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ADDRESS BY MR. VARNER AT GOOD ROADS MEETING

Mr. President, Brethren of the Press and Good Roads Enthusiasts:

Giving an illustration of his observation by citing a number of articles of local interest and importance contained in an item of a country weekly, Editor Clarence H. Poe, of the Progressive Farmer, recently wrote very aptly, I think, as follows:

"There is hardly any more gratifying development in the south today than the tendency of our newspapers to give less attention to the faraway issues and theories and more attention to the big, vital, throbbing problems of building up the counties and towns in which they are located—that God gives task to which they are called."

This is indeed gratifying, and the tendency, apparent to all who review the sources of newspapers of the state, is making itself more and more manifest. The papers, weekly and daily, are giving more space to home topics, a discussion of which makes for improvement and progress than ever before. This is especially true of the weekly, which has too often wasted space on subjects of no immediate concern to its readers. Every live weekly today carries editorial comment and news stories on such subjects as more corn and more wheat to the acre, crop rotation, results some farmer has obtained from a trial of new methods, drainage, special tax for schools, and good roads.

This is significant. It means that the press is wide-awake, that the people are also, and that this is an era of change and progress. And it is far less common than formerly for an editor to select the fence in a fight for improvement, because of late years the press has found its financial life and is able to stand on its feet. I doubt if in all North Carolina there is a newspaper today that is so much afraid of some "big bug" who opposes the expenditure of money for schools or roads, that it would devote a column of editorial to denouncing Russia for her treatment of the Jews, during a campaign for bond issue when the cause of progress called for every line of the paper to support it.

In answering this call of its God given duty, the local paper is doing much for good roads, both directly and indirectly. It helps the cause of better highways when it advocates more corn and more wheat, better stock, improved agricultural methods, and better schools, for the hour a farmer brings his farm up to

modern standards, that hour he needs good roads more than ever before, and favors them more strongly. More corn means better roads, the development of the schools means development of the highways, any progressive action whatsoever is a step towards improved roads; and, on the other hand, good roads mean still more corn and wheat, still better schools, still more progress in every particular. For the cause of good roads is closely linked with every other cause that makes for better things.

And the country weekly is taking the lead in the improvement of the farm and the roads connecting it with the market becomes a force for the upbuilding of the whole country, with its diversified interest, because the farm is the foundation of the republic, and it is through agricultural evolution that real, lasting prosperity and greatness will come. If the farmers are in good shape, so is the country as a whole, and the reverse is likewise true. The condition of the highways is of vital interest to the farmers and has a far-reaching influence on their business. Community after community has shown that good roads contribute to the prosperity of the farmer and to his wealth, and in aiding the good roads movement the press is thereby adding to the assets of the country.

In arguing the road question, it seems to me that it would be wise to urge the construction of high-class roads for the main highways, like the asphalt road, a costly but enduring type of construction that will bear any sort of traffic from automobiles down. Next to that stands the ordinary macadam, and while it, too, is expensive, yet the press in urging good roads should not fail to hold up always the ideal of the best roads possible. Macadam cannot be secured in all counties at the present, and there remains then the gravel road and the sand-clay road, both serviceable types and inexpensive. And finally, where there is no immediate opening for any considerable road improvement, we think that one of the most attractive, direct opportunities of the press to aid the good roads movement in North Carolina today is to educate the people to the value of an already simple yet wonderfully effective invention, known as the split log drag. Few communities can afford to build permanent stone roads, and for years to come dirt roads must be used in most of Carolina territory. This being so, the problem of good roads in the majority of our counties resolves itself into the proposition of making dirt roads as good as possible at the smallest expense. Here is where the drag comes in. It is extensively used in the west, where miserably bad roads have been transformed into boulevards at practically no expenditure of money. In the south, strange to say, the people have not taken hold of the idea. North Carolina papers have published quite a good deal about it, but there is much more to be said of it, and constant hammering on the subject is bound to bring the drag into general use. There is an abundance of literature on the theme, meaty and convincing, and it should be used liberally by the press. The Saturday Evening Post carried an article May that might be reproduced in every weekly newspaper in the state, and I am glad to say, was in several. The government office of public roads gladly furnishes special articles about the drag, as it does about road making in general. I am convinced that when the farmers of the state once take hold of this method of road improvement they will be astonished at the power it possesses for performing miracles, and will wonder why they endured bad roads so many years when within their reach there was such an inexpensive, yet thoroughly effective means for making their common dirt roads veritable boulevards.

