

GOOD ROADS AND THE FARMER

While the farmer receives as great financial gain from good roads as anyone, says Prof. Ernest Flagg Ayres, highway engineer of the O. A. C., he has the added social benefits. Under present conditions it is often impossible for his children to go to school regularly, his family to go to church except when the roads are dried out, his doctor to reach him in time to be of most help, or his mail to be delivered regularly. With better roads this can all be changed, and graded schools and larger churches always follow these improvements.

"It is not necessary that a great deal of money be spent on our highways, but what is invested should be used carefully and intelligently. A few dollars spent at the right time will save repairs costing hundreds, and most of the roads where there is no heavy through travel may be improved in this way."

Mr. Ayres then described the process of building sand-clay roads; the initial grading with a proper crown and drainage ditches, the distribution and packing of the clay, spreading of the sand, and ploughing and

barrowing it in lightly on top. This type of road has given excellent satisfaction in the southern and middle-western states, but little work of the sort has been done as yet in the Pacific northwest. It has proved successful in soils and climatic conditions similar to those found in Oregon, and there is no question as to its value for our rural highways.

"The saving in expense over other forms of road is no mean item," continued Prof. Ayres. "The average cost for sand-clay roads is but \$723 a mile for the 24,001 miles in the United States, compared with a cost of \$4,989 a mile for macadam. In other words, about seven miles of good sand-clay road can be built for the same money as one mile of plain or water-bound macadam. The cost of maintenance is less than for any other form of improvement except the earth road, and horses and automobiles alike prefer it to any of the hard surface roads.

"The road must first be graded and drained carefully, and should be crowned about one inch to the foot and smoothed as a rag. It can be greatly improved by adding sand even if no grading has been done but the expense will be much greater. The sand must be sharp and coarse, but need not be as clean as is required for concrete. It should be

brought and piled along the shoulders of the road in dry weather when teaming is cheaper, though construction can not begin until the rains soften the clay. The cheapest way is to spread the sand 4 to 6 inches deep over the wet clay and let the traffic mix the material. Economy is the only argument for this, and as more sand is usually required to fill the ruts and holes formed by the heavier teams, even this advantage is sometimes lost. The road is almost impassible to heavy loads until the sand and clay are thoroughly mixed.

"A better way is to spread the sand evenly to a width of 12 or 16 feet, mixing well with plough and harrow. A depth of 6 inches is enough for light travel, and a foot for heavy loads. The road drag should be used often to maintain the crown and fill ruts which will form in the first few months. If the road does not compare favorably with gravel or macadam as soon as the sand is added to the clay, it should not be considered a failure. Its construction is a gradual process, and the surface will not be at its best in less than six months. If it gets muddy add more sand; if it is too dry and dusty more clay is needed. All that is required for maintenance is the addition of a little more sand to the clay each year, and the occasional use of a drag."

Regular Sunday excursion to Parkdale. Pleasant trip for yourself and friends.*

COMMUNICATION

To the editor of the News:

In your issue of July 10th, is an able editorial touching on the economic, financial and social problem, which is like coming onto an oasis. Home or local papers are usually controlled by the accumulators or those managing special interests, professional politicians and ward heeders, who always stand clear and advise against discussing questions of economic or a social nature that will cause those engaged in productive and distributive industry to rise up to think and inquire why such conditions exist, what is the matter and where we are?

Being a plebeian in the rear ranks without influence or leadership your first proposition attracted my attention. "About half the people of the United States are either farmers or are dependent on the farmers for their livelihood. All people depend for food on the farms." That, of course, means the land, which was not created by man, consequently, was the gift of, or a provision made by the Creator or a law of nature at least. This being an established fact the inquiry arises in my mind—Is it right and just that the land should be monopolized and owned by a few, who hold a large area of it out of use for speculative purposes at the expense of productive and distributive labor which in the last analysis has to pay all rent, interest and profit.

Abraham Lincoln in an annual message said, "Labor is prior, to and independent of capital. Capital is only the fruit of labor and could never have existed if labor had not first existed. Labor is the superior of capital and deserves much the higher consideration." This is a companion piece to Lincoln's famous Gettysburg speech which seems to be studiously avoided by Memorial Day and Fourth of July orators. Nevertheless, it is tenable, underlying the fundamental principles upon which our civilization is based.

