

**"The Man Who Knows" Answers "Taxpayer" and "Reader" And Makes Statements That Should Awaken Serious Thought**

Editors Courier:  
 Answering "Taxpayer" in your issue of March 10, (it should have been done sooner, but the paper of that date is just to hand), will say that, as a matter of course the cost of macadamizing a road depends largely upon the depth and width of the material placed, as well as the interest taken in the work.

Thirteen hundred and twenty cubic yards of gravel or crushed rock, will not cover a surface one mile long, twelve feet wide and seven inches thick when rolled; as "Taxpayer" claims it will; nor do we claim that \$1,400 will place that amount of macadam on a road.

But why seven inches when the standard work, the county over, is usually but six inches, and much of it no more than five.

Farmers Bulletin No. 338, issued by the U. S. Dept. of Agriculture, and which Taxpayer can get for the asking, gives data on much road work, taken from the carefully kept records of many parts of the East where they have to provide for both light traffic and heavy tonnage, several hundred times greater than Fulton county roads will ever be called upon to carry, and in scarcely a single case is more than six inches of crushed rock or gravel used. While practically all the roads in Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, New York and New Jersey are but six inches in the center and sloping to four inches at the sides, with an average depth of five inches. And this notwithstanding the low and often swampy character of the soil.

Coming nearer home, Dixon county, Tenn., is covering her roads an average depth of six inches and is using the same material as contemplated by our Fiscal court for Fulton county roads.

Again, the same difference may be manifest in the width, and a corresponding difference in the cost. Twelve feet for a much traveled road is not too wide. But many thoroughfares in the East, where the traffic is a hundred times greater than it will ever be on any road in Fulton county, are but 10 and 11 feet in width. While Dixon county, Tenn., above referred to, is building her roads but 9 feet. And, although some of our main roads we think should be not less than twelve feet, notably the so-called State road, between here and Hickman, perhaps some others; yet there seems little excuse for the metaling of twelve feet of surface, over a large part of the roads in the county for the accommodation of not more than one or two families to the mile, and where not over half a dozen vehicles and they mostly light ones, will pass in any twenty-four hours.

But all this is with the State Highway Commissioner and the Fiscal Court and should it become a question as to how much can be expended on a mile of roadway, rather than how much, good, serviceable road can be macadamized for a given sum of money, there will be a chance for a wide margin in results obtained. And as in politics and other service, public or private, the people will get in road building just what they deserve, and no more.

In building the great Lincoln

Highway, stretching from New York to San Francisco, through 3,400 miles of swamp prairie, desert and mountain, a single fifteen mile section in the State of Wyoming has cost \$50,000. But the work includes, among other things, three cuts through solid rock, ranging from one-half to one and a quarter miles long, and from 7 to 18 feet in depth, with many other smaller cuts and corresponding fills. It has a twelve foot roadbed with macadamized surface, save about two and a half miles, which is solid concrete. Fulton county furnishes no such engineering problems but we have known nearly as much money to have been carelessly, not to say criminally, spent in building a like distance over a fine rolling prairie. Hence we were not figuring on what may or will, but what could be done with \$300,000. And statistics from many reliable sources will fully bear out our statements.

We know nothing of the conditions under which Mr. Cresop, of Okolona, Miss., built his roads which cost an average of \$4,000 per mile, but a postal card to the Massachusetts Highway Commission will bring "Taxpayer" a copy of their report, and he will learn that in that State, their 13 foot roads, built for the heaviest traffic, including auto service which is admitted hardest of all, and which is many times more than it will ever be in Fulton county, and where rock and labor costs practically twice the amount paid here, owing to higher wages and shorter hour (eight hours is their limit of a day's work) still, the average cost is far below the cost given by your Mr. Cresop. Nor do I know what Mr. Kelley, the civil engineer of Union City, found, but nearer than either is Dixon County, Tenn., where they are graveling 65 miles of public road, much of it finished, at a contract price of \$1,400 for metaling a depth of six inches after rolling. Where new lines are run and the road changed, requiring surveying and grading, the cost reaches around \$2,300 per mile. The surveying costing \$100 and the grading from \$1,800 to \$1,000, owing to the nature of the work.

But it is not contemplated that new lines will be laid in Fulton county. The roads are already fixed and for the most part graded. We assumed that this work was done and that the roadbed was ready for the macadam. Hence we give prices on macadamizing only, and insist that our figures were liberal.

The writer has had some experience as a road builder; has been somewhat observant of the work of others, and has given some time to the study of road building problems and the cost; and in but very few instances of public road construction, and those few only for very heavy traffic, with roadbeds of fifteen feet or more in width and with 8 inches or more in depth of metaling, have we any records of carefully supervised, systematized and practical road building, where the cost of macadamizing approximated the figures given by Mr. Cresop, reaching as they do, well nigh the remarkable cost given for the expensive piece of roadway built on the famous Lincoln Highway, crossing the mountains on its way to the Pacific. It is

well to remember that there is road building and there is road supervision and road supervision.

A letter with a return stamp for reply sent to the postmaster at Dixon, Tenn., will verify my statements as to the cost of metaling in that nearby county with material from Camden, our nearest source of supply.

Again we have no knowledge of what Obion county contemplates in the way of road build-

ing Bulletin No. 6, which contains all the road laws of the State as they stand today, of which chapter 87 is of most importance in this connection. This act approved March 25, 1914, fills nearly 15 pages of the bulletin and would be rather lengthy for any of our county papers to publish, and an expense they can ill afford, since who cares to "know" can obtain the information for so slight an expense. But perhaps "Reader" will take

council or any governing body of any municipality, to pass a resolution stating that the public interest demands the improvement of a road, and any of said municipalities may raise by taxation, funds to pay the cost of construction of any road, or may issue bonds for the payment of same, in the manner prescribed by law.

