

THE KING ROAD DRAG

Fame of Split Log Variety and How It Is Made.

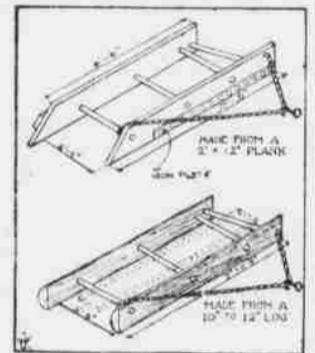
FOREIGN LANDS ASK ABOUT IT

Scientific Roadmakers Satisfied With Its Practicability—Inventor of Highway Improving Device Tells How to Build It—Kind of Wood to Use.

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The fame of the split log or King drag is becoming worldwide. Inquiries concerning it have come to me from Australia, Porto Rico, Honolulu, Canada, Paris and elsewhere.

Here in our own country there is no longer any question concerning the merits of the King system of road dragging. Six states have put "drag laws" on their statute books, while the scientific roadmakers of most states, now satisfied of its practicability, are endorsing the method and urging the use of the drag.

The split log drag is so exceedingly simple that most men feel able to improve it and many believe they have



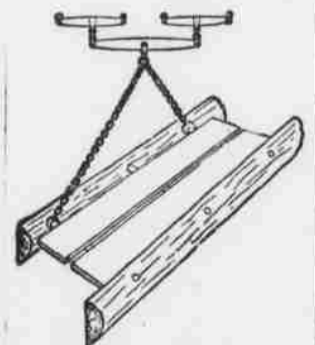
PLANS OF THE KING ROAD DRAG.
Improvement—After each run drive up one side of the wheel track and back on the other side at least once, with drag in position to throw the earth to the center. Ribs on the drag should be at an angle of forty-five degrees. Gradually when the strips dragged on the road improve, to round up the road better place a smaller rib on occasionally each side of the drag and work the loose dirt to the center.

done so. I have no quarrel with these men. For years I have been saying that any tool which will smooth the surface of the highway and move a little earth to the center of the road is a good drag. But I also would remind the reader that I have myself spent a great deal of time years ago trying to improve the drag and gave it up as impossible. With all deference to the opinion of others I feel that one might as well try to improve an ax or a spade. I have seen and know of a great many different styles of drags. Some are made of one slab with a tongue, others are built in the shape of a V and used with broad ends to the front, working both sides of the road at once, and so on. Any one of them is better than no drag and will improve the road if properly used.

However, I have been asked to tell how to make and use a split log drag, and with the expressions made above, to indicate that I am more anxious the road should be cared for than to insist it must be cared for by any particular style of drag, I will confine myself to my task.

The best form of material for building is the log. The straighter the log and the straighter its grain the better. Other things being equal, I prefer the lightest log. Weight, when needed, can be added to a light drag, but a drag constructed of heavy material cannot be lightened. The weight of the driver on the drag will generally prove sufficient to do good work. If given my choice I would prefer a log of the sort of wood in the following list, in the order given: Red cedar, walnut, elm, cypress, soft maple, box elder, with oak, ash and hickory in a class by themselves and last on the list. Even cottonwood or willow is preferable to the heavy woods.

Having split the log, we are ready to bore the holes. Two points are impor-



KING ROAD DRAG REVERSED.

tant in building a drag if we hope to have it go together shipshape; bore the holes at right angles to the face of the slab across the grain, and ditto lengthwise of the grain of the wood. But little difficulty, however, will be experienced even if the holes are not absolutely true, for the stakes can be made a little smaller for the crooked holes and, with careful wedging, they will be all right. Select the best slab to go in front. Now, with the flat face to the north the right hand end of the slab will be the ditch end. Eighteen or twenty inches from the ditch end of this slab and midway of its cross section we will have a two inch hole.

At the other end of the slab cut a groove to the end as the strength of the timber will permit—say three to six

inches—we will bore the second hole. Next stretch a chalk line from center to center of these holes and bore the third hole halfway between the other two and on the chalk mark. Now we will bring the other slab up close to and behind the front slab, flat side to the north, but with the end slipped west to a point within three or four inches of the first hole we bored, and after carefully adjusting the slabs we can mark for all three holes on the rear slab. When these holes are bored we will prepare three stakes and slip the slabs on to the stakes (about thirty inches apart) and wedge them securely.