The next proposition that attracted my attention was the investigation by President Taft of the system of lending money to the farmers of France, Germany and other European countries, which raises the question in my mind why the necessity of the United States farmer being dependent on borrowing money and paying interest thereon to conduct their business wherein they are the original producers of the necessities of life upon which all other classes are dependent.

It appears to me to involve the question of the high price of living whereas commodities are sold but once for consumption; all intermediate sales between producer and consumer are speculative adding price only, not value. As a plebeian and worker it occurs to me that this question opens a field for the economist, university president, professor, graduate and student for investigation and determination, where this intermediate part of the price goes and whether or not there is a reasonable rule to eliminate this speculative price as we have already seen it is not value.

In the editorial there is an allusion to the rule in Denmark which seems to be flavored somewhat with state socialism; also there is another allusion to the system of farmers securing loans on their crops or crop products through a system of banking, and hinted at in one of the planks of the late Chicago Republican platform. This so excites my curiosity that I rise to a special privilege of

inquiry and ask if this is a revival of the demands of the Ocala Farmers Alliance platform of 1890 and the Populist platform adopted at Omaha in 1892. Were those people wrong then and are we right now or were they and we both wrong? Many of the bad conditions those people predicted have occurred without any permanent remedy being provided to eradicate the evil condition until the present plans suggested at Chicago and by President Taft.

Another important question arises in my mind, which for personal gratification and information I am anxious to submit to some of the old

veterans, university presidents, professors, graduates and students is from what source did the government of the United States secure the money with which it paid the soldier for his service in the war of the Rebellion for which he signed the payroll when the money passed over the pay table which was payment in full; and to the contractor for supplies to put down the rebellion for which the contractor received all bills in full payment. What became of that money? Further, whether or not Thaddeus Stephens, Oliver P. Morton, "Fig Horn" William D. Kelly of Philadelphia, Gen. Samuel

F. Cary of Cincinnati, Ohio, and many others in congress were false prophets during 1867 to 1869 when they were raising their voices in the halls of congress and on the stump against approaching dreadful financial calamities; many of which we have passed through, which cannot be more accurately described by people who are now living than was predicted by those long since dead. Like causes produce like effects, and the above questions are live questions of great importance to the present generation who suppose they are living in a "government of the people by the people for the peo-

ple" of which each is a citizen and a unit. I am personally deeply interested and would consider it of great advantage to present and coming generation to have those questions discussed through the local papers and proved out by good authorities and upon unquestionable records. A supplementary or subsidiary question is what is money, its source and use and by whom created, whether for use in commerce or to be bought and sold in the market the same as other commodities for a price, called interest measured by itself. M. T. F.

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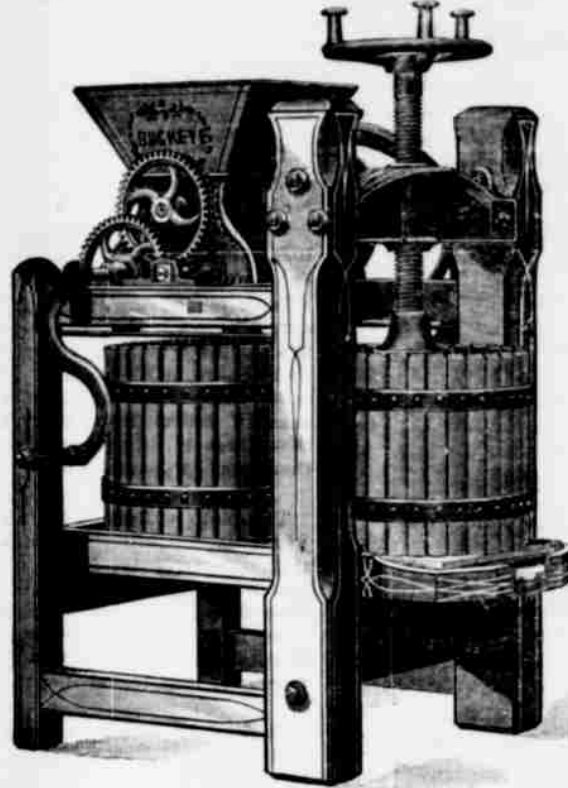
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