

agriculture, dairying and other subjects of importance to our subscribers will be willingly answered in a column especially set apart for that purpose.



OUR PUBLIC ROADS.

The subject of public roads is one in which every citizen is, or ought to be interested. It is a subject of vital importance to every business man, and of financial importance to every farmer or owner of real estate in this country.

A steady drive over some of our township roads would thoroughly convince the most casual observer that improvement in our present system of roadmaking is woefully needed.

Perhaps it would be well to point out the flaws and defects in our present system, and then to suggest a remedy from which we might profit. In the first place our pathmasters are not chosen with any special regard to their fitness for the office. In some cases they are appointed against their will, having no desire to officiate. Few men desire to assume the responsibility, farmers especially, for the reason that roadmaking occurs at a season of the year when they could more profitably employ their time at work on their farms. The length of the term of office is another defect. No two men think exactly alike, therefore the one may undo what his predecessor had done the previous year.

And now with regard to the manner in which it is done. In the first place the days allotted for roadmaking are looked upon as holidays for man and beast. The farmer starts out in the morning with as small a box on his wagon as it is possible for him to construct. If he has a man in his employment not specially noted for his diligence, or a son of his own who knows how to take care of himself on a hot day, they are very apt to work out a large share of the tax. The temptation to shirk work is so great that it has a bad effect on the morals of the men employed.

They are not apt to over exert themselves when their pathmaster and a neighbor are seen to back into the fence corner and talk politics by the hour. Some men are honest

everywhere, but the performing of statute labor is not a good place to find them.

It would be too great an undertaking to point out all the defects in this system, nor would it be advisable to do so, as there are a great many who adhere to the present system in vogue, and not without a few just reasons, but the enumeration of some of the advantages arising from better public roads would be more in place.

There is nothing perhaps that would tend to improve the condition of our farmers, both intellectually and socially, as the interchanging of ideas with his fellow farmers and others, which would undoubtedly follow if the roads were more passable during the slack time of the year. He and his children would be able to take advantage of public meetings, debating societies, institutes, schools, churches, etc., which would naturally make them better and truer citizens. The season of the year when the farmer can embrace such opportunities is during the fall and spring, but the majority of our roads are at that time almost impassable. The distance from market where the farmer disposes of his produce would be lessened. For instance a farmer living ten miles from town on a good road would be just as near, practically speaking, as one who lived only five miles distant on a poor one. The former could take just as large a load and reach his home again as early as the latter.

Good roads would lessen the cost of transportation, and, by lessening the cost of transportation the cost of production is reduced; and by reducing the cost of production we increase the profit realized from the produce, therefore the value of his property would be greatly increased.

A great many other benefits might be stated, but enough has been said to show that there are many advantages not unimportant to the farmer. But before abandoning this subject it would be as well to suggest something to remedy the condition of our roads.

First, the payment of all road taxes in cash; second, the electing of a supervisor for a term of three years or more, giving bonds for the security of the money placed in his hands, allowing a salary to fully compensate him for his time, empowering him with authority to have men and teams, and to purchase such tools as would be necessary to facilitate his work. This supervisor should be directed