

A SPLIT-LOG DRAG COMPETITION FOR ONTARIO.

"The Farmer's Advocate" Offers \$100 in Prizes to Encourage Experiments With the Split-log Drag on the Earth Roads of Ontario.

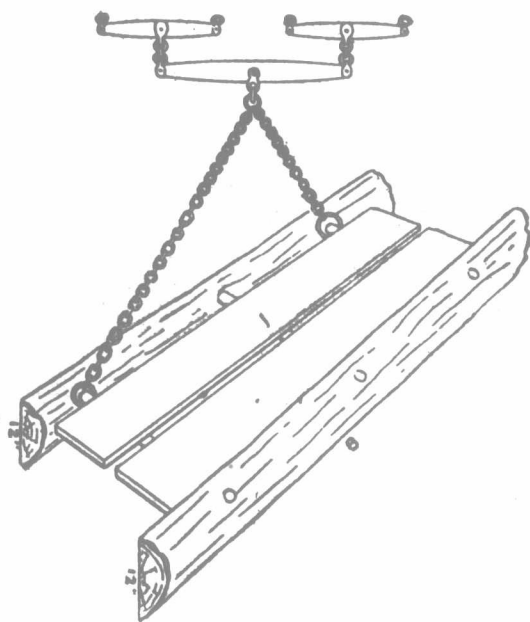
In the Province of Ontario are thousands upon thousands of miles of earth roads, in texture varying from waxy clay to loam and sand. Many of these cannot be gravelled or macadamized without great expense. For a long time to come they must remain earth-surfaced. Their condition during many weeks in the spring and fall, and sometimes during a considerable part of summer and winter, is wretched. Various means for improving them have been attempted. Under the statute-labor system, the plow and dump scraper were tried, with large outlay of time, but very indifferent results. Latterly, road graders have been widely purchased, and have done much to reduce the cost of road construction. The disappointment arising in some cases with this implement has been due to misuse, particularly on old gravel and stone roads, where much harm has been done. However, dismissing this tempting topic, viz., the misuse of the grader, let us simply point out that an annual grading will rarely be sufficient to produce good earth roads. Once the roads are graded, they must be kept smooth so as to shed rain and snow water freely to the ditches. This can only be accomplished by the use of some cheap smoothing implement that can be drawn over the road early in spring and after every summer and fall rain during which the road becomes worked up. For this purpose, a simple affair called the road-leveller, consisting of a piece of heavy timber eight or ten feet long, having its lower edge bevelled and shod with iron, and drawn over the roads angling a little towards the center, has done a great amount of good on our clay roads where used intelligently and often enough. By hauling this up and down, one or two rounds, after the roads have become crumbling dry, lumps and ridges are broken down, ruts are filled, and travel soon makes a comparatively smooth surface. The next rain is shed more freely to the ditches, the subsoil is preserved to quite an extent from soaking, and thus repeated levelling not only maintains a smooth road throughout the season of its use, but helps to preserve the crown and protect the roadbed from disintegration. If proper use were made of the leveller, the roads would be maintained in far better shape than they are. The trouble has been the leveller is so simple and cheap that people underrate its usefulness. Had some enterprising firm been exploiting these levellers with lithographed advertising literature and selling them for \$50 or \$100 apiece, they would be much more extensively used. It seems so much easier to expect benefit from a complicated apparatus for which you pay a hundred or a thousand dollars than a simple homemade leveller. But facts speak for themselves, and are sure to be heeded in time. The conviction has dawned on many a ratepayer's mind that overmuch has been expected from our expensive machinery, and that some kind of a drag or leveller is the means of maintaining earth roads in condition.

THE OLD IDEA IMPROVED UPON.

Strong as is our faith in the leveller, based upon experience and observation, we have been impressed with the new idea exploited in the United States by a man named D. Ward King, of Missouri. Simple as the leveller, and with the same purpose, its principle is slightly different. Instead of using a single iron-shod timber to rub down the lumps when they are crumbling dry, he made a drag, by setting on edge the halves of a split log, one behind the other, and joined by cross-pieces. His idea is to haul this up and down over the road while it is still muddy, the object being to puddle the surface, as one might puddle clay for the bottom of a well, silo or cellar floor. Everyone living in a clay district knows how hard and impervious he can make a clay bottom by mucking and puddling in it when wet. This is the principle upon which Mr. King reasoned, and the results of using the drag to puddle clay roads in this way are attested by the emphatic endorsement of all the best and most reliable agricultural journals of the United States, where the plan has been widely tried during the past two years; also by dozens of enthusiastic contributors to these papers. From Eastern Ontario last fall one subscriber reported to "The Farmer's Advocate" very satisfactory results. So far we have heard of no experiment being made to compare the split-log drag with the leveller, but from all accounts, our expectation is that the use of the drag, as Mr. King advises, will give better results than the leveller which we have been accustomed to use. At any rate, the drag has the big advantage that it is employed while the roads are still muddy and before one can work on his fields. Hence it is less likely to be neglected than the work with the leveller.

