27,000 Miles of Hard Roads

One of the first impressions made upon the delegates, after alighting from the train at Beloit on Monday morning where they were taken in automobiles for a tour of the farms in Rock County, was the splendid condition of their highways. Gravel and concrete roads seemed to be the rule everywhere. This impression made on the first day was strengthened continually during the remaining three days of the trip.

In practically all of the eleven counties traversed by the party the county engineer of that county was a member of the reception committee and with his automobile assisted in transporting the visitors to the various points of interest. From these county engineers and in fact from every citizen of Wisconsin the trippers heard of their wonderful system of roads and how the farmers as well as the town people appreciated these good highways and were spending their money annually to build new ones and maintain those already built. The farmers told us that they could not operate their dairy farms profitably without good roads. The automobiles, busses and trucks are rapidly becoming one of the most important departments of their transportation system.

SPEND $40,000,000.00 ANNUALLY.

We learned that at the present time the state, counties and townships were expending annually nearly forty million dollars for the building and maintaining of roads. We were told by a representative of the state highway department that Wisconsin could boast of over 27,000 miles of 365 day roads, 2,000 of which are concrete and 25,000 of gravel, macadam and various other types.

PATROL SYSTEM.

It was a surprise to many of the delegates to see highway patrolmen with two horse graders patrolling the gravel roads which were dry and dusty. Their system in that state of maintenance is carried on by an organization of patrolmen, each one of which maintains about seven miles of road. These patrolmen are employed by the month at an average of $150.00 for man and team. We learned that the average cost of maintaining these roads by the patrol system per mile per year, averaged about as follows: Earth, $186.00, Gravel $183.00, Concrete $312.00.

We learned that the State of Wisconsin was unable to issue bonds to build state roads because the constitution provided that before a state bond issue could be voted that it must be submitted to a vote of the people by two succeeding legislatures and this procedure had never been followed up to date. The state pays one-third of the cost of state roads, the Federal Aid supplies one-third of the cost and the counties and townships supply the other third. The state obtains its highway funds from the automobile license fees which average about $13.80 per car per year, bringing to the state annually, approximately $6,700,000. The state has no gasoline tax at the present time but a big campaign was on to induce the next legislature to pass a law requiring a 2c per gallon tax on gasoline to bring more revenue to the state road fund.

COUNTIES VOTE BONDS.

In several of the counties we visited we found the main highways were paved of concrete and the county had paid its portion from a county bond
issue. In the last six years 28 counties in that state had voted bond issues totalling $38,500,000. Several agricultural counties had voted from $3,000,000 to $5,400,000 for roads. Here are a few:
Fond du Lac Co. in 1919—$4,500,000
Green Co.      in 1919— 3,000,000
Walworth Co.   in 1919— 3,000,000
Waukesha Co.   in 1919— 3,800,000
Dodge Co.      in 1919— 5,400,000
and 23 others smaller sums.

The cost of hard roads in Wisconsin during the past year has averaged per mile as follows: Gravel for grading, bridges and surface $8,750.00; concrete $27,550. For surfacing only the gravel has averaged $1,590 per mile and the concrete $24,500 per mile.

STATE MARKERS.

The marking system in Wisconsin was one of the striking features of their highway system. Every road was marked with a number and by the use of a state highway map a traveler could go anywhere in the state by following the official number.

The above picture represents the marker which is found on every state highway in Wisconsin. During 1923 the state expended $40,296 for marking and posting their highways. There is only one trail marker on any highway in the entire state.

William Allen White, the noted Editor and Traveler of Emporia, Kansas, recently visited Wisconsin and among other things he said, “Other states, California and Oregon, have

WISCONSIN ROAD MARKER
great natural beauty, but in Wisconsin the great number of small prosperous cities, the thousands of highly improved farms, with modern buildings and well-tilled fields, and the never ending system of highways with its mile after mile of splendid roads and its wonderful system of road marking, tell of a wide and intelligent, and apparently quite fair, distribution of wealth—a distribution which indicates to the stranger that the good things of Wisconsin are open to and enjoyed by all.”

Bankers Ass’n is Urged to Help Dairymen

United co-operative effort to encourage dairying in Kansas, by the Kansas Bankers Association, the extension division of the state agricultural college and other agencies interested in the development of agriculture in the state, is urged in resolutions adopted by Kansas bankers, editors and agriculturists, who made a tour of the dairying districts of the