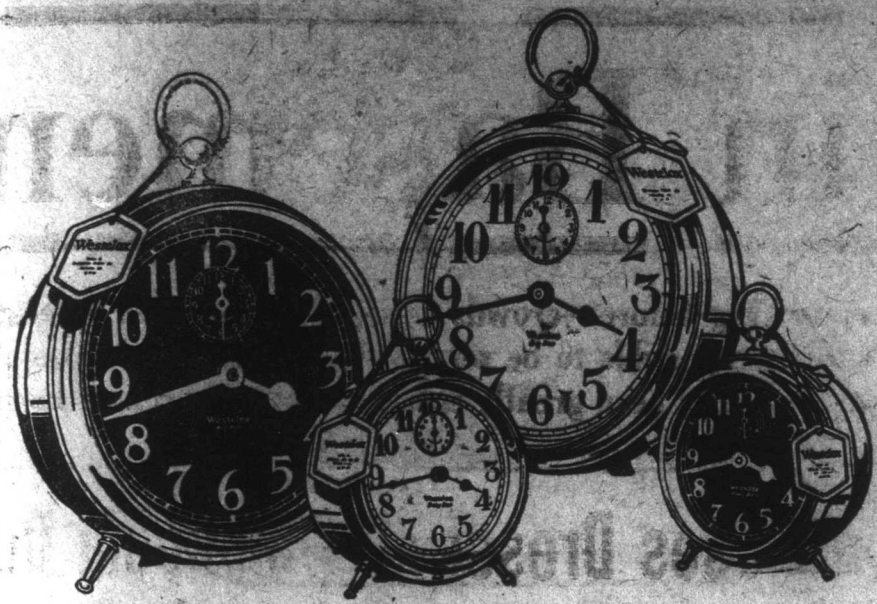


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Address on Road Building

The following is a brief summary of the address given by Mr. H. A. Winter to the Motor Association on Tuesday on the subject of road building. The lecturer's suggestions are comprehensive and are based on knowledge that has been gained by road builders in other countries.

Mr. Winter, by way of preface, disclaimed any expert knowledge of what was really a highly technical matter. He brought to the subject merely a little theory and study, some modest experimenting on his own part and, perhaps, a little more observation than most of actual road conditions and their behaviour.

The subject fell into two natural divisions, and so he would treat it. There was, first, the technical side—of what materials and methods should be made and how those materials should be applied; and, second, the whole system, political, mechanical and financial, upon which the work should be done.

1. Material. There is only one answer—gravel. It existed in superabundance here and was the finest quality for the purpose. We must read foreign text books and articles with caution, and allow for local conditions. Many experts did not mean by "gravel" quite what he did, and often used the word loosely to denote clay or loam as well as the pure gravel. It is most important to remember this.

It was very easy, the lecturer said, for any of the audience to point out what he meant by gravel. Let him go in his backyard and dig. He would find: (1) sod; (2) dark earth, called dig, about 1 foot deep; (3) 2 or 3 inches of red clay; (4) pure gravel, sometimes of a blue colour and sometimes whitish. There was no need of a microscope to see it. It consisted of stones entirely, however small. Hence were derived two invaluable properties: (a) it was capable of resisting great pressure; (b) it was always porous and pervious to water, no matter what the pressure.

The proper employment and the preservation of these two properties were the whole secret of good road making. How was it to be done?

First, gravel is always porous, no matter how it is put on. Hence, roads are bound to be improved if only gravel is used, no matter how badly they are built. Half the battle is merely to forbid the use of earth.

Second, how to employ gravel road. This is very simple. Build up your road in pyramid or filter style: use big stones on the bottom, smaller stones on them, still smaller stones, and so on up to the top. An inch or so of pure fine gravel sifted as fine as possible should form the surface. It is absolutely essential to observe the principle, that no stone should rest on a stone smaller than itself, but always between 2 or 3 larger ones. They could not then get out of place.

To hold this structure together, two pressures are necessary, vertical and lateral. The first is provided by the steam roller and regular traffic; the second by a retaining wall of clay. The second is just as important as the first. Most of our roads are laid down and are not retained on the sides. After a time the side stones are pushed out and the road slowly disintegrates. Every road built by gravel should be just in the form of a trench.

A road made like this will last indefinitely. There is nothing to go wrong. Water goes right through and leaves nothing to freeze in winter. A demonstration was given by means of two roads made in glass bottles, with gravel and clay tops respectively. The gravel let the water pass right through, whereas the clay became sticky mud.

The theory that water drains off the road sideways is a fallacy. Hence ditches and high crowns are both great evils. Ditches are bad because:

1. They take away in most cases from width of road.

2. They are awkward for pedestrians.

3. They do not get the water from the road. Vehicles make ruts which retain pools. The only place where water drains into ditches is on the side of a hill.

4. If the water went over the surface into the ditch, it would carry the top of the road with it and fill the ditch up.

5. They prevent the making of a retaining wall; hence stones get pushed into the ditch.

Ditches should be made, but should be a part of the road. This method is known as Trench Drains.

High crowns are unnecessary. Traffic keeps to the middle of the road to avoid the slope, and wears out great ruts and holes.

II. System. Much more machinery is imperative. Nowhere else is work like this done by pick and shovel. We should have a large supply of (a) steam shovels; (b) screens; (c) rollers; (d) motor trucks.

There is an absurd idea that roads can be made "as you go." Large gravel pits should be selected at convenient sites, and steam shovels going constantly should be used digging out gravel. Screens sort stones into heaps. This is absolutely essential, but rarely done here. Trucks come and load up with the size of stone required and take it out where the road is being made. This system is much more efficient, far more expeditious, and cheaper in the long run.



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It is an absurdity to put on this work men who know nothing about it. Even we don't do this in other directions, e.g., sewers, public buildings, railways, etc. Always an engineer is in charge there, but apparently anyone can survey, plan and build a road!

The system and Act should be changed. We should have a competent

engineer in charge of the whole work all over the island, and so should be given plenary powers. The Board of Works should be merely a clerical and financial depot. At present, no one really supervises the work.

The Government has made a good beginning by voting a large sum for roads. It would be advisable to expend as much as possible of this on

machinery. We might be able to get a lot of this from contractors on the Humber, as well as other assistance. If our roads were built this way, and on this system, they would be among the best in the world, beautiful to travel on, cheap to maintain and a delight to the eye. How can the motor Association help?

1. By sympathy and interest.

2. By offering suggestions and help.

3. By driving carefully and not making bad roads worse.

4. By forming a Vigilance Committee and reporting bad bits of road and bad work.

Pearline for easy washing. July 17, 1924.