

## CITY AUTO CAMPS

By W. E. KOEHRING.

Under the sub-title of "No City Can Afford to Sacrifice its Reputation and Hospitality by Neglecting the Stranger Within its Gates," W. E. Koehring, who describes himself as a farmer of Lawrence, Kansas, in the following article in "Kansas Municipalities" urges the setting aside of certain open spaces as auto camps for tourists.

"Without question the first and original tourist travelled afoot. It is also equally certain that he camped out. He did both from necessity. He may have liked walking but the liking for it did not persist in his successors to the extent of causing them to reject other modes of travel when offered. But that camping out satisfied a real longing of his nature seems clear from the persistence with which one type of successor, the auto tourist, clings to that practice. It is this camping out idea that makes the auto tourist something of a problem to the community through which he passes. The filling station, the service station, and the auto accessories shop amply provide for all his needs in motive power, lubrication, inflation and all other possible and impossible needs and facilitate in every way his journey, as well as the spending of his money. And the sign, "Oxy-acetylene welding done here," appears in the most unexpected, surprisingly remote, and, with present conditions of roads, welcome places.

If you are out yourself day after day, you will meet the tourist varying greatly in the completeness of his equipment, reflecting in the neatness of his appearance the condition of the roads and the state of the weather and also, strikingly, his lover of order or slovenliness. Blithely individualistic through the day, sufficient unto himself, the average traveler will find himself, as the day draws to a close, seeking some common point at which to gather and spend the night with others. This natural social instinct is fostered by a variety of causes. A certain timidity and dread about camping alone in the open in a strange community is felt by many. Another factor is the desire to discuss the condition of the road and routes of travel with those who have just been over them, and to learn of the best camping places on ahead. The fact that it is more satisfactory to buy food supplies in small quantities as needed rather than carry large supplies, and the further fact that an abundant supply of water of desirable quality can usually be found in town or city and not always elsewhere, determine the point of gathering.

Most towns and cities that are so situated as to have any considerable number of auto tourists passing through are recognizing a very obvious situation and are making an effort to meet it by providing some sort of place for them to camp. In some places this has been done in a spirit of true hospitality, with a studied attempt to provide for the needs and comfort of these travelers. With others, the response has been very reluctant, with no thought even for the absolute need of the situation. The question for each community is whether it can afford to allow this ever-increasing host to pass on to the next town. From a business point of view, it is well to consider that the aggregate of money spent along the way by the tourist is very great. Also, the purely humanitarian aspect of the situation cannot well be disregarded. There is also an ethical side, for there are some from every community accepting this sort of hospitality elsewhere and as a community we should do unto others as we would have them do unto us.

### Equipping the Camp.

But, aside from all else, it must be recognized that there are certain things that the tourist must have; things which from the standpoint of sanitation and public health the

community cannot afford to neglect. Adequate toilet facilities that insure privacy and decency are of course the first requisite and every effort should be made that cleanliness prevails. The most satisfactory arrangement that we found in visiting many tourist camps last summer was buildings constructed entirely of concrete, built so that they could be thoroughly flushed and scrubbed. Sewer connection is of course highly desirable.

The water supply is next in importance. In the larger camps that we visited this was supplied by conveniently placing hydrants but in most cases no provision was made to take care of the wastage in drawing water and thus the surroundings were made very sloppy and disagreeable. Brilliant illumination is not desirable but wherever it is possible some lighting of the camp is a good thing, because of the feeling of safety that it gives the tourist and the better chance of observation it affords the community. Rough tables and benches were provided in some of the camps, and ovens of masonry had been built for cooking purposes. In some cases firewood was furnished free. This may have been partly a matter of self protection, for loose lumber and anything that burns readily is liable to be gathered up pretty closely when the need of fire for cooking or warmth becomes urgent.

Shower baths were provided in some places and we noticed that these were much patronized by the children. One of the things found occasionally and much appreciated was a place to wash the car. Sometimes this was simply a hydrant with sufficient hose to reach around the car, but at Ogden, Utah, where, in addition, a concrete slab had been laid on which to work, the arrangement seemed complete. In Blackfoot, Idaho, the park was divided, one half being used for camping while the other was being irrigated. This arrangement insured the life of the trees and grass without discomfort to the campers.

A well drained location is best for any camp ground and trees will contribute much to the comfort of the campers. Some regular caretaking is necessary to keep the place in a habitable condition. The tourist should be encouraged to be tidy about his surroundings, and this is best accomplished by providing receptacles for refuse and requesting their use by conspicuous signs, and by daily cleaning of the grounds allowing no accumulation of waste.

### Be Easily Found.

Conspicuous signs giving clear directions as to how to find the auto park at the points where the principal roads enter the town are of great assistance to the tourist. In some cases the interest in this subject by some public official manifested itself by his daily visits to the park and his mingling with the tourists to learn of their ways, and to get new ideas as to their needs. This interest does not need to be confined to an official, but any public spirited citizen might well take it upon himself to study the needs of his city's auto park. Needless to say, it was in places that such interest was manifest that we found the most attractive camp surroundings, and it would be fortunate for the tourist, and the town, too, if there were more public officials and citizens who would take a personal interest in this subject.

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"Over expansion and consequent financial embarrassment have caused in many localities a pessimism which is not warranted by the fundamental soundness of Canadian conditions and its almost unlimited natural wealth." — E. W. Beatty, President C. P. R.