Sec. 8 gives Fiscal Court and State Road Commissioner power to select roads to be improved. Secs. 9, 10 and 11 define the

is one, are paying one billion dollars in cold cash every year to King Mud. An amount sufficient to build and connect up forty magnificent transcontinental highways, 15 feet wide, fully macadamized and where needed, concreted; extending from ocean to ocean. Which in the language of the street arab, "is going some" for liberality—to the other fellow, and robbery to their own children.

Nor is this all nor the worse. For this does not take into account the great, the amazing, the appalling, the eternal education and moral loss to the farmer's children—the boys and girls—the country—which is directly chargeable to bad roads. "Reader" and "Taxpayer," are you among the farmers who are willing to continue this astounding loss? Are you of the farmers who take more interest in the training and care—the education—of a mule calf than of your own or daughter's?

Fulton county district school statistics, covering the past winter, are on the desk before "The Man Who Knows," duplicates of the teachers' reports, and they show the mad of the past winter reduced the school attendance through the month, in one district from 38 to 15, in another from 12 to 30, in another from 41 to 12, and in another from 20 for dry roads to 13 for the mud months. Can children thus handicapped in life's battle, rise up and call parents "blessed" when statistics gathered by the U. S. Labor Bureau, show that the difference in the average wages of the educated man, as compared with the uneducated, fixes the actual cash value of each day spent in school by you boy, as it increases his earning capacity and prepares him for the struggle of life, which is yearly becoming more and more severe at a little over \$11. Figured on this basis of the actual conditions which obtain in the U. S. today, which is becoming more disastrous yearly, of how many hundreds of thousands of dollars have the farmers of Fulton county robbed their posterity in the past ten years of bad roads, not to mention the other many trivial excuses which have kept their children from school.

You may think your boy is not endowed by nature to profit by the schooling, but any hundred boys of Fulton county will favorably compare with any hundred in other parts of our country, and every day of absence from school has robbed each hundred of those boys of eleven hundred dollars. How many times eleven hundred dollars were the boys and girls of Fulton county robbed by the bad roads of the past winter? What taxpaying farmer will dare to approximate it?

Today, in Fulton county, good roads is the issue. "Reader" and "Taxpayer" meet it with an intelligent understanding of its relation to the financial, the educational and the religious life of the country people, for they are the ones most to be benefitted. And we again insist that good roads are possible, not only with out increasing your taxes to the extent of one single farthing, but at a very large saving of money to the taxpayers.

Respectfully submitted by,  
 "The Man Who Knows,"  
 Lock box No. 352. Fulton, Ky.

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ing or what Mr. Kelly figured on. He doubtless knows his business and has figured from data given him. Obion county may have to relay many of her roads. This will mean the condemning of more or less property for the new roads; it will mean grading, with the necessary cutting and filling, bridge and culvert building, not to mention the cost of surveying, and many an incidental expense which Fulton county will not have, and which was not taken into consideration. Our figures comprised only and solely the cost of graveling, in sufficient width and depth to amply care for the traffic of the county over our 210 miles, more or less of road, and we insist that the work can be substantially done within the estimates given, as both our own experience and reliable statistics amply prove.

Coming now to "Reader" in the last issue of the Courier, will say, a postal card request sent to the Department of Public Roads, Frankfort, Ky., will bring

the word of "The Man Who Knows" when we say we have not "garbled" the wording of the act, in our efforts to shorten it for the help of the printer, but have given the true spirit of the language, albeit we have omitted and changed much of the verbiage.

Sec. 1 of the act gives the State's Commissioner of Public Roads general supervision over all the roads built or maintained in whole or in part by State aid; provides for the collection of information; the education of the public to create an interest in good roads, etc.

Sec. 2 announces the creation of a system of public highways, to which State aid will be furnished.

Secs. 3 and 4 provide the means whereby the State may aid counties in surveying, making maps, locating and constructing roads, which is provided by a State road tax of 5 cents on each hundred dollars of all real, personal, franchises and all intangible property not exempt from taxation. Sec. 5 provides that this money shall be set apart to the credit of the State Road Fund to be apportioned among the several counties applying, the amount to be apportioned on the basis of the taxes collected and to be used for the building of public roads, including interest on any bonded indebtedness created for public roads, until such county shall have received an amount equal to one half of all the moneys expended in constructing or reconstructing public roads. No county to receive in any one year more than two per cent of the total amount collected for the public road fund, but to receive from this fund in subsequent years such further amounts as will equal one half of the money thus spent. Any balance remaining in the State Road Fund after each year's apportionment to be retained and included in the next year's appropriations.

Sec. 6 "If any county shall not avail itself of the aid, the amount shall remain in the State Road Fund to be apportioned among the counties at the next annual apportionment."

Sec. 7, authorizes the Fiscal Court of the county, the town

character of the improvements to be made, including the crowning of the roadbed, ditches, etc., which must be in conformity to the engineering plans of the State Commissioner and the Fiscal Court, and for advertising for bids on same.

Secs. 12, 13 and 14 provide for the time and manner of filing bids; the time and manner of payment of contracts; appointment of an inspector, etc.

The above are probably the sections in which "Reader" will be most interested; but we suggest that he send to the addresses given above for Good Roads Bulletins, and we opine that he also will soon "know" some things that will give him a better grip on himself and open his eyes to some of the enormous expense that farmers are bearing yearly for the sake of traveling in the mud. If he goes far enough into it, he will learn that the farmers, of which we suppose he

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