

W. K. Curtis on the Road Question.

It seems to me that the proposition of a dirt road bed is a thing of the past. No road bed of dirt, however well worked, will stand the wear of heavily laden wagons. Rock of some form, or corduroy, must form the foundation. The damage to the road bed is done in summer, not winter. A gopher, tunneled under the road bed, a passing wheel broke through the arch, each succeeding wheel made the hole larger. Today there is a deep mud hole on the site. Any inequality in the density of the soil composing the road bed will allow the wheel to settle deeper in places than in others, thus forming dust holes, which are the forerunners of the mud holes in winter.

The value of tile in lowering the water level is not appreciated by road builders. I have a deep drain, over five feet deep: within ten feet of my well. The tile is six inches in diameter. The water in the well never fills higher than the level of the tile, although before the drain was put in the water came to the surface of the well. This means that the water level has been lowered at least five feet, within ten feet of that drain. Suppose the drain was laid five feet beneath the crown of a road bed. The water level would never rise above the level of the tile. It would not necessarily receive the surface water, but it would take care of the water as it rises in the soil.

The theory of road work that ought to be followed should be determined by circumstances. If the citizens have faith in the passage of the Brownlow bill, and the supplementary acts of our legislature to carry out its provisions, then our efforts should be directed simply to keeping our roads in a passable condition until the government engineers can take hold of the work.

A delay of a couple of years in the passage of the Brownlow bill would be insignificant in comparison with the greater advantage of a uniform method of road work.

But if there is no reasonable hope in the ultimate passage of that bill, then we must proceed with the "hit and miss" method as now prevails, bond the district and commence the permanent improvement of our roads. It is not the man who can split the rafters with his eloquence in advocacy of good roads, but the man behind a reasonable plan of road work, who has the push to go ahead, that we are after. But I have probably written too much.

W. K. C.

Good Roads.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NEWS:

No public matter can possess greater interest at this time to the people of our county than that of road improvement, and it seems to me that our people should hail with pleasure the able and excellent beginning made by Mr. Atwell in its behalf. Good roads, more than anything else, promotes

communication, and without this we cannot enjoy the best social or business intercourse. While I may differ from others as to the best means of road building, or the system most likely to best promote it, yet I think it is now the duty of every good citizen to support the excellent article of the your correspondent of last week. It is clear to begin with that the old road overseer plan, as now practised in Oregon, has "run out," and is utterly inadequate and worthless. Now, what shall we do, seems to be "it." Does any reasonable person believe that after those older states having laid their own shoulders to the wheel and built up a good permanent road system, would stand by, through their representatives, and see their powerful competitors, sister states of the west, walk away from congress with "state aid?" Not much. This is a myth and will result, if undertaken, in endless delay. Again what could the states gain by "state aid?" Nothing. From whence comes the full treasury? It is recruited from the pockets of the tax-payers, duties on imports consumed by our great people. Then please, what is there to be thus gained, even were it obtainable. Well, now, let us stop and think, think, with large capitals if need be—yes, t-h-i-n-k!

And I am so glad some of our good people are beginning to think upon this vital question of better roads.

Friend, you may say, then let us ask the state to make our roads for us. I have always understood that "God helps those who help themselves." Napoleon was of the opinion that the Lord was on the side of the heaviest battalions. Where will our good state get her strong battalions from if not from among our citizen tax-paying members?

But Mr. Atwell struck it right when he said, "build our roads by contract"—centralize ideas, centralize movement, mobilize muscle.

Now is an excellent time for Oregon people to excite this question when we are about to elect a new general assembly, and when the bottom is so near out of our 60-foot strips we have been calling "roads." Now, Mr. Editor, I have an idea of about how I think we can make at least fairly good roads in Oregon, but I do not wish to impose upon your kindness nor upon the patience of your readers, and if you will kindly permit, I would like to come again.

R. S. LYBARGER.

The Road Question.

