

# BOND ISSUE PLAN

Is Recommended By the State Authorities As the Only Practicable Way To Build Roads.

The State authorities at Raleigh recommend the bond issue plan for building roads, as is shown by the following letter sent out in pamphlet form by the State Geologist:

Raleigh, Dec. 5, 1912.  
Every inhabitant of a community, from the highest to the lowest taxpayer, will receive direct or indirect benefit from the construction of improved public roads, even though from lack of means or other reasons he does not possess any stock which travel over the improved road. Indeed, so universal in their operation are the good effects of improved roads that it is difficult to confine their benefits to any class of people or any individual line of action.

The old method of obtaining construction of roads, (which is still used by a few mountain counties), was by a labor tax which required all able-bodied male residents, between certain ages, to work on the public highways within their respective townships, for a certain number of days per annum. This method of road construction did not mean good roads, and though thousands of miles of public road have been built by this means, it has built but few miles of graded or improved roads, and it is practically impossible to construct a system of good roads in this way. As this method will not give us good roads, it remains for us to employ other methods of raising revenue to pay for their construction.

There are two methods of obtaining the revenue for the construction of good roads in a county, viz:

1. By issuing bonds and levying a small tax to take care of the bond issue;

2. By a direct tax on property. To carry out the work of good road construction the quickest and to the best advantage, the counties and townships should issue bonds, in order to secure the necessary funds.

The issuing of bonds by a county will mean but a very small increase in taxes, which as years go on will be more and more counterbalanced by the increase in the value of land and other taxable property adjacent to the improved road.

It is a fair and equitable arrangement that future generations should pay for a portion of the improvement of our public roads, as they derive just as great benefit from them as the present generation. Many have argued that if their county issued bonds to raise revenue for good road construction that it would mean a very large increase in their taxes without their deriving any material benefit from the expenditure, not realizing that if they are to have good roads they must either raise the revenue by direct high tax or by issuing bonds, and that they derive a direct benefit from the improved roads in the increase in value of property, the decrease in the cost of maintenance of the roads, and in the decrease of the cost of wear and tear on horses, wagons, and harness.

Then again, if a county issues bonds for good roads construction it makes available sufficient funds to render possible the accomplishment of the construction of a definite number of miles of road. To obtain this same number of miles within the same time by a direct tax is practically prohibitory.

The issuing of bonds gives us almost immediately the benefit

of good roads, while the payment for them is deferred for many years, so that the county is enabled to meet the bonds without unnecessary inconvenience. They give us good roads now, and make the best sort of argument for the extension of this progressive movement.

I believe that if any county or township, which has not issued bonds for good roads construction, will issue from fifty to one hundred thousand dollars of bonds and then spend it in the most economical way for good roads, that it will have no difficulty whatever in obtaining a second bond issue if the same is necessary to complete the system of roads within the township or county.

If a county decided to try and raise the necessary revenue for good roads construction by a direct tax on the \$100 worth of property, it would require an exceedingly high tax to accomplish the desired result, unless there was situated in the county a large city whose accumulated wealth could be taxed for good road work in the county. Counties situated in this way could probably raise a revenue sufficient to construct improved roads throughout the county with a tax not running over 50 cents on the \$100 worth of property. The counties, however, without large cities or towns should issue bonds for good roads construction.

A bond issue supplemented by a poll tax should give any township or county in North Carolina sufficient funds with which to construct a system of good roads, without working a hardship on any one, and at a low rate of taxation.

J. H. PRATT,  
State Geologist.

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## Bad Roads Keep Millions of Children Out of School.

The following is an extract from a very interesting and important contribution to the current issue of Farm and Fireside: "Out of twenty-five million children in the United States, less than eighteen million go to school." Of these seven million children who do not go to school, half of them live in the country, where bad roads—muddy roads, rutty roads, dangerous roads—not only prevent them from getting to and from school, but by their impoverishment of the farmers prevent any good schools for them to go to! "Many children are killed each year walking railroad tracks to school. Why? Because father needs their help on the farm—he isn't making money enough to spare his children's time for school-days, because he has to pay so much for hauling his crops to market he has no profit left for extra hired help! "Isn't it your problem to, Mrs. Mother? Isn't it worth your while to agitate the question. Isn't it worth your while to bring it up in church, in school, in society, in club, in neighborhood—to talk, to inquire, to agitate, to educate, those who don't know. To understand that the expense of good roads is like the expense of a new threshing machine, plow or a pair of horses, sure to come back many fold in the course of time?"

## THE THIRD LETTER.

From Rev. P. Oliver Against the Good Roads Bond Issue.

King, March 4.

Mr. Editor:

Our roads are in a bad condition and this we all realize and regret, but when we seek for a remedy let us be careful not to select one that is worse than the disease itself. A person suffering with a "splitting headache" may, by taking an overdose of poison, soon feel no more aches or pains of any kind forever; but most of us prefer the disease to the remedy. A specialist who had made the discovery of a drug that would convert any and all diseases into typhoid fever, would not often be called in by patients suffering from a disordered stomach, for they would readily see that their last state would be worse than their first state. They tell me that in treating a patient a skilled physician seeks first to find and remove the cause; then he strives to assist nature in repairing the damage wrought by the disease. There was a time in the memory of many of us when under our present almost outlawed system of working and maintaining public roads, that our citizens of road age met on days when we could not do much else, had a good social time with neighbors, and instead of wasting the time in a game or some other way, we freely and willingly repaired the roads, feeling this to be a duty and an obligation that each should perform for the common good of all, "every one over against his home," as was the wise policy with its incentive for best results, put into operation

by Nehemiah in rebuilding the broken down walls around Jerusalem. The roads were so kept as to invite very little criticism, for we realized that our roads were in proportion to our other comforts and necessities. But for some years now, weak-in and weak-out, our present method of building and maintaining public roads has been held up to ridicule and pictured by those who want to experiment with something new, as a huge failure,—indeed, a consuming monster, that is crouching at our gate and is not only unjust, but is depriving us of a great flood of prosperity and good things in general, that are knocking at our very portals for admission. This disparagement of the present law has gone on and increased till people have almost ceased, in places, the performance of plain duty, failing to realize that any law will fail, if not complied with. My friends, I am persuaded that if one-half the newspaper space and the spoken words had been devoted to encouraging and urging a faithful performance of our duties under the present law, that have been used to defeat its purpose by making it as odious as possible, we would today have a fair system of roads,—roads that would be well in proportion to our homes and our farms, and this is all we should crave. Things should be in proportion. It is a mistake to mortgage the home for money, to place a twenty dollar saddle on to a ten-dollar horse. Our free labor could be assisted by a reasonable road tax, collected and spent each year for certain work, such as small bridges and important changes that could not well be done by free labor

(Continued on page 9.)

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