These stakes should be sawed off smoothly in front or they will clog the earth as it drifts along the slab, but the wedges and stake ends may protrude at the rear, where they will save you much time and bother by mutely explaining exactly how the slabs are held together.

The hitch may be a strong wire or chain. A trace chain and one-half is about the right length. Pass one end over the top of the front slab at the rear end and loop it around the stake; the other end should be passed through a hole made for it two or three inches from the ditch end and at the center of the slabs.

If forced to use plank, get elm or cypress 2 by 12 of the proper length and a 2 by 6 of the same length. Use the 2 by 6 to re-enforce the 2 by 12 lengthwise of its center, so that there will be four inches in thickness of the wood through which to bore the two inch holes. By this arrangement of the plank the shape of the log slab is approximated. At the end of six months' use the road will become so hard that the front slab will need to be faced with three or four feet of steel or iron. Any flat piece will do. No bolts are necessary except to fasten the flat steel to the ditch end of the front slab.

The length of the drag will depend on the team that is to be used. For horses that weigh 1,200 pounds a seven foot drag is large enough. Two horses weighing 1,300 pounds each will handle a nine foot drag.

In other articles of the series I will try to explain how to secure the best results.

BUILDING SWAMP ROADS.

Horatio S. Earle Tells of Methods That Have Been Tried.

To say just how best to build a good road or even a fair road over swampy ground is something that no sane road builder will attempt to do. The main reason why is that there are seldom two swamps alike, and so what has worked in one place would be worthless in another place. About the only thing I can do is to relate some things that have been done and let you take your choice without any guarantee that they will produce a cure in your particular piece of road, says Horatio S. Earle, state highway commissioner for Michigan.

One man had been drawing gravel for years. Each year it sank, and the road was no better than before. He drew cobblestones in the winter time and threw them into the ditches alongside of the road. In the spring they sank. Next winter he did the same thing. In the spring they sank some, but not out of sight. The result was he had two walls on either side of his road, so that the truck could not ooze to the side, and there has been no sinking of his road since.

A prominent railroad engineer says that generally it is best not to break the soil across a swamp, but to haul on the earth to build up your turpicks, first making a mat of trees and placing your earth on top of this mat. The trees should be from one and one-half inches to three inches in diameter. He says he built a railroad grade in this way across a swamp which was so soft that he could run a pole down thirty feet by hand, and the grade has stayed up without any trouble for over ten years.

Another man, instead of building a corduroy road, took the logs and drove them down endwise beside the road, using logs sixteen feet long. He drove them with a hand pile driver made out of an elm butt with three handles, so that three men could use it. These logs kept the truck from oozing to the side and proved very satisfactory.

Where you have a soft spot in your road it can often be improved by putting a layer of sweet grass or rye straw or hay over it and then putting your gravel on top of that. The hay or straw is not a water carrier and will generally hold up the grade until the gravel has a chance to pack, after which there will be no further trouble.

Effect of Automobiles on Roads.

At a meeting of the Los Angeles board of supervisors and the highway commission G. H. Squires, who returned recently from Europe, told of the building and maintenance of roads there. Contrary to general belief, he said, affairs have not yet reached the stage of perfection abroad, although they are far in advance of the United States. Fast autos, he said, are bad for good roads, and slow autos are good for bad roads.

Public Roads of New York.

From the office of public roads, the United States department of agriculture, a report shows by comparing the total road mileage with the area of the state that there are 1.51 miles of public road per square mile of area. A comparison of mileage with population shows that there is a mile of road to every ninety-eight inhabitants and one mile of improved road to every 1,277 inhabitants.

Good Roads in Cuba.

It is reported that about eighty miles of good roads will be built this year in the province of Havana, Cuba.

Famous Lilac Tree.

