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Public Affairs.

From the Maryland Farmer.

PUBLIC ROADS.

The committee appointed by the late Road Convention, assembled on the 22d Aug. at 12 M. at the Rooms of the State Agricultural Society in Baltimore, and after some general conversation between the members from various parts of the State, Mr. D. Lawrence, of Howard Co., called the meeting to order as chairman of the committee, and stated all that had been done by the committee, since it was appointed, at its different meetings, and he then called the Hon. A. B. Davis, temporarily to the chair, whilst he read and explained the report incorporating provisions of a Law, which he had prepared at the instance of most of the members of the committee who were present at the former meetings. On taking the chair, Mr. Davis, spoke in substance as follows:

Of the Location of Public Roads.

Public roads should be located as nearly as possible to a horizontal line. Not only does the experience of all humane and observant reinsmen and teamsters teach this—but a little study of the anatomical structure of the horse will convince the most indifferent and skeptical upon this point. The strength of all animals is derived from, and lies in the virtebræ or back-bone. That of man being vertical, he is seen with ease and agility climbing steep ascents, lofty ladders and successive flights of stair steps. The most familiar example of the ease with which heavy loads are carried by man on the shoulder, is that of the hod carrier and the miller. The horse being on all fours—his virtebræ is directly at right angles to that of man—and when at ease is parallel with the level space which he always selects. He is frequently seen standing across his stall to bring himself as nearly as possible to this horizontal position. Hence, when forced upon steep grades, he is out of his natural position, and deprived of the ability to exert the full strength with which nature has endowed him—and hence loss of power, loss of speed, and loss of full usefulness to his owner. Both humanity and economy demand that this great and too-frequent error in the location of public roads, should as far as possible be lessened in old roads and avoided in the new. A mistake however, in location is fatal, because when once made, it cannot afterwards be easily corrected.

Of the Construction of Roads.

Hardness and smoothness are the essentials of a good road. To obtain this, perfect drainage is indispensable. A writer upon roads his observed that "one dollar in drainage under a road, is worth ten dollars spent upon its surface." So important is shorough drainage to obtain a smooth and hard road track. The superior value of a hard road is witnessed every winter in the country, when farmers avail themselves of severe freezing weather, when the ground is hard frozen for their heaviest hauling. Nothing can be equal to a hard frozen road, when worn to smoothness by a few days travel. The books more handsomely illustrate the importance of a hard as well as a smooth road, by supposing a marble projected upon a piece of velvet stretched beside a cake of ice of equal length; and vice versa. The experiment will soon satisfy the most incredulous that smoothness without hardness will never make a perfect road.

Of the Repair of Public Roads.

To obtain the hardness and smoothness insisted upon in the preceding head, public roads thould be kept up rather than repaired. The old adage, "that a stitch in time saves nine," is pre-eminently applicable to the repair of roads. When suffered to dilapidate so as to need repair, two positive wrongs are committed.

First, a breach of contract with the travelling public, and second, a loss and damage to the proprietors of the road. To keep up a road, as is here suggested, requires skill, judgment and perfect familiarity, by frequent inspection of the road. The common practice of appointing supervisors from any other consideration than that of fitness for the office, and interest in and acquaintance with the road, is a fraud upon the public who use the road, and a direct robbery of those at whose expense it has to be kept up, whether the road be owned and managed by the county, through their County Commissioners, or by a private corporation. Undoubtedly the kind of road most likely to obtain the perfection herein insisted upon is a toll road. Because first, it is the interest of those who build the road to keep it up; secondly, because the owners can be made to feel the penalty of neglect, and thirdly; because it is kept up at the expense of those only who use it, and consequently is the more equitable than any other mode of laying out, and keeping up public roads. The objection to free county roads is, that the responsibility of construction and repair, is so diffused as to avoid the penalty of neglect and mismanagement; and further the tax paying public never will be satisfied with a system which taxes them for improvements in which they have no interests and never see or use. Therefore the toll road becomes the only equitable alternative; but to induce the construction of toll roads, authority must be given to lay a toll sufficient to reimburse the capital necessary for their construction and preservation.

Where the old county system of laying out and keeping in repair public roads is adhered to, I would suggest that counties be divided into much smaller road districts than at present, and upon each separate road district be thrown the expense and responsibility of the construction and repair of its own roads. The object of this suggestion is to concentrate responsibility, and to bring public and private interest into as close proximity as possible.

