

how the Roman empire used to throw its great highways out from Rome until they touched the limits of the empire—until they threaded even the distant island of Britain; and it was like throwing thongs out to bind all the empire together. Now, the initial purpose of those highways was to afford an open road for the armies of Rome so that she could throw her power rapidly in any direction; but Rome also, in my imagination at any rate, prepared her destruction by those highways because she could not open them to her own armies without opening them also to the people that lived upon their edges, and they could not touch one another without forming an opinion about the Roman power, without intermingling the influences of different nations, for these roads did not stop at national confines, and the Roman roads threaded the opinion of the world together into an axis and pattern, and I tell you very frankly that my interest in good roads is not merely an interest in the pleasure of riding in automobiles, it is not merely an interest in the very much more important matter of affording the farmers of this country and the residents in villages the means of ready access to such neighboring markets as they need for their economic benefit, but it is also the interest in weaving as complicated and elaborate a net of neighborhood and state and national opinion together as it is possible to weave.

"It is of the most fundamental importance that the United States should think in big pieces, should think together, should think ultimately as a whole, and I felt, in my enthusiasm for good roads something of the old opposition that there always has been in me to any kind of sectional feelings, to any kind of class feeling.

"The reason that city men are not more catholic in their ideas is that they do not share the opinions of the country, and the reason that some countrymen are rustic is that they do not know the opinion of the city and they are both hampered by their limitations. I heard of a lady the other day who had lived all her life in the city and in a hotel. She made a first visit to the country and spent a week in a farmhouse. She was asked afterwards what interested her most about her experience and she said that it was hearing the farmer praise his cows.

"A very urban point of view with regard to a common rustic occurrence, and yet that language showed the sharp, the inelastic limits of her thought. She thought much more narrowly than in the terms of a city. She thought in the terms of a hotel; and in proportion as we are confined within the walls of one hostelry or city, or one state, we are provincial, and national thought cannot successfully build itself upon those foundations in a way that will be permanent; so that I believe that the development of great systems of roads is, psychologically speaking, as well as physically speaking, a task of statemanship.

"I believe that it is the proper study of the statesman to bind communities together and open their intercourse so that it will flow with absolute freedom and facility. No one argument ought to be omitted; every class has its argument for good roads, and putting them all together they form an irresistible mass of arguments, but the result of the whole reasoning to my mind is simply this: the United States has up to this time simply let the energies of the people drift.

"It has thrown the reins on our necks and said, 'Now, here is a continent of unexampled richness; do what you please with it. We will try to see that you don't break each other's heads. We will try to see that you are restrained until you get so powerful that we can't restrain you. We will try to see that you do justice until you so combine with one another that justice is impossible, but we are not going

to lend the aid of the government to the actual task of development.'

"That has been the general attitude of our government up to this time. It cannot be that attitude any longer. There are things of this sort for example, you take not merely the matter of good roads and the carrying of goods to market, but of what goods there are to be carried to market, the production, the agricultural production per acre in the United States does not favorably compare with the production per acre in the older countries of the world and the margins are approaching one another.

"We used to lead the world and our grain exports were our chief exports, but the exports of grain are going down and down because the other margin is coming up, the margin of domestic demand and the population is increasing faster than the product so that a great deal of our commercial history is about to be altered by the circumstances of agricultural production, and I believe that it is the proper function of the government to see to it that by the extension of all the varied modern knowledge about agricultural process and about the characteristics of different soils ought to be so extended, so carried everywhere to the farmer as to build up by the aid of the government this thing that feeds us and ought to continue to feed the world; and whenever you speak of that, whenever you increase what the United States is doing, you must immediately increase the facilities of the United States for handling what it has made after it has made it. You cannot rationally increase the prosperity of this country without increasing the road facilities of this country."

"I remember having a very interesting and, for me, enlightening conversation with a mountaineer once in the North Carolina mountains. He was very hot against the excise taxes which made it practically impossible for him, without becoming a criminal, to make whiskey out of his corn, and I discussed it somewhat minutely with him in order to get his point of view. His point of view was simply this; he had a little farm that was a fertile pocket in a remote part of the mountain. It didn't pay him to take his corn to the market as corn, because by the time he got to the market, the very horses that were hauling it would have eaten it up, but he could profitably get it to the market as whiskey.

"His point was simply this, that it was unreasonable for the government to forbid his getting a market for his corn in the only way in which it was possible for him to get a market. Now, while we might say that it was not desirable that there should be any market at all for the product that he wished to sell, nevertheless, the illustration will point my moral, namely, that it is not worth while producing until you can release what you produce and that the only way of releasing it is by the most facile methods of inter-communication and transportation.

"We are merely threading the energies of a nation together, linking them in a single pattern, or rather, we are merely setting them free when we facilitate and promote the interests of a congress like this. I need not tell you, therefore, that I am in deep sympathy with the purposes of this congress, because in my judgment that would simply be like claiming that I was a rational being and I hope that does not require argument.

"I would rather admit it than try to prove it, and if you will allow me to admit I am a rational being, you will allow me to say that as a matter of course, I am profoundly interested in the purposes of this congress, and I consider it an honor that the State of New Jersey should have the pleasure of housing you for a little while and entertaining you for a little while in consultation about what is, at bottom, a great national interest."