

The following extract from the report of the committee of the House of Commons in 1819, on the public highways, contains remarks which concur fully in principle with the recommendations now given for the improvement of the turnpike roads.

The importance of land carriage to the prosperity of a country need not be dwelt upon. Next to the general influence of the seasons, upon which the regular supply of our wants and a great proportion of our comforts, so much depend, there is perhaps no circumstance more interesting to men in a civilized state, than the perfection of the means of interior communication. It is a matter, therefore, to be wondered at, that so great a source of national improvement has hitherto been so much neglected. Instead of the roads of the kingdom being made a great national concern, a number of local trusts are created, under the authority of which large sums of money are collected from the public, and expended without adequate responsibility or control. Hence arises a number of abuses for which no remedy is provided; and the resources of the country, instead of being devoted to useful purposes, are too often improvidently wasted.

The next great error in principle, as to legislation on the common highways, is the means by which the funds for maintaining them are provided, namely, statute labour; and it may be said with respect to this point, as it has been already said with respect to the former, that so long as this radical error in principle shall be recognized by parliament, it will be labour in vain to pass new acts to remedy existing evils.

And a third great error in the system of parish management, consists in the regulation by which a surveyor is appointed to act only for one year. This practice is founded on the vulgar notion that the management of roads is something that requires no education; that it is not an art which requires skill and science. This practice may be set down