As an inducement to individuals to construct toll roads, the system adopted in Washington county, of subscribing on the part of the county one-fifth or more the cost of each mile of Turnpike, appears to be a good one, and works I understand satisfactory to the people. The effect is to encourage the construction of Turnpikes, and to lessen the expense of keeping up indifferent county roads by general taxation.

The Effects of Good Roads.

The first and most striking effect of good roads, is the increased value they at once impart to land adjacent and convenient thereto. I have seen land increased from one hundred to one thousand per cent. by the opening of a good road. I have never seen it depreciated.

The second and almost equally beneficial result, is in its social effect. By good roads, a community is compacted, and brought closer together. Mutual sympathies grow up, and mutual schemes for advancement and improvement soon follow: schools, churches and lyceums are built and patronized, and all the concomitants of a homogenious people are soon developed, rendering such a people as prosperous, happy and contented as it is possible in this life to be.

With such results if these crude suggestions shall obtain the approval of the convention, and through its influence, be embodied in the form of law, the good old State of Maryland will take an important step onward, and soon be what her geographical position, mild climate and generous soil entitle her to rank as one of the most populous, intelligent, and wealthy States of the Union.

At the conclusion of Mr. D.'s remarks, Mr. William Webster was appointed Secretary. and Mr. Lawrence read his report. It is a lengthy and elaborate report, advocating the District system, with many novel features, and shows great labor and research.—It was pretty thoroughly ventilated in the discussion of its merits by Messrs. Davis of Montgomery, Webster, of Baltimore county; Dorsey, of Howard; Whitely, of Baltimore county; Walker, of Prince George's; Elliott, of St. Mary's; and Dorsey, of Carroll. The committee finally determined to submit it to the convention to be reassembled upon the call of the President. On motion of D. Lawrence, Esq., a letter was prepared, requesting Col. W. W. W. Bowie, President of the Convention, to call it, on the 10th of October, at 7.30 P. M. at Raine's Buildings, in Baltimore City. The committee then adjourned to that day.

The following is a copy of the Act proposed by Mr. Lawrence, which is to be the subject of discussion at the next Road Convention, and if adopted, to be submitted to the Legislature at its next session for their adoption:

Section 1. The voters of the State of Maryland shall assemble at their usual voting places in their respective election districts on the first Saturday of March of each year at the hour of two P. M., (of which due notice shall be given by the sheriff of the county in the manner now prescribed by law for other elections, and shall elect by ballot a District Road Commissioner, who shall serve for twelve months, and until his successor shall replace him.

Sec. 2. The District Road Commissioners (that is to say, one commissioner from each election district in the county,) shall constitute a Board of County Road Commissioners, sue and be sued as such, etc., and shall meet on the first Tuesday of each month, or oftener if their duties shall demand it, at the Court House, (in apartments which the County Commissioners shall furnish them,) for the transaction of business; the first Board, however, and all newly elected Boards, shall hold their first meeting on the first Tuesday after the first Saturday in March, and on the first Tuesday of each month thereafter.

Sec. 3. The County Board of Road Commissioners, at their first meeting in March, shall elect a President and Secretary, (who shall serve as Treasurer,) from their own number, and shall proceed to levy a labor tax upon the taxable property of the county which in their judgment shall be necessary for the repair of the public roads thereof, which tax shall be paid in labor upon the road near the premises so taxed, and in the road district specified by the Commissioner; or may be commuted by the payment to the overseer of $1.50 for each day of the said tax.

Sec. 4. Within ten days from such meeting it shall be the duty of the Road Commissioners—each in his own election district—to lay off the roads into road districts of a length suitable for their repair, not exceeding three miles, and shall appoint within the ten days specified for each road district an Overseer of Highways, and the said road district shall be properly numbered in a book which the District Commissioner shall keep for the purpose, together with the limits of each road district; at the time of such appointment of an overseer, and by the 20th of March, the Road Commissioners shall furnish each Overseer a list of the persons taxed in his road district, with the amount of tax in days for each person so taxed to pay, and eight hours shall constitute a day for the duties required by this Act.

