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WHAT IS A "GOOD ROAD"?

The answer to this question is that good road is one which has **proper location, proper construction, and proper maintenance.** If we can get those three factors woven into a road, then, to my mind, our problem of a comprehensive road system for the United States has been solved.

Subdividing, we might say that all roads can be divided into three great classes. First, arterial city streets; second, city streets; and third, what are known to the profession as country roads.

Location

The value of any road is decreased by improper location. You know and have seen many examples of improper location of roads—roads which might have been located to better advantage to serve a greater number of people and greater interests. As a matter of fact, most of our old roads were located by the animals, and, after all, man can sometimes look to the animals—the so-called dumb animals—to guide us over the rough and hilly places; and they do. Take, for instance, the radial streets. Many of our radial streets you will find were located by animals. It may have been the animal first, the Indian afterwards and then the settler. They developed from a trail to a road, and now they are arterial city highways. You see how this works out, therefore care must be taken and though given to the proper location of a road in the period of transition from a country road into a city street. City planners have thought on this subject and they have laid down radial roads. They have provided where deficiencies existed in the radial system, and then they have gone one step further—the counter radial; what is known as the circumferential system. But there have been so few of these in actual practice that it is hardly fair to criticize them one way or the other. However, we do know of some examples which are really good—one right in our own country. In Washington we all admire the diagonals and the counter-diagonals, letting us reach any part of the city in a direct line. The human mind is trained to believe that the shortest distance between two points is a straight line. Karlsruhe, Mannheim, Detroit, Boston, and Philadelphia, and even the later planning of Paris, are some of the examples of radial planning which I have mentioned as proper locations.

Secondary City Streets

Secondary city streets should be located to fit the primary system of arterial highways. They should also be located to meet the physical conditions, with the idea of preserving the natural beauty of the country, with as little change and cost as it is possible or necessary to develop them. They should also be laid down to prevent through traffic. Some of you will object to this statement, but it has been thought out through city planning conferences that it is proper to keep the traffic off the secondary highway and only let the service traffic, the ice man, the milk man, and the provision dealer, go into the small streets. Keep the heavy traffic on the main highways where you have provided for them, and remember that streets are not only to provide for, but to direct. This is the principal thought of this paper.

I think it is poor practice to curve a street unless there is a real fundamental reason behind it; unless there is a natural depression or perhaps a promontory or some little knob in the topography which you want to overcome, or perhaps a certain street which you want to make a square or an obtuse intersection. A street curved without the natural reason for a curve loses its charm and defeats its very object.

The MacKinnon Steel Co., Limited, of Sherbrooke, Que., has been awarded the contract for the steel super-structure of the highway bridge which the Government of the Province of Quebec has arranged to erect over the Batsican River, at Batsican, Que., on the Montreal-Quebec highway. This bridge which is over twelve hundred feet long will be one of the largest highway bridges in the Province of Quebec.