

THE GOOD ROADS PROBLEM IS DISCUSSED IN PRACTICAL WAY

Washington portion of the Pacific Highway to show what the adjoining state is doing to make this a good road. They are evidently planning to make it a hard surfaced road through the state. They are not trying to do it all at once, but in sections, beginning around each town of importance, and are only building it as fast as they can pay for it. They evidently have not settled which is the best material to use, but are trying many kinds.

We have also wished to compare Washington highways with our own. We are familiar with ours from Eugene and Astoria only and, while Oregon is apparently far behind, perhaps until the question of the best kind of country road is settled it is best it should be so.

Eugene has eight miles of first-class road, partly hard surface, but mostly macadam. From Junction City to Harrisburg the highway is along the river and not good. Linn county highway is mostly a dirt road, but evidently has been dragged and is in good summer shape. On both sides of Albany there is a good gravel highway. On the north side it extends to Jefferson. Little can be said for the road from there to the Ankeny hill. From the hill to Salem, ten miles, there is a crushed rock road. Some of it has never had the surfacing done, and many places of the rest need resurfacing.

Bad Most of Way.

As the Highway leaves the pavement on North Capital street the road is bad—in winter very bad—to the city limits on the north. The next four miles is a good crushed rock road. This ends at the Labish hill and from there on to Oregon City nothing can be said in favor of the Pacific Highway. It is mud and creek holes in winter and uneven and covered with several inches of dust in summer. Near Oregon City the road is gravelled and good, but after the bridge is crossed for some miles the macadam road is rough and neglected. There is finally a good macadam road leading into Portland. On the whole road, except within the limits of the various cities, and a short distance out of Eugene, there is not a foot of paved highway.

The clay soil on which the greater part of our roads must be made cuts up into mud during the long wet winters and into deep dust in the dry summer. Some sort of hard surface for the roads subject to the heaviest loads will be necessary.

To find the best and cheapest hard surface which will endure in this climate is the problem. Bitulithic, cement and brick pavements are all expensive. On the market are a number of road oils. One known as the Richmond Road Oil No. 3 is being tried in Salem on Fourteenth street near Englewood and also at the beginning of the slough road, by Mr. Hatch, chairman of the street committee. These experiments are being watched with interest.

On the surface of a gravel road, after the dust is swept off, one-half an inch of the Richmond Road Oil is spread while hot, and covered with screenings. It is then rolled and ready for use. It is claimed this surface will wear for three years, then it will be necessary to add another half-inch layer of oil and screenings. At the end of six years a third application will be required, and then there will be an inch and a half wearing surface, the same as our paved streets, except the base will be gravel instead of crushed rock. If this is found to be sufficient, as it will cost about one-fourth as much as the regular pavements, it will make a hard surface road we can afford.

Must Crown Roads.

The first thing in building a road is to crown it and provide for drainage. Many of our supervisors make their roads flat or with so slight a crown that they soon wear flat. The crowning of a paved street is not sufficient for

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This Road in Washington.

From there on to Toledo the highway is not good. It is worked here and there as many roads are in Oregon, but no continuous nor permanent work is done. From Toledo north for many miles there is a plank road, made of laying loose boards along the ground. It makes a rough road and it would seem a short-lived and expensive one unless lumber in that part of Washington is very cheap.

South of Chehalis the road is paved with cement for five miles. The next four miles to Centralia there is a gravel road and cement pavement extends two and one-half miles north of Centralia. From there on through a gravelly country the road is more or less neglected. At Tenino some hard pavement has been laid, but this is not yet open to traffic. The road from there on to Olympia is mostly a gravel road and most of the way good. Between Olympia and Tacoma there is a first-class gravel road. This is repaired yearly and it is no doubt in fine shape the year round.

Tacoma and Seattle are nearly connected by a hard surface road. There is a break midway of a number of miles and here the road is not good. Several pavements are being tried—cement first, which seems a nice finer surface than that on our streets; next, a brick pavement, which Seattle people use much and claim is the best, but it is a very expensive pavement, requiring a cement foundation and, further, we thing it has been tried in Portland and has not proven satisfactory. Next is Warrenite pavement and, as the road draws near Seattle macadam which the autos by seeking off the top surface have made rough. North of Seattle a brick pavement highway continues for miles along Lake Washington.

Gravel Road Is Fine.

There is a high-class gravelled road from the King county line to near Everett. The gravel must be ten or twelve inches deep, with a fine gravel top surface. It is almost as smooth and even as a pavement. On both sides of Everett the road is hard surfaced for some miles. On the north side about five miles of cement road is not yet hard enough to use. From East Stanwood to Stanwood there is another stretch of a mile of hard surface highway. The remaining road to the British line is good and bad as they happen to have an industrious or an indifferent supervisor.

We have gone into details about the

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on unpaved road. There must be more crown to give good service. We are of the opinion that the practicable country road for Oregon is a gravel road, but it must be well crowned, as wherever water stands, it will wear out. Whatever may be said for dragged dirt roads, and they are better than neglected ones, the unusual water fall of Oregon winters and the deep dust of the summers make them good roads only for a short season each spring and fall.