A weekly paper in any county can start a good roads revolution by heading an effort to have a number of such drags built. Get the merchants of the town to contribute. The drags cost about \$2 each. Select a road leading into town for experiment. Get the farmers living on it to agree to drag, say, a mile each. In a short time a good road, properly shaped, crowned and drained, results, and the whole county has been educated and convinced. Some-

times I think that the drag and this little plan of cooperation have not been taken hold in our state, just because the whole thing is so simple and inexpensive. The press ought to begin a lively campaign for the plan, because it is the only possible way for road improvement in some counties for years to come. It stands midway between the unimproved road and macadam, and serves its purpose well.

There are various ways of creating road sentiment and in bringing about road improvements without money, one simple expedient being to have the county commissioners set apart certain days for road work by all hands, designating such days as good roads days. This was tried in Davidson county last summer with most excellent results. The commissioners named three days in July and called on the people to turn out and work the roads. 1,500 citizens answered the call and gave the public roads such a thorough working that it was said that more was done during those three days than had been done on the roads in ten years. The Davidson county commissioners think so well of the idea that they have set apart July 28, 29 and 30 as good roads day in Davidson county, and the roads will again receive a much needed working.

The automobile has been and will continue to be a potent good roads influence, and while I would not advise the editor of any country weekly to purchase a machine in order to build up the good roads propaganda in his county—at least not while the present low advertising rates are in force—yet it will not be amiss for the paper to call attention to the far-reaching influence of the machine for better highways, putting in a word for the autoist in order to lessen the prejudice against him. For many people vehemently declare that they will not tax themselves to build good roads for these modern travelers to use. This is passing and in time will pass away entirely, but the press can hasten the day. A good road for an automobilist means a good road for the farmer and everybody else, including the old lady with a box of eggs in the back of the buggy.

Proposed highways connecting distant towns should receive instant and hearty encouragement at the hands of the press, for the time is coming when North Carolina will be traversed in every direction by such roads, and they will prove a tremendous factor in the development of the commonwealth. They will not only accomplish what a good road always does for those who live along its course, but these highways will attract tourists from abroad, and that means a largely increased money circulation. It is said that in one small resort in New England last summer as much as \$6,000 a day was spent by automobile tourists drawing thither from many states by alluring roads which penetrated a territory rich in scenic attractions.

While always and ever, the cause of good roads and politics should be kept far from each other, yet the press can render good service by demanding that the men who represent us in the general assembly be men who favor building good roads, who are not afraid to champion measures looking toward the expenditure of public money for this purpose. A good roads legislature would bring a good roads era to North Carolina at once. What would otherwise happen only after the lapse of a weighty time would occur now. The state aid idea is being put into practice in every good roads state. It is no longer an experiment. New Jersey and New York for years have demonstrated that it is the solution of the question. And the press should not only demand that candidates for local and state offices favor good roads, but they should labor to secure good roads congressmen, for there is no doubt in my mind that the national government ought and sometime will begin to take interest in the construction of good roads and will aid the states in the work. I do not believe that the people will always stand for the expenditure of hundreds of millions each year for the army, navy and waterways improvements, public buildings and the like, and only \$75,000 a year to maintain an office of good roads that can only advise and suggest and in a limited way assist and encourage the people of the United States in such a supremely important work as good roads building.

If you will pardon a personal reference, I will recount how the Lexington Dispatch did excellent work for the good roads movement in its territory, and incidentally made money and extended its circulation and increased its influence, by operating two special trains from Davidson. Davis and Yadkin counties to Charlotte for the purpose of showing more than two hundred farmers those magnificent highways which radiate from the Queen City into all parts of the county of Mecklenburg. Those who went were selected by subscribers of the paper who expressed a choice of candidates when they paid subscriptions. Few of these farmers had ever traveled on a modern macadam road; some had never so much as seen such roads as are in Mecklenburg; I believe there was one or perhaps two who had never been on a train in their lives; and all were men who, as most farmers do, live the majority of their lives close at home, bound down to their unceasing round of farm work. The most of them did not favor the expenditure of money for roads on the plea of poverty. These men were taken out over the roads of the county, shown the bridges and the road forces at work, methods were explained, lessons from experience told, the expense set forth, how land values had doubled, trebled and quadrupled, the advantage of being able to rush produce to market in any weather when the prices were high, how prices for produce had steadily risen, and what wonderful improvement had been made in churches and schools and farming as a result of good roads; and those visiting farmers went back to their home laden with good roads argument and enthusiasm, became missionaries among their neighbors, and in the case of Lexington township, there is no doubt that the influence of the Davidson farmers who made the trip went far toward the success of the election in which \$100,000 of good roads bonds were voted. Other weekly papers can do this same sort of thing, and they will find that while they are doing good for their counties, they are also building for themselves and reaping good returns on the investment of money and energy.