Sec. 5. The Overseer shall then give at least two days' notice to each person on his list to assemble at a certain place on the highway, for the purpose of its repair; but the immediate payment of the commutation money shall exempt the person so paying from such highway labor, and a verbal notice at the person's usual place of abode shall be considered a legal service.

Sec. 6. And the persons so taxed shall be allowed to work out the said tax at the following rates for each day's service of the articles mentioned:

For each Pair of Horses or Working Cattle—one day.
For each Cart or wagon in use.....one day.
" Plow or Scraper ..... "
" Hand over eighteen..... "

Sec. 7. The Overseer shall keep a correct account of the amount of tax paid in labor or money, or remaining unpaid, by each person; make returns under oath, therefor, to the District Road Commissioner; see that two-thirds at least of the road tax is worked out before the first day of May, and the remainder before the first day of October; cause all loose stone to be removed from the road previous to the first day of August, and also all injurious and useless vegetation to be cut down once before the first day of September, with the exercise of discretion in regard to such growth as may afford proper shade to the highway; and shall be liable to a fine of ten dollars for neglect of duty, and shall receive one dollar per day for his services the whole amount not to exceed $5 per annum, the object being to annul the compensation feature as soon as the law shall be thoroughly established, as the Overseers in other States are not paid, as they do but little more work than their tax calls for.

Sec. 8. All male persons over eighteen years of age, not taxed by the provisions of Sec. 3, and physically qualified, shall work two days on the public roads in each year, under the direction of the Overseer of Highways, or may commute the same by payment to the Overseer of $1.50 for each day of the tax unpaid, provided this section shall not apply to operatives in factories, nor residents of corporate towns.

Sec. 9. It shall further be the duty of the District Commissioner to see that the roads in his district are promptly, regularly and efficiently repaired—made convex, with proper culverts and water bay, and guide-board at each cross roads—within the time specified; issue directions to the Overseers, in regard to the most effectual mode of repair, which directions, together with the duties of Overseers, as specified by this Act, shall be printed on the Tax List and Road Warrant of each Overseer; collect the judgments which he shall render, not disposed of by Sec. 15; make returns to the County Board of the amount of money appropriated by his district for road purposes, as provided in Sec. 13; give orders on the Treasurer of the County Board for such monies as shall be expended on the roads of his district, in accordance with the intention of Sec. 13; take receipts from Overseers for such implements as shall be furnished them, and see that said implements are handed over to succeeding Overseers; and for all services required by this Act he shall receive one dollar and fifty cents for each day so occupied, the whole amount not to exceed two hundred dollars per annum, to be paid by the district which elected him.

Sec. 10. It shall further be the duty of the County Board of Road Commissioners to build such bridges between road districts, and assist in building such joint bridges between counties as shall be necessary; provide for the repair of the public roads in such road or election districts as shall fail to comply with the provisions of this Act, the expenses thereof to be borne by such districts; fill any vacancy in their number from the district to be represented; make additional provision for the repair of highways and bridges when in case of special necessity, by virtue of a thinly settled district, public calamity, or other good and sufficient cause the condition of the highways shall demand it; make requisition on the County Commissioners for monies expended according to Sections 17 and 18; furnish such implements to Overseers as, in the exercise of a strict and judicious economy, they shall deem necessary, the amount not to exceed five hundred dollars per annum; hear and decide all cases which shall arise under this act, and exercise exclusive control over the public roads of the county, and all questions which shall arise concerning their repair and to levy a money tax (in addition to the labor tax mentioned in Sec. 3.) upon the taxable property of the county which shall be sufficient to meet the expenses incurred hereby.

Sec. 11. The requisition for money of the County Board of Road Commissioners upon the County Commissioners shall include the levy mentioned in Sec. 10, and also the amounts respectively appropriated by the election districts, and shall be signed by the President and Treasurer of the Road Commissioners; and the amount which shall be appropriated by any election district, according to the provisions of Sec. 13, shall be levied upon the property of that district, and applied to the improvement of the roads and bridges of that district, and to no other.

Sec. 12. The District Commissioners shall enter into such bonds for the faithful performance of their duties as the County Board shall deem necessary, and the Treasurer of the County Board shall deem necessary, and the Treasurer of the County Board shall give bond to the County Board in the sum of five thousand dollars for the faithful performance of the duties of his office.

