

**Open Forum  
COLUMN  
FOR THE VOICE OF THE  
PEOPLE**

**NOW IS THE TIME TO BUILD  
ROADS**

We have read the newspapers and listened to our good friend, Grady Cole, broadcast relative to road conditions with great interest. Having lived, and still living in an area where the small amount of money that has been spent for roads has come in what may be described in "capsule" form, naturally, I can't help but "continue" to be interested in the road question.

We believe all who think straight should favor this program's being carried out. Mr. Cole points out that the Eastern part of the state has received the larger part of the road funds, which I suppose is true. But, be it remembered that the farther west the smaller the amount spent. We believe that when this money is to be allocated that our road authorities will consider that in the mountains (and we have no apologies for living in the mountains), that they will realize that in addition to the mud—which is "universal"—the hills add to the transportation troubles in the west.

We resent the epithet that is often used to describe the mountains as being the "Lost Province." But if this were true, it would be only "Scriptural" for some means to be used to "find" this lost area. Many actually good folks have the same opinion of the mountains and the residents of the same as a Northern lady who moved from Pennsylvania to our section told me relative to what many folks who, like in the North, think of the South. She said that she had been taught that the Southerners are "back numbers" and were non-progressive. She said that she was never more surprised in her life to find it to be totally untrue.

As a further evidence of misunderstandings even among well-informed men, when I was superintendent of Schools of Ashe County (please pardon reference to myself—I want no glory nor office) at the time that the consolidated program of schools began, in a meeting of school officials, our then State Superintendent (now gone to his reward) made the statement that any county superintendent who does not put as many as ten schools together is "sleeping on his job." I merely asked the question if he had ever been to Ashe County. "No," was his reply. I stated further that until the good

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Lord levels the mountains and changes the course of the streams that this is not only impractical, but impossible. I also told him that in certain sections that it is easier to consolidate 10 schools in the Piedmont or the Tide water section than it is to consolidate two in some mountain sections of the state. I merely mention these things to show that in the allocation of funds that it

should be done fairly and equitably. I would not attempt to suggest to road men, but it is common knowledge that many miles of expensive roads have been torn up and "paralleled" with more expensive roads to take out a little crook when numbers of farmers in the mountains have had to push and pull their "Tin Lizzies" through mud to the axle and at a slant of

from 45 degrees on down. Within the memory of the present generation, this winter has been "unique" for rain and mud, but it is no uncommon thing in the past for school buses to stand for a week; for mails to have to stop, or carry it into the office part of the time, and for doctors to have to be pulled out of the mud at night in this section. But let's revert to Grady

Cole's suggestion that the farmers aid in the construction of these roads. A good road through any section is an investment and not a liability. As an incentive to those who may think this is a burden, I will say that I distinctly remember (and I am by no means claiming to be old) when beginning at 18 years old, all able-bodied men had to put in 10 days "free" la-

bor on the road, and in cases where a new road had to be built they had to walk as far as five miles to do a part of this. We are all proud that North Carolina was first at Bethel; farthest at Gettysburg; last at Appomattox, and that she gave the first hero in the Spanish-American War. Now, let's forget about war and pursue this road-building

program until Ashe shakes hands with Brunswick; Cherokee with Currituck and connect all the main highways so that we may all march into "Mudlingburg" County and give Grady Cole such a serenade that it will make him feel young again.  
C. M. DICKSON,  
Silas Creek, N. C.  
Ashe County.  
February 14, 1946.

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