To encourage a general and widespread trial of the split-log drag, the publishers of "The Farm-

er's Advocate" decided to offer one hundred dollars in prizes, fifty dollars in Eastern Ontario and fifty dollars in the Western part, for the best results from one season's use of a split-log drag on a mile of earth road most convenient, in each case, to the competitors' farms. To this end we solicited the co-operation of the Ontario Good Roads Commissioner, Mr. A. W. Campbell, who has kindly agreed to do the judging. Let it be understood that we are not offering these prizes as payment for the work, and let no one hold back for fear of not receiving a prize. In the United States the rallying cry has been, "Drag from your gate to your neighbor's nearest town." This has been done by many without a cent of pay or inducement, simply as a public-spirited contribution to the cause of good roads. Most of these consider, however, that the improvement in their own piece of road is sufficient recompense to themselves for the half hour's work they do now and then. The same motives should



actuate Canadian farmers, and our appeal is not to the desire for a prize, but to the direct self-interest and the public spirit of our subscribers. Only six men can receive prizes, but we believe the hundreds of others who enter will feel amply repaid by the improvement of their roads to market and by the satisfaction of having contributed something to the solution of the rural-road problem in Canada. There is no fee to enter this competition, and the conditions and rules are as simple as possible.

RULES AND PARTICULARS.

1. Two sets of three cash prizes are offered, one set for Eastern and one for Western Ontario, an imaginary line running due north from Yonge St., Toronto, being the dividing line. The first prize in each case will be \$25, second prize \$15, and the third prize \$10.00.

2. Any subscriber to "The Farmer's Advocate" may enter who will notify us on or before March 27th, 1907, of his willingness to construct a drag, as explained below, and use it at least five times during the summer before October 15th, at his own discretion, on a mile of ungravelled earth road of his own selection, preferably the mile from his gate towards the nearest town. Applicants must give full name, post-office address and railway station or stations.

3. On behalf of the Provincial Government, Mr. A. W. Campbell, Good Roads Commissioner, has agreed to co-operate with us by doing the judging. Each piece of road will be inspected as early as possible in the spring, and again after the conclusion of the trial on October 15th. The awards will be made according to the results evident from the use of the drag. To make a good showing, it may be well to choose a bad rather than a good piece of road, though no limitations are imposed in this respect. Each competitor will be required to keep and present in writing to the judge a statement showing the amount of time spent in dragging his beat and the dates on which it was done. This statement will not be used in making the awards, but is desired for purposes of information, and in some cases for publication.

The results of the competition will be written up and illustrated with half-tone engravings in "The Farmer's Advocate."

Send in your name at once. Let us have dozens from every county in the Province. We are offering our time and money in the cause of good roads. Will you help?

Remember, the time for entering the competition closes March 27th. Address your letters, as per rule 2, to "The Farmer's Advocate," London, Ont."

HOW TO MAKE AND USE THE DRAG.

The two halves of a split log, ten to twelve inches thick, are set on edge thirty inches apart, both flat sides to the front. The cross-pieces are wedged in two-inch auger holes bored through the slabs. In other respects the cut is self-explanatory. If working a clay or gumbo road, it is advised to put iron (old wagon tire, or something of that sort) on lower edge of drag at end of six months; for softer soil, at end of twelve months.

The inventor has prepared the following road-dragging "catechism," telling how to make and work the drag:

Would it not be better to plow the road before dragging?

No. Plowing gives a soft foundation. Plowing the middle of the road is a relic of the old dump-scraper days.

What do you do when there are deep ruts in the road?

Drag them. If you drag when the surface is quite loose and soft, you will be surprised how soon the ruts will disappear.

How do you get the dirt to the middle of the road?

By hauling the drag slantwise, with the end that is toward the center of the road a little to the rear of the other end.

But suppose the road is too narrow?

First drag the wheel tracks. After three or four rains or wet spells, plow a shallow furrow just outside the dragged part. Spread this over the road with a drag. Only plow one furrow. You may plow another furrow after the next rain. At each plowing you widen the roadbed two feet.

How many horses do you use?

Two, generally; three if it is just as handy; four when breaking colts—a good solid team in the center, and a colt on each side; two men on the drag, one to drive, the other to control the colts.

How do you drain the road?

If the earth is pushed in the middle of the road continually, the road will drain itself.

Why not make the drag out of plank?

You can, and do good work, but the split log is the best. The plank drag is not so stiff.

Why not make the drag of heavy, sawed timber?

Because drags so made have a tendency to slip over the bumps.

Don't you grade up the road first?

No. The grading is done with the drag, gradually. By so doing, the road is solid all the time, and is built on a solid foundation.

What does it cost to drag a mile of road a year?

The cost is variously estimated at from one to three dollars.

How do you keep the drag from dodging around sidewise?

By not loading it too heavily. If a drag dodges around the earth you are moving, it is because it is overloaded.

Will the dragged road stand heavy hauling?

Yes and no. A dragged road will stand more heavy hauling than an undragged road, but not so much as a macadamized or well-kept gravel road.

Don't drive too fast. Don't walk; get on the drag and ride. Don't be particular about material; almost any log will do. Don't try to drag with only one piece; use two.

SUMMER - FALLOWING.

Editor "The Farmer's Advocate":

In reading your valuable paper, I have found many helpful articles about the farm and contents, such as farming, stock-raising, stock-feeding, etc., but there is one thing that has been extremely neglected, and that is summer-fallowing. I think that is one of the things to be considered in farming. We have so many noxious weeds to contend with. I find it is hard to leave a meadow very long without summer-fallowing, as the weeds will grow, instead of first-class hay. As we go through this Ontario of ours, we can see the great need of the land being better worked. When a boy, we summer-fallowed, and had good hay crops. When I commenced managing the farm I went out of summer-fallowing, and, to my surprise, I found I was going back on the hay crop, also in the farm in general. I have adopted the plan again, and I find it has helped me in keeping more stock. I can sell hay now; it is more pleasant to sell than to buy. I would like to impress on the minds of the young farmers the