Sec. 13. At the district elections called for in Sec. 1 of this Act, the people of each election district shall determine what amount of money shall be levied upon the district for the repair of the roads and bridges thereof, in addition to the general labor levy for the same purpose, upon the taxable property of the county, as required by Sec. 3.

Sec. 14. In case of neglect or refusal of any person taxed to comply with the provisions of this Act, the District Commissioner shall not later than the 1st day of October, duly notify (at least five days beforehand,) the said person of the charge against him, and the time and place, which shall be the election district in which such person shall reside, of hearing the case. Should the charge be sustained, or the party fail to appear, the Commissioner shall give judgment against him to the amount of $1,50 for each day of the said person's tax unpaid, and the said person shall have the right of appeal to the County Board, whose decision shall be final; but the party so appealing shall do so within thirty days, by giving security which shall be acceptable to the Commissioner for the prompt payment of the amount of the tax should the decision of the County Board be adverse to the party appealing.

The District Commissioner shall then repair such roads as shall not have been repaired, and work out the unpaid taxes to the full amount of said tax unpaid, at the expense of the delinquents, and which when paid shall be in discharge of the judgments rendered against the parties so refusing or neglecting to pay.

Sec. 15. All road-tax judgments remaining unpaid at the expiration of the year shall be forwarded by the District Commissioners to the County Board, who shall make a requisition upon the County Commissioners for the amounts, and the County Commissioners shall then at the next regular levy include the said amounts in the levy, and against the property of the parties against whom they stand.

Sec. 16. Where the parties against whom judgment has been given by the District Commissioners possess no taxable property, the said judgment shall be of equal force and effect before the law as other judgments rendered by Justices of the Peace for debt, and for their collection any amount of money may be attached, without the usual reservation of $——in favor of the debtor; or—no property shall be exempt from execution for its collection, (see Sec. 44, p. 11, Constitution of Maryland;) or—

Hard Roads.

Sec. 17. At their first meeting in March of each year the County Board of Road Commissioners shall issue a call—to which due publicity shall be given in the county newspapers—to the people to assemble in their respective election districts, at the usual voting places, on the last Saturday in March to vote what thoroughfares, if any, shall be graded and macadamized—it being the intent of this Act that at least two of the main and most frequently used highways of each county shall be so graded and macadamized. Should the people then by means of paid subscriptions to a joint Stock Company, voluntary labors or other means, grade and macadamize one-half of the said road or roads, that is to say, expend upon the said road or roads one-half of such amount as in the judgment of the County Board shall be necessary to grade and macadamize the whole of the said road or roads, then the County Commissioners—after the conditions of Sec. 54, Article 3d of the Constitution shall have been complied with—shall issue the bonds of the County for the remainder of the amount necessary to complete the road or roads, and payable in ten years, and the County Board of Road Commissioners shall subscribe to the stock of the Company, in case the improvements were made by a Company, an amount equal to those bonds, which shall be devoted to the completion of the road; and the County shall be entitled to a representation by a member of the County Road Commissioners in the meetings of the Company equal to its share in the stock of the Company, and to all other rights and privileges enjoyed by other stock holders. In case the improvements were made by the voluntary labors of the people, then the County Board shall proceed to expend an equal amount upon the road in such manner as shall be most effectual.

Sec. 18. In case any party or parties shall desire to spend in improvements on the county roads or bridges any certain amount, by stating, in writing, the amount and specific object to which it is to be applied, to the County Board, and receiving their permission to make such improvement, the said party or parties may do so, and the County Board shall, upon sufficient evidence of the expenditure of the amount, and the accomplishment of the object specified in the petition, give the party or parties so improving the road or bridge an order on the Treasurer of the County Board for one-half of the amount so expended.

Opening Roads.