It will take from six to twelve inches of gravel to hold up the year around, depending upon the amount of use required of the road. The road should not be less than sixteen feet wide. Our road builders make the gravelled portion of the road but eight feet wide. This does not give room to pass. A sixteen foot road will permit passing, but automobiles will have to slow down to do it safely. When the roads are wet an automobile is helpless off the gravel; if one needs a wagon or a buggy it is compelled to stay on an eight foot road, for to attempt to leave it means to get stuck. Automobiles do not like to do this, for it seems selfish not to give the half of the road every man is entitled to and, worse still, some times a woman driver is met, and to be compelled to require her to drive out of the road is far from pleasant. We hope that all future roads built will be well crowned, drained and sixteen feet wide.

First of all we need a substantial Pacific Highway; then like roads to the important towns in this and Polk county. Should the Richmond Road Oil surface prove a success, such roads would cost for the first three years about three thousand dollars a mile.

If the Oil Is Success.

A road sixteen feet wide, well turpiked, drained and gravelled with ten inches of gravel, packed with clay for a binder, will cost about sixteen hundred dollars a mile. If this is used as a foundation, for a wearing surface the Richmond Road Oil one-half an inch thick, with screenings rolled in, can be placed on the same road for fourteen hundred dollars and we will have a good road for three thousand dollars a mile. At the end of three years another half inch of this wearing surface will need to be placed on top and at the end of six years a third, then at the cost of five or six thousand dollars a mile there will be the same road we have on our streets, but the taxes of six years instead of one will pay the bill.

This, to be sure, is speculation, for we have to demonstrate that the Richmond Road Oil will do that which is claimed for it, but while waiting the graveling should be done. We will then have good roads and a foundation for whatever hard surface road we finally decide upon. Where the traffic is heavy the gravel should be ten to twelve inches thick, but six inches will be sufficient gravel for the usual country roads. In making the base it is well to use clay as a binder, but to get a smooth surface largely free from mud and dust there should be a top dressing of fine gravel.

All roads, whatever they are built of, must have repairs. Even if we paved our highways they would require constant attention. Otherwise in a few years they would be ruined. A gravel road once properly built can be kept in repair at a minimum cost, but it must have annual attention. Each spring just before the dry weather begins roads should be gone over and the holes, made by the winter, filled and the surface leveled again.

Vancouver Island Roads.

On Vancouver Island the country roads are everywhere made of gravel, and they are fine roads. While their soil is such that the maintaining of a road is not so much of a problem as with us, these roads are kept in good condition by care. A wagon loaded with gravel, in charge of two men, goes over the roads each spring, filling and repairing all places that need it. The cost is light because they can cover some miles each day.

There the roads are made and cared for by the government. Men expert in road building are employed, and they

give their time to it. Here we have the counties divided into many road districts and each district has a supervisor. Some of these do good work and brag results, but there is no concerted action, and a good stretch of road is sure to be followed by very bad ones.

After traveling about in British Columbia everywhere on good gravel roads, to cross the line at Blaine and proceed down to Seattle, the irregularities of the work done by various supervisors is forcibly set before one and the inferiority of the system is evident.

A Marion county supervisor's explanation of why he paid so little attention to his road was because when he looked after the roads his own place suffered and he could ill afford to make good roads at the expense of the prosperity of his farm. We think he is right and that road supervisors should be a business of itself, that the supervisor should be employed by the year, given a much larger district, selected because of his fitness for the place, and devote all his time to the roads; build good roads as fast as practicable and at all times keep those built in good repair.

Autos Run Macadam.

The automobile seems to have undone the macadam road. It is claimed that it sucks up the surface and ruins the road. Years ago Victoria was noted for its macadam drives, but now where they have not been superseded by a hard surface they are rough and wagons and buggies go bumping over them as well as automobiles.

It is stated that New York state has spent fifty millions of dollars on macadam roads and now it is all a waste and they are looking for some road that will meet the needs of country traffic and one the automobile will not destroy. If they are covered with some material such as the Richmond Road Oil it is claimed to be they will again become good roads.

Even the roads built by Julius Caesar two thousand years ago, which have been in use ever since, are at last giving away, owing to the action of the automobile, and they too will have to be protected.

If we use a top surface a gravel foundation is as good as one of macadam and, as it costs less, it is the base to consider.

Henton, Polk and Yamhill counties are all in advance of our county in making gravel roads. Their work is being done consecutively. From Eugene to Corvallis the road is good nearly all the way. In Polk and Yamhill counties miles of the main roads are

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gravelled and level. Marion county to one track. The result is that soon graveling is sort of a patch work, good in spots, but in many cases neglected, sets no matter how much foundation there is, and it happens as quickly to a macadam road as any other. If the roads were sixteen feet wide it would not be necessary to always go in the same groove and the keeping of the surface even would be much less difficult.

Light oil on a road keeps the dust down and in a measure protects the road. No dust makes them much more satisfactory to travel on, but otherwise it adds but little. It is well to consider the comfort of the users, but the first importance is a smooth and permanent road.

Whatever his business, every man is benefited by prosperity. Good roads will contribute more prosperity than any one thing, so all should work in the cause and hurry the building of good roads in every district of this country.

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