Chief among the many objects of interest in the gardens of Easton Lodge, Dunmow, the residence of the Earl and Countess of Warwick, is the magnificent lilac tree which occupies a conspicuous position on the terrace. This tree is the finest specimen of its kind in the United Kingdom. It has a circumference of 120 feet and a height of sixteen feet, and it has so dense a growth and blooms so profusely that when in flower it forms a huge bouquet of lilac blossoms.

The lilac is that commonly known as the Persian and described by the botanists as the Chinese, but it is not a native of either Persia or China, but was raised in the Roman botanic garden in 1765 by the hybridization of the true Persian lilac and the common lilac of British gardens.

It was of noble proportions at the middle of the last century and produced such a magnificent display of blossoms that in the flowering season Viscount Maynard, Lady Warwick's grandfather, used to make a special journey from London to enjoy the beauty and fragrance of the flowers.—Gardener's Magazine.

Lunches in Germany.

I was told at 8:30 it was time for luncheon, writes an American tourist working in Leipzig. On stating that I did not care to eat, he told me that it would be better if I did no work, so I sat down for half an hour and watched the others. At noon we had an hour and a half and at 4 o'clock fifteen minutes for lunch.

It may be of interest to some readers to know what the German eats. For his first breakfast he generally has a milk roll and a cup of coffee. The second breakfast is almost always a slice of bread with lard or goose oil, a piece of sausage or chicken and a bottle of beer. For dinner he has two slices of bread as above, with a forcing or large green pickle, cheese or sausage and another bottle of beer. For lunch another bottle of beer and a milk roll. For supper soup and potatoes.

This is the general variety of foods we had for the four months I worked in that shop, and they had it day in and day out.—New York World.

When He Enjoyed Life.

Among the tombs near the old Arlington mansion on the Chesapeake is the mausoleum of John Custis, the father of Martin Washington's first husband. It bears this suggestive inscription:

Heath this Martha Tomb lies ye Body of the Honorable John Custis, Esq. Of the City of Williamsburg and Parish of Burien. Formerly of Hungaria Parish on the Eastern Shore of the County of Northampton the Place of his Nativity. Aged 72 years, and yet lived but seven years.

Which was the space of time he led A Bachelor's House at Arlington On the Eastern Shore of Virginia.

It is said that before his marriage Custis did have a free and easy life. His marriage was of importance to his country, for he was the progenitor of several leading families. One would like to know Mrs. Custis' version of the life they had together, which he regarded as unworthy to be called living.—Youth's Companion.

Finding a Grave With an Egg.

The Mantons, a little known tribe in Asia, are very superstitious about death and will not bury a man until they have first tested the ground with an egg. This operation is very curious. While the body is being prepared for burial a number of Mantons, including the male relatives of the deceased, go out to the appointed spot bearing a large basket of eggs. Steeping down one of the natives lets an egg drop softly on the ground. If it breaks it is considered an ill omen, and another spot is selected. In this way the party often wanders about for hours, breaking eggs over the ground until they finally strike a place where the shell does not crack.

Java's Fire Island.

One of the greatest wonders of Java, "the fire island," a large lake of boiling mud, is nearly two miles in circumference, and in the center immense columns of soft, hot mud may be seen continually rising and falling, like great black timbers thrust forth and then suddenly withdrawn by a giant's hand. Besides the phenomena of the columns, there are two gigantic bubbles near the western edge, which fill up like huge balloons and explode on an average three times per minute.

Cause For Hurry.

"I understand they were married in haste."
"Yes; they told the minister to hurry because there was only a little gasoline left in their automobile, and they were twenty miles from home."—New York Town Topics.

Plenty of Them.

Jockley—You're right. Most people worry over what they haven't got, but I know certain people who worry because of what they have. Conkley—That so? What have they? Jockley—Nothing.—Philadelphia Press.

Evolution.

"Father," said little Rollo, "what is evolution?" "Evolution, my son, is a sort of apology which man has invented for displaying so many of the traits of the lower animals."—Washington Star.

Good Plan.

"How can I prevent the flies getting into my sugar basin?" wrote a "Constant Reader" to a journal. "Fill the sugar basin with salt." was the laconic reply.—Pole Mele.

Lovers' paths are tied with cobwebs.—Italian Proverb.

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