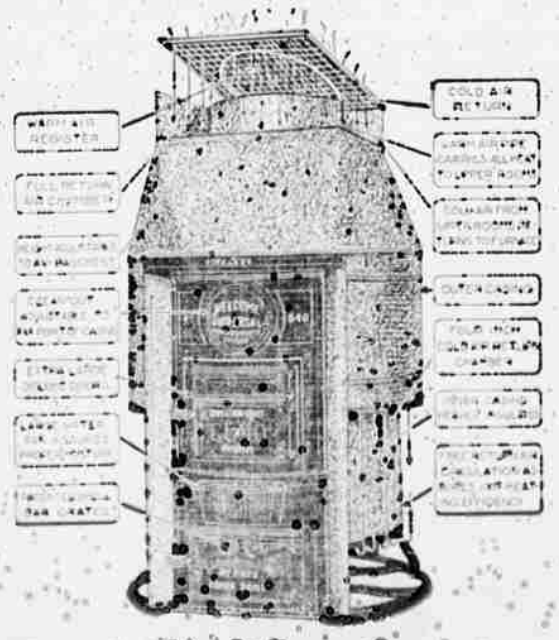

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