

"Good Roads"

A Prize-Winning Essay

The following essay on "Good Roads" by Katharine Flournoy Butterfield, 16 years old, of Weiser, Idaho, won the four-year university scholarship for which thousands of high school students of the United States competed in the H. S. Firestone essay contest. The essay shows an intimate knowledge on the subject of our highways and is an excellent contribution to contemporary literature on good roads.

Like Curious children, the Indians of the plains watched the building of the first transcontinental railroad. When the first engine breathing smoke and flame steamed upon them they turned their ponies' heads and fled wildly, expecting to feel at every jump, its hot breath on their cheeks. But the monster never pursued them over the trackless prairies.

A more mobile kinsman to the locomotive demonstrates ability to travel without steel rails, tractable truck. On the farm it is shortening the distance to market, carrying twice the load in half the time and eating only while it works.

Freight traffic everywhere is clogged. The present condition is choking industry---a menace, financial and otherwise, to the whole country. Every year, to some extent, freight congestion recurs. The railroads have no competitors for the long haul, which justifies the short haul at each end. Shall they compete for the short haul, or advise or advise the segregation of short haul traffic, and invoke the aid of this "rural express" for the hundred mile runs? Railroads cut through community areas a single diameter. Truck highways spread out innumerable radii.

Trucks carry blooded stock to range flocks. In due time fleets of trucks are conveyed, bringing in the wool, transferring its for the long haul to the Atlantic seaboard. Railroads again return it to us as manufactured goods and the cycle is complete. Busting granaries spell prosperity for the railroads---a long haul to the sea. To ensure a hundred percent harvest, fullest benefit from short planting seasons, let the truck carry the seed wheat, farm machinery, fuel, replacements and repairs for the short haul. Long and short haul agencies supplement each other. The short arc and long arc dovetail, and the transportation cycle is complete. They coalesce, not conflict.

Within a mile of Edinboro town, there runs an old Roman road. The sightseer's bus travels over the same highway that re-echoed to the tread of Roman soldiery. The work of human hands two thousand years ago is an instrument of human progress today. The coat of such highways, distributed over the centuries, fades into insignificance. Nevertheless it takes something besides the enthusiasm and energy of a pseudo-efficiency expert to build good roads. A good program can not be clapped down upon a community like a nicely

fluted pie crust, presenting an attractive surface. Every dollars worth of bonds must show a dollar's worth of permanent improvement. Prosperity will pay for the roads; we must insure value received. Millions have been spent by corporations to improve railroads, millions will be spent by co-operation to build good roads.

To the motor truck, the highest exponent of good roads! To Good roads, the basis for truck efficiency!