Sec. 19. All applications for new roads shall be made to the District Commissioner, who shall give at least five days' notice beforehand in writing at three principal places in the vicinity of the proposed road of the time and place of hearing the said application, and any objections thereto. Should the proposed road in the judgment of the Commissioner be necessary, he shall proceed to appoint three disinterested Examiners and Commissioners for the same, and take such other measures as are prescribed for such cases; any party, however, shall have the right of appeal within thirty days to the County Board of Road Commissioners, who shall within thirty days hear and decide the question, after taking such measures as shall be necessary to give all parties interested a full and impartial hearing. Should the road be granted, and any person still remain opposed to the opening of the said road, he may demand a Board of Inquiry, and the County Board shall then summon three disinterested persons, who shall have had no previous connection with the proceedings relating thereto, as such Board of Injuiry, who shall fully examine the premises in dispute, and make a report of such examination to the County Board within thirty-five days from their appointment, and the County Board shall then proceed to hear anew all the testimony in the matter, and shall finally decide the question without any appeal therefrom; and for his services under this Sec. each Examiner or member of a Board of Inquiry shall receive $1.50 per day for such service, the whole amount not to exceed $5 for each person so appointed.

Gates.

Sec. 20. All gates now obstructing the free use of the county thoroughfares shall be gradually abolished by such means as shall be decided upon by the Road Commissioners and County Commissioners, acting together, of the respective counties, provided, however, that no new gates shall henceforth be erected, and that all gates shall be removed within ten years from the passage of this Act.

Vacating Roads.

Sec. 21. All proceedings for vacating roads shall be the same as those prescribed in Sec. 19 for opening roads.

Sec. 22. No officer appointed under this Act shall be required to serve as juror during his term of office.

Sec. 23. Any person who shall obstruct free travel in any manner shall be liable for all damages resulting therefrom, and the District Commissioner shall have power to sue such person whenever in his judgment the case shall demand it.

Selected Miscellany.

Newspapers.

Their value is by no means appreciated, but the rapidity with which people are waking up to their necessity and usefulness is one of the significant signs of the times. Few families are now content with a single newspaper. The thirst for knowledge is not easily satiated, and books, though useful—yea, absolutely necessary in their place, fail to meet the demands of youth or age. The village newspaper is eagerly sought and its contents as eagerly devoured. Then comes the demand for the county news, state news, national and foreign news. Next to the political come the literary, and then the scientific journals. Lastly, and above all, come the moral and religious journals. This variety is demanded to satisfy the cravings of the active mind.

Newspapers are also valuable to material prosperity. They advertise the village, county or locality. They spread before the reader a map on which may be traced character, desigh, progress. If a stranger calls at a hotel he first inquires for the village newspaper; if a friend comes from a distance, the very next thing after a family greeting, he inquires for your village or county newspaper, and you feel discomfited if you are unable to find a late copy, and confounded if you are compelled to say you do not take it.

The newspaper is just as necessary to fit a man for his true position in life as food or raiment. Show us a ragged, barefoot boy rather than an ignorant one. His head will cover his feet in after life if he is well supplied with newspapers. Show us the child that is eager for newspapers. He will make the man of mark in after life if you gratify that desire for knowledge.—Other things being equal, it is a rule that never fails. Give the children newspapers.

CATCHING SHAD WITH HOOK AND LINE.—It has been the popular notion in this country that shad could not be induced to take a bait, and when captured it must be by the net in some form. Seth Green has a letter from Thomas Chalmers, dated at Holyoke, on the Connecticut, giving the results of his experiments at baiting shad, in company with another named George Murray. The writer says, notwithstanding the old saying that shad will not take bait, he and his companion went to Holyoke two years ago and began making observations and experiments. They had never visited a shad stream before.

A careful examination of the stomach of the shad gave no light as to what they fed upon. Various kinds of bait, natural and artificial, were tried, and for a considerable time without satisfactory result. At length some flies were dressed in a peculiar manner, and these the shad took, and were captured in considerable numbers with hook and line. In July, 1871, 168 shad were taken on two poles. Three flies were used on one line, and sometimes as many as three shad were taken at one cast—the whole weighing eight and a-half pounds. The present season has not been so good, owing partly to rolly water, but the sport has been fair. In one evening, between 7 and 8:30, the two angles took in twenty shad on hooks and lines. Mr. Chalmers says that from childhood he has been given to sport with rod and line, and thinks the catching of shad with hook and line the best angling he has found.—*Rochester Union.*

FOR THE LADIES.—We publish the following for the benefit of our lady readers: If you have been picking or handling any acid fruit and have stained your hands, wash them in clear water, wipe them lightly and while they are yet moist strike a match and shut your hands around it so as to catch the smoke, and the stain will disappear. If you have stained your muslin or gingham or white dress, with berries, before wetting the cloth with anything else pour boiling water through the stains and they will disappear. Before fruit juice dries it can often be removed by cold water, using a sponge or towel, if necessary. Rubbing the fingers with the inside of the parings of apples will remove most of the stains caused by paring. Ink, also, if it be washed out or sopped up from the carpet with cold water immediately when it is spilled, can be almost entirely removed.