The farmers appreciate this kind of enterprise and I have yet to see a newspaper fail that labored for the people. You may undertake a movement that is prompted by selfishness, by a desire to extend your circulation, and make you money, and yet if you are at the same time doing something for the uplift of your county, you are doing much more than laboring for yourself, and the results will justify anything you may do. If you wage a strenuous campaign for good roads in your county, you are working for yourself. The man who does good in this world is sure to be rewarded. I know of a certain gentleman, who began life with a contract written out with God slightly as party of the second part, in which it was agreed that if the efforts of the party of the first part prospered, he would help the poor and do all he could for the material betterment of the people about him. That man today is rich. He has kept his word and his contract, he has done inestimable good in the world, he has carried new ideas and education to many, alleviated human suffering and sorrow, beautified barren places and has done a thousand and one things from distributing free flower seed to exploiting a country whose victims of the great white plague may find hope, and yet he has made money for himself, and has what is more than wealth—the satisfaction of knowing that he did what he could to make this world better than he found it. The labors of the press are largely performed with the same spirit. Countless acts are done by the newspaper man for which he neither gets nor expects to get anything whatsoever, not even thanks, but he finds pleasure in the work.

This good roads question is outranked in importance by no other question. In it is bound up the happiness and progress and prosperity of the country. The press can lay its hand on nothing that will redound more to the welfare of the people than the cause of good roads, and it must answer to the fullest degree the call that duty makes. With good roads, North Carolina will be bigger and better and greater, and all other improvements will be added to this improvement. The south with good roads will be a greater south, and the seeds tell us that through the south will come the freeer nation.

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BUSY LITTLE RASCAL

Statesville Couple, Advised By Cupid, Join Fortunes in Matrimony.

(Special to Daily News.)
Statesville, June 9.—A marriage of wide interest occurred here Wednesday evening at 6 o'clock when Miss Catherine Vance Copeland became the bride of Dr. Richard Clinton Bunting, of Baltimore, the ceremony being performed at the handsome home of the bride, on Walnut street. Immediately after the ceremony the bridal party drove to the station where Dr. and Mrs. Bunting were showered with rice as they boarded a train for their future home in Baltimore.

The marriage of Miss Copeland and Dr. Bunting was not planned as an elaborate affair, but it was exceedingly impressive and beautiful in its simplicity. The elegant home was artistically decorated, daisies being the predominating flower in the decorations. In the library, adding to the scene of beauty, was a grand display of costly wedding gifts, which bespoke the popularity of the bridal couple. The vows were taken in the spacious reception hall, the ceremony being performed by the Rev. Crates E. Raynal, pastor of the First Presbyterian church.

Introductory, a most interesting and pleasing musical program was rendered. Miss Rose Shuford, of Hickory, rendered several piano selections; Miss Marie Long sang "Beloved, It is Morn;" Mrs. Hockett sang "Beauty's Eyes," by Tosti, and Schubert's "Serenade." To the strains of Lohengrin's wedding march, four little ribbon girls, Misses Nancy Shelton and Jeanette Melton, of Charlotte, Lila Henski and Anna Cowan, of Statesville, wearing white and carrying white rib-

bons, entered and formed an aisle in the hall. Next came little Misses Elizabeth Sloop and Winifred Peggam, of Statesville, flower girls, wearing white, with pink ribbons, followed by Master David J. Craig, Jr., ring bearer. The bride came from up stairs, with her father, and met the bridegroom and his best man, William Bunting, of Wilmington, at the arch. Mendelssohn's march was played as the party left the hall. The bride wore a dress of Marquissette, trimmed in hand embroidery.

The bride is a daughter of Capt. J. W. Copeland and is a highly educated and cultured young woman, a favorite with her numerous friends. The bridegroom is a native of Wilmington, but is well known in other towns of the state, and his present home city Baltimore, Md., where he is a practicing physician. The sincere good wishes of hosts of friends are with them in the beginning of their journey through life together.

Many out of town people attended the marriage.

GANT-BANNER.

Burlington Man to Marry Greensboro Girl Wednesday.

A marriage of wide interest will be performed next Wednesday evening at 9 o'clock, when Miss Mary Gilmer Banner, the attractive and accomplished daughter of Mrs. James G. Banner, will be married to Joseph Erwin Gant, of Burlington, N. C.

Owing to the recent death of Miss Gant's father, the marriage will be a quiet one. The ceremony will be performed by the Rev. B. W. Mabana, in the presence of a few relatives and friends.

Good Tobacco Soaks. (Special to Daily News.)
Durham, June 9.—The close of the tobacco year finds that there have been sold on this town's floor, 7,068,200 pounds, at an average of \$13.12.

This is the sixth or seventh leaf market in the state in point of poundage, as the market men call it. The average price was three-fourths of a cent better than ever, but the season closed is about 500,000 short in pounds. Last year the average price paid was \$12.42 and that was a record holder until that time.

Considering the fact that the market the past season promised less than a three-fourths crop, the amount of tobacco sold is considered phenomenal.

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