



Greenport, N. Y., Feb. 1.—This whole country has been stirred as never before over the killing of Peter A. Hallenbeck, by his four nephews, Harvey, Fred, Burton and Willis Van Wormer, with some strange motive for the crime.

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HIGHWAY MATTERS

DISCOURAGING GOOD  
ROADS MOVEMENT

Portland Oregonian Writer Apparently Advocating the Willamette Valley Policy of Waiting.

The other day an article appeared upon the editorial page of the Portland Oregonian, in which the efforts of those who are assisting in the good roads propaganda received quite a shower of cold water. The writer in question scorned the fact that an agent of the government had come to Oregon to agitate the matter of better public highways, and virtually uttered this sentiment: Oregon must wait a long time before building better roads. The article took up the discussion of the highways and their betterment in the Willamette valley and argued that it was absurd to expect much improvement at the present time in that part of the state.

In the main he is right, when he sets forth the difficulty of building good roads without the expenditure of sums beyond the ability of the people there. Yet this need not be made the occasion for discouraging all efforts to effect improvements, and should rather be the occasion for the expression of hope that the people would apply themselves to the solution of the problem and compel success in the face of difficulties. The point is here:

Were Oregon faulty in that they were inclined towards extravagance in the expenditure for roads, it might be well for this guardian of the people to utter his plaint, and his word of warning lest the public treasuries be too soon depleted. No one can claim truthfully that we are spending too much upon our roads. Let the discussion go right down into the very country to which the writer referred to went in his article. The county court of Benton county, at the last session of 1901, allowed bills amounting to a total of something like \$150,000 for roads and bridges, and that was the sum that during November and December was devoted there to the betterment of the highways, where of all regions in the world there should be done something to effect improvement.

Take Benton county again: Between Corvallis and Philomath, six miles, \$100 per mile would make a superb road. This was the opinion of people living in both places, expressed to the writer of this, during

the past six weeks. There is found for a part of the distance a clay of peculiar character that needs only crowning in the center to give drainage to make the finest country road ever traveled by man. In spots where the crowning had been done it was hard and firm, even when mud was deep on roads elsewhere in the valley. Here is an instance of possible improvement. Improvement that will not be encouraged by the reading of the retroactive articles in the Oregonian heretofore referred to.

For the love of progress, when is Oregon ever going to get away from that familiar doctrine—we cannot do anything; we must wait? Wait! When have we heard that word before? Wait! Wait until all of California and all other states are given roads fit for travel, and then when axes have elapsed, and everyone else has done his duty, let Oregon come forward at the tail of the procession and do something. Wait. Wait until eternity comes, and roads are no longer needed. When Gabriel blows his trumpet, then, let this advocate of waiting arise and say that it is time to do something for Oregon. It is not claimed that that short stretch of road between Corvallis and Philomath represents much of the soil of Willamette valley. But the inactivity of the people there in this instance is somewhat illustrative of the road question's treatment in that part of the state.

The creation of a sentiment for better roads must precede any considerable improvement. Before the people will stand by any extensive movement for better highways, there must be a demand for the work. And until this demand reaches a point endangering profligacy in the expenditure of public monies, no one need sound a word of warning.

A meeting is to be held in Walla Walla on February 4, to consider the question of making better roads in this region. It will be attended by road supervisors and superintendents from Oregon and Washington. Suppose this deprecating article in the Oregonian were read before that convention. What would be the effect? Would it make for advancement? Or would it influence for further delay? Were it accepted at its full presumptive value, it would be similar in effect to throwing a bucketful of cold water over one who was about to perform an act requiring enthusiasm. But it would not be accepted at its apparent valuation. It would be read with interest, and work somewhat to dampen the ardor of those who with fine public spirit have conceived the idea of utilizing the means at hand to make better roads.

But that is not saying all. The reading of that article would cause many a fellow in the convention to remark that he was glad he lived in the present generation, and not in the past; that he realized that progress comes not by waiting; that Oregon and Washington have waited long enough, and that some of their citizens do not propose to wait any longer than they have to. It is to be hoped that all the Umatilla county road men will attend the Walla Walla meeting. It will be an occasion when sentiment will be strengthened, and knowledge disseminated regarding the best methods of improving country highways. And that this is desirable need not be argued to any excepting the mossbacks.

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CRES

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CLEV