

Good Roads and Marketing Problem

By W. S. Nicholson, Traffic Editor, Fruit and Produce Distributor.

Fruit and Produce Distributor is "Devoted to the Marketing Industry." Were we to interpret this narrowly, we would in all probability be compelled to confine our activities to the discussion of marketing problems alone, that is to say, merchandizing methods. We are, however, endeavoring to do a work of broader scope than that, and our investigations of marketing problems have led us far afield, and have given us a new insight into the many subjects that must be considered before the great work of proper distribution may be treated intelligently.

Thus, in our investigation work, we have found that poor transportation methods have, in many cases, been responsible for low prices, and we have accordingly been compelled to establish a Traffic Department in order to study transportation conditions, with a view to improving them, insofar as the movement of fruit and produce is concerned. In studying these transportation problems, we have found that the shipper himself has a great deal to learn about proper methods of preparing, inspecting and loading fruit, and that it is not always the carrier who is to blame when shipments "go wrong."

Effects of Bad Roads.

Now we are beginning to see that in some cases, we must search further than the shipper, and it looks as though, in the natural order of things, we are going to be led into the "Good Roads Movement."

A few days ago, the manager of a large shipping association, located along the Columbia River, visited our office. His district raises as fine strawberries as can be produced anywhere in the world, yet the growers have never made any money on this fruit. We asked him the reason for this—his answer was "Bad Roads." He told us of one man, who brought his berries to the association for shipment. They came from a farm about two miles from the shipping station; were well packed, clean, picked at the proper time, yet the berries in about two hundred cases were so badly bruised that the association inspector refused to accept them, and the grower had either to dump them or feed them to his hogs, if he had any.

In this case there was a loss of at least \$200, which, at 5 per cent, represents the interest on a principal of \$4,000. Suppose \$4,000, or a much smaller amount, had been expended on a good, permanent road from this man's

STEEL WHEELS FOR AUTOMOBILES.

PRESSED-STEEL wheels are being built for automobiles, which have great strength and no more weight than wooden wheels of the same carrying capacity. For vehicles weighing up to 1½ tons, No. 18 gauge steel is used, and this is found to be heavy enough for larger cars, although a lighter gauge would doubtless be ample for the lighter varieties of touring cars. The sheet steel is pressed cold, the first impression merely outlining the spokes, while subsequent processes cut out the intermediate steel, and round the spokes for close fitting. The wheel is assembled, the "spider" is placed in the concave side of one of the stampings, and the spoke wings closed, forming a perfect interlock. The surplus material is removed from between the spokes and the hub and rim added, while spot welding may be used between the spokes if desired.

WOMEN AND GOOD ROADS.

THE United States Department of Agriculture, working on the theory that much of the hardship suffered by women on farms is directly due to bad roads, is beginning a campaign to interest the farmers' wives in the good road movement. The department is backed by the American Highway Association.

The scheme is to have the wives of farmers study the good roads question from a practical viewpoint, and then demand of township and county officials that they spend their funds properly and direct the work of road improvement in a scientific manner.

Bulletins on road improvement will be printed for the women's use, and

place to the railroad—there are few roads in the Northwest that a few hundred dollars a mile will not put in passable condition—it is obvious that this loss would not have occurred. When we consider the thousands of miles of bad roads in the Northwest, and the thousands of fruit growers who are hauling their produce over such roads, the gross amount of loss due to bruising must run into almost unbelievable figures.

Marketing Problem.

So the study of marketing problems brings up not alone the question of selling fruit over a counter in some Eastern city for the highest possible price, but leads us into a labyrinth of complex, correlated problems—picking, packing, grading, "Good Roads" and transportation, storage, distribution, advertising, accounting—each one of which is related to and is an important factor in the ultimate returns that will be made for any given shipment.

Good roads are expensive; anything that is good costs money, but if we are losing more money by having bad roads than we could save by installing good ones, by all means let us wake up and get behind the "Good Roads Movement."

Improvements Pay.

At least let us study the merits of the movement and see whether it will pay us in actual dollars and cents; whether it will add to the value of our property; whether it will improve social conditions in our fruitgrowing districts by facilitating social intercourse with our neighbors; whether it will make it easier for the children to travel to and from school; and above all, whether it will add to our own self-respect to be able to feel, and to be able to say with pride that we are factors in a live, up-to-date, progressive community, too proud of its name and reputation as a good place to live, to countenance the wretched trails that pass for roads in so many of our growing districts today.

In conclusion, unless the grower has a good road between his home and his shipping station, all his care in preparing his produce will be wasted, and in many cases fruit that is one hundred per cent perfect when it leaves his shipping station will be so badly bruised that it will be practically worthless after the wagon haul over the rocks and ruts and chuckholes of his "road." If there is a cannery available, he may save something; if there is not, his loss will frequently be total. —From Fruit and Produce Distributor.

women's road clubs will be organized along the lines of the girls' canning clubs and the boys' corn and pig clubs. In addition to getting good traveling roads, the women will be urged to see that their husbands plant trees to provide shade along the highways and to afford protection from storms.

AUTOS PULL BINDER.

WHEN the horses of G. L. Hamm, a farmer near Williamston, Kan., played out while cutting a field of oats, two automobiles belonging to J. D. and M. F. Martin, who were visiting on the farm, were fastened to the binder and completed the work.

The tongue of the binder was removed and a rope was run through a pulley fastened on the front of the reaper. One end of the rope was tied to one car and the other end to the second car, thus making a sliding pulley so if one car pulled ahead of the other it would not have the whole job of pulling thrown upon it.

The binder pulled easily and it is said one car could have done the work alone. At the rate the field of oats was harvested thirty acres per day could have been cut.

COMBINATION PLEASURE CAR AND DELIVERY VAN.

A GERMAN automobile manufacturer has recently brought out a delivery car, which, used as a 30-horsepower sporting phaeton, holds four passengers, but, by taking out the upholstery and removing the seats, is adapted to the transportation and delivery of merchandise. The transformation may be accomplished in a few minutes.

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