The road question was ably and earnestly discussed at the grange Saturday last. It was agreed that the most important thing is to get the water off the road. Some try to accomplish this by building the road up, others by letting the water down. It is better and easier for several reasons, which are apparent, to let the water down than to try to build up out of it. Gravity is the chief assistant in making

good roads if you give it a chance to work. It belongs to no unions demanding a nine-hour day. It works every minute in the twenty-four hours. Covered drainage is better than open drainage, but you must provide both in this country, where the rain falls so slowly and constantly. Covered drainage would dry the ground soon enough to prevent the roads becoming very muddy if the supply were not constantly augmented.

The same amount of rainfall in Indiana will not make bad roads because it falls in showers and the drainage will carry it off before the roads are cut up.

A proposition was made that road districts should be allowed to incur indebtedness to make roads and that the state should pay such districts an amount equal to such indebtedness. The first part of the proposition would be good, but the latter, in my judgment, would be very objectionable to this county.

Washington county is one of the smaller and most densely populated counties of the state. Good roads would cost a less amount per capita than in many other counties. On the other hand the richer counties would pay to the state the quarter tax. It is evident then that you would not get back what you paid into the state treasury, but would be taxed to help the larger and less wealthy counties.

It is evident to my mind, from the facts I have learned here and my experience in the East, that the best way for Forest Grove and vicinity to get good roads is to begin at home. It can not be done in a year, but something can be done. Choose the roads most traveled. Begin at the town and build out as far as you can this year. Prepare for more next year, and before you are hardly aware of it you will have good roads leading into Forest Grove from every direction.

JACOB MARTIN.

Cheap Sunday Rates Between Forest Grove and Portland.

Low round-trip rates have been placed in effect between Portland and Forest Grove, in either direction.

Tickets will be sold Saturdays and Sundays, and limited to return on or before the following Monday. Rate of \$1.05 round trip. Call on Southern Pacific's agents for particulars.

Blacksmith Shop at Gales Creek

Having opened a blacksmith shop at Gales Creek, I am pleased to announce to the public that I am now ready to do all kinds of blacksmithing in a good workmanlike manner. I desire those needing work in my line to call. My charges will be reasonable and work guaranteed to be first class.

IRVEN DUPRAY,
Gales Creek, Or.

Martin's feed store for field and garden seeds.

An Interesting Article on the Prune Industry.

(Written by request.)

About fifteen years ago, people in the Willamette Valley began to plant prune trees on a large scale, being influenced by the great success of the prune orchardists of Clarke County, Washington. At that time, the raising of the fruit was confined, almost exclusively, to the near neighborhood of Vancouver and the profits were very satisfactory, in fact, fortunes were made out of prunes in those days.

Large orchards were set out near Newburg, Dundee, Dallas, Salem, Corvallis and Roseburg; and these places have been prune centers ever since, although a large aggregate area was planted, in various parts of the valley, as well as around Walla Walla, and in Southern Idaho.

Some of these orchards, notably around Newburg and Dundee, contained several hundred acres. Planting continued vigorously until the hard times of 1893, since which time it has been quite moderate.

About the first prune orchard in Washington County was set by Adolph Anderson, on David's Hill, near Forest Grove.

Prior to last spring, no large orchards were set in Washington County, ten to fifteen acres usually comprising the limit; and but few new trees have been set in the last eight years.

During the past year, however, John Forbis, of Butte, Montana, has had ninety acres of prunes set on his land, north of Dilley, and Robert Alexander, who lives a little farther northwest, is setting out about thirty acres.

There are about 150 acres of bearing orchards in Washington county, most of which are in the western part and tributary to Forest Grove and Dilley. The new plantings, so near as I have been able to learn, are confined to the same district. The variety thus far planted in this county, as elsewhere in

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Opening.

My new and complete stock of Ladies' and Childrens' Hats in the latest styles will be ready for the public

March 17 and 18

I invite you to call in and see them. My prices will be right and my goods first class. Don't forget the date.

Mrs. A. E. Dixon

Main St. Forest Grove, Oregon.