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JUDGE PRITCHARD

MAKES GOOD ROADS SPEECH

Does The Welfare of the County and Town Depend Upon the Construction of Good Roads?

Lexington, Nov. 9.—Judge Jeter C. Pritchard, of the United States circuit court, delivered the principal address at the opening of the Davidson county fair last week. His subject was: "Does the Welfare of the County and Town Depend Upon the Construction of Good Roads?" The speaker addressed the crowd from platform in front of the court-house; he was introduced by Mr. H. B. Varner, chief marshal of the fair, and spoke in part, as follows:

This is an age of progress and development in every line of human endeavor. The merchant and the banker adopt the most up-to-date methods in order that they may obtain the very best results; the manufacturer, the mechanic, the miner, railroad people and others are striving to improve their methods so as to secure the same laudable end. Until recently the farmers of this state contented themselves with the methods employed by their forefathers, and as a result but little, if any, progress was made in developing our agricultural interests. Many of the counties of our state have, from the earliest days been cursed with bad roads, and the farmers practically cut off from communication with the outside world, which resulted in thousands of our brightest and best young men leaving our state and casting their fortunes in those states where farming pays, and where the people are more progressive and appreciate the fact that money expended in the construction of public highways, and in furnishing conveniences for the farming class is the best investment that can possibly be made.

In this age the people of almost every vocation in life demand the best of everything and feel that they are entitled to the most improved and up-to-date methods. But until recently the farmers have been content to pursue "the even tenor of their way," and as a general rule, only those matters have been considered that pertain to the building of railroads, the establishment of factories, building towns, cities, etc. However, I am proud to say that under the leadership of men like Dr. Joseph Hyde Pratt, Gov. Kitchin, Mr. Varner, Prof. Joyner and others, the farmers of North Carolina at last realize that they are entitled to some consideration at the hands of those who legislate for us, as well as those who levy and collect the taxes.

My friend, Senator Simmons,

one of our ablest and most efficient representatives, fully appreciates the importance of this subject, and recently he made a speech in the Senate of the United States on this subject which is full of information and encouragement. His bill which authorizes the taxing of automobiles which engage in interstate transportation is a splendid scheme, and if developed, would aid us very materially in the construction and maintenance of our highways.

Not very many months ago Louis D. Brandeis, that distinguished lawyer and progressive citizen of Massachusetts, started the country by declaring that the railroads were losing a million dollars a day by their failure to adopt the best machinery and methods. This, however, was not a new or original idea—it was only its apparent extravagance that arrested public attention. The farmers, too, of late years, had been inquiring into the efficiency of their own practices; but here many of them were confronted by the demoralizing and disheartening problem of bad roads. What, many of them asked, was the use of raising more than they could use and profitably market? For most of them were practically shut out of all markets three or more months every year because of impassable roads.

The human mind is so constructed that when a proposition is made concerning the expenditure of money we are always anxious as to whether the thing proposed will pay. Viewing the matter purely from a commercial and economical standpoint, does it pay to construct good roads? From my experience and observation, I am satisfied that the wear and tear of wagons and other vehicles, and the injury to horses on account of bad roads, to say nothing of the loss entailed upon the farmer by not being able to haul a sufficient amount of his produce to market at a time when he can realize a fair profit thereon, will amount annually to a sum five times greater than the highest rate of taxation we would have to pay in order to construct and maintain good roads in every community.

Under the old system of road-building it was the custom to begin the construction of the road in the town and build in the direction of the rural district sought to be reached. I have for a number of years been impressed with the idea that this was a mistake. To secure the construction of good roads into every community, we should begin at its proposed terminus and then build in the direction of the town. This plan would work like a charm; for if you once build a road from a rural district to within eight or ten miles of a town, then the business men living in the town will see to it

that the road is completed.

I beg leave to call attention to the following statement from Congressman Sulzer, of New York, which appears in Southern Good Roads for September, 1911. He sums up the argument for the plaintiff in the case of "Good Roads vs. Bad Roads" as follows:

"Good roads have a money value far beyond our ordinary conception. Bad roads constitute our greatest drawback to internal development and material progress. Good roads mean prosperous farmers; bad roads mean abandoned farms, sparsely settled country districts, and congested cities where the poor are destined to become poorer. Good roads mean more cultivated farms and cheaper food products for the toilers in the towns; bad roads mean poor transportation, lack of communication, high prices for the necessities of life, the loss of untold millions of wealth, and idle workmen seeking employment."

This is the whole argument in a nutshell, and is the most conclusive statement I have seen upon the subject. It so clearly expresses my views that I could not refrain from inserting it as a part of my speech.

In a conversation the other day with a young man who lives in either Davidson or Guilford county, I learned among other things that he was a graduate of the A. & M. College. This young man told me that after he left school he looked over the situation in the community where he lived with a view to settling down to make a living. He said the soil was all right and that the climate was good, but that in the winter time the roads were almost impassable. With this situation confronting him he did what thousands of others have done, left and went to Tennessee and other points where he engaged in farming for quite a while. But finally the people in the section where he formerly resided caught the spirit of progress and good roads were constructed. This young man at once returned to the place of his nativity and began farming; he said that in many instances land is worth four or

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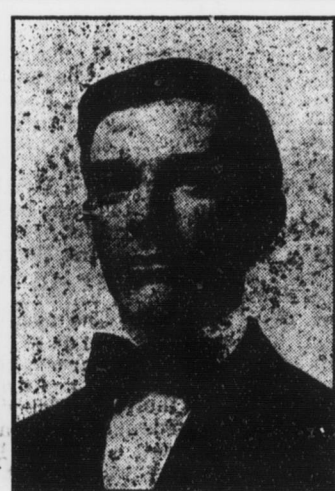
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