Good actions proceed as naturally from good thoughts as roses from their bushes, and bad actions from bad thoughts, as naturally as unwholesome weeds and plants from the unhealthy and impure places of the earth.

SILENT INFLUENCE.—We are touching our fellow beings on all sides. They are affected for good or for evil by what we are, by what we say and do, even by what we think and feel. May flowers in the parlor breathe their fragrance through the atmosphere.—We are each of us as silently saturating the atmosphere about us with the subtle aroma of our character. In the family circle, besides and beyond all the teaching, the daily life of each parent and child mysteriously modifies the life of every person in the household. The same process on a wider scale is going on through the community. No man lives to himself, and no man dies to himself. Others are built up and straightened by our unconscious deeds and others may be wrenched out of their places and thrown down by our unconscious influence.

LESSON TO RULERS.—The Chinese Emperor Tchon set out on a journey to visit the vast provinces of his empire, accompanied by his heir. One day he stopped among some fields where the people were hard at work. "I took you with me," he said to his son, "that you might be an eyewitness of the painful toils of the poor; and that the feeling their laborious lot among us should excite in your heart, may, in the future, prevent your consent to burdening them with taxes."

A wise man will never rust out. As long as he can move and breathe he will be doing something for himself, his neighbor, or for posterity. Who is old? Not the man of energy, not the day laborer in science, art or benevolence, but he only who suffers his energies to waste away, and the spring of life to become motionless; on whose hands the hours hang heavily, and to whom all things wear the garb of gloom.

SYMPTOMS OF MAIDENLY CELIBACY. When a woman begins to drink her tea without sugar—that's a symptom.

When a woman begins to read love stories abed—that's a symptom.

When a woman begins to say that she's refused many an offer—that's a symptom.

When a woman begins to talk about rheumatism in her knees and elbows—that's a symptom.

When a woman begins to refuse to tell her age—that's a symptom.

When a woman begins to find fault with her looking-glass, and says it doesn't show her features right—that's a symptom.

When a woman begins to talk about cold drafts and stops up the crevices in the doors and windows—that's a symptom.

When a woman begins to say what a dreadful set of creatures men are, and that she wouldn't be bothered with one for the world—that's a symptom.

When a woman begins to change her shoe every time she comes into the house after a walk—that's a symptom.

When a woman begins to have a little dog trotting after her—that's a symptom.

When a woman begins to have a cat at her elbow at meal time, and gives it sweetened milk—that's a symptom.

When a woman begins to say that a servant has no business to have a sweetheart—that's a symptom.

When a woman begins to rub her fingers over chairs and tables to see if they are dusty—that's a symptom.

When a woman begins to go to bed with her stockings and flannel nightcap on—that's a symptom.

A TALK WITH A HINGLISHMAN.—I talked with a minion from her Majesty's dominions.

Says I, "Where are you going?"

Says he "To hide a hoe."

Says I, "What are you going to hide a hoe for?"

"Says he, "I didn't say hide a hoe, I said hide a hoe."

Says I, "Spell it."

Says he, "I-d-a-h-o."

"Oh!" says I, "Idaho."

"Yes," says he, "Hide a hoe."

"My Son," said a good mother to her young hopeful, "did you wish your teacher a happy New Year?" "No ma'am, responded the boy." "Well why not?"

"Because," said the youth, "she isn't happy unless she's a whipping some of us boys, and I was afraid if I wished her happiness, she'd go for me!"

"If there is anybody under the canister of heaven that I have in utter excresence, says Mrs. Partington, "it is the slanderer going about, like a boy constructor, circulating his calomel upon honest folks."

"I want to know," said a creditor, fiercely, "when you are going to pay me what you owe me?" "When I'm going to pay you? Why, you're a pretty fellow! Do you take me for a prophet?"

Why is love like a Scotch plaid? Because it is all stuff, and often crossed.