

**Country Roads.**  
NUMBER THREE.

On the 20th of March a convention was held in Springfield, Illinois, the purpose of which was to agitate the question of permanent good roads. Of course, after a man has spent two or three days in a convention of this character, or, in fact, in any convention, when he comes home and gets into his old ruts he is not likely very soon to recover from the effects of this convention, particularly if it has been a good one and things went the way of his thinking. I enjoyed this convention greatly. While it was not great in numbers, it was composed of practical men and men who knew what they were talking about, and had come to Springfield to do something, if possible, to get a little enthusiasm among the people of our state on this very important and essential question to our present and future prosperity.

Phocion Howard, the indefatigable, hard-working, self-sacrificing and gratuitous secretary of this organization, of which he has been the secretary now for ten years, gave us a most interesting report of the condition of things in the State of Illinois. Told us a great deal about what we had not done, graphically described the condition of things as they would be if we should only do half our duty with regard to this question of country roads. He pointed out a way through the mud which he thought would ultimately lead us, not into the promised land, but upon a good, dry road, on which we could travel all the year round with pleasure and comfort.

The most astounding fact which Mr. Howard presented was that over \$1,700,000 every year was literally dumped into the mud, and there are no traces of it to be seen to-day. Looking over the village and township in which I reside, when I think how much money for the last twenty years has been spent, and then try to see if there is anything in sight to show for it, I am led to exclaim, with the prophet of old: "How long, how long shall we suffer with mismanagement, incompetency and neglect as to the permanent improvement of country roads?" Very valuable, timely and practical papers, covering the legal, the physical, the practical, and, in fact, every phase of this important question, were read. Could these papers be gathered under one cover they would form a most valuable guide book, and one which would also throw a great deal of light and knowledge into the eyes of the benighted average road commissioner of our state.

The convention did not "resolve" very much. They appointed committees to gather information with regard to what had been done in making permanent hard roads. This information will be given to the public in the "set by and by." I do not think there has ever been in the history of this state so great a general interest in the road question as now exists, and my idea is that the older we grow and the more dense our population becomes we shall feel more and more the necessity of good roads. I am a thorough believer that the first thing for a permanent road is a good foundation, and that can only be reached through under-drainage.

**Neighborhood Talk.**

The Gardner correspondent of the Joliet News has this to say about us: "As the traveler approaches Dwight, that ninth wonder of the world, he finds an increasing interest in that extraordinary settlement. Mr. Germain had much to say in praise of the treatment as taken by neighbors of his. 'And still the wonder grows,' that their quiet, thoughtful fellow-citizen, Dr. Keeley, who had gone in and out among them for twenty-five years, keeping his own counsel and nursing his great 'plan of salvation,' should be suddenly found shaking the nations with his sublime discoveries. This prophet is not without honor at home. Scott Allison, the banker of Gardner, confirmed the statement of Mr. Germain that farm property was rising in value in that neighborhood. The immense inflow of money at Dwight was making itself felt in the region round about. For instance, Dr. J. R. Oughton, one of Dr. Keeley's associates, had bought 520 acres in one lot from J. F. Durston of Syracuse, N. Y. It is three tenths south of Gardner. Many small farms have been bought by men who were renters. Few of these exceed 100 acres. Improved crops on this rich soil have enabled the renters to do this. Most farm owners are holding fast to their property, in expectation of still better prices.

**For Sale.**

A good building, 16x30 with a 10-foot ceiling, and one block from the business center of town. This will be a bargain for some one who wishes to go into business. Enquire at this office.

**Wanted to Rent.**

Two or three furnished rooms for light housekeeping, centrally located. Call at this office.

**Crop Reports.**

The following are the crop reports from all over the country, as published in Mr. S. T. K. Prime's Crop Bulletin for April.

**General Conditions.**

General conditions for the week ending,

APRIL 15TH, 1882.

"Cold, wet weather. Oats growing. Seeding Spring wheat. Winter wheat doing well."

Yield of spring wheat } 502,739,000  
" winter " } bushels  
" corn...1,617,025,100 bu.  
" oats.... 488,251,000 bu.

APRIL 15TH, 1883.

"Small grain nearly all seeded. Stand of winter wheat poor. Good progress with plowing for corn."

Yield of spring wheat } 420,155,000  
" winter " } bushels  
" corn...1,551,000,000 bu.  
" oats.... 571,302,000 bu.

APRIL 15TH, 1884.

"Cold, wet and backward. Oats seeded. Fifty per cent. of the spring wheat in. Winter wheat very backward. Little ground plowed for corn."

Yield of spring wheat } 512,764,000  
" winter " } bushels  
" corn...1,795,000,000 bu.  
" oats.... 571,302,000 bu.

APRIL 15TH, 1885.

"Winter wheat barely holding its own. Spring wheat seeded. Seeding Oats."

Yield of spring wheat } 357,112,000  
" winter " } bushels  
" corn...1,036,000,000 bu.  
" oats.... 629,409,000 bu.

APRIL 15TH, 1886.

"Cold, wet and backward. Winter wheat just started to grow. Spring wheat seeding progressing favorably."

Yield of spring wheat } 457,218,000  
" winter " } bushels  
" corn...1,665,441,000 bu.  
" oats.... 557,618,000 bu.

APRIL 15TH, 1887.

"Winter wheat in very fair condition. Pastures and meadows short. Oats all seeded. Corn lands plowed and ready for planting."

Yield of spring wheat } 456,329,000  
" winter " } bushels  
" corn...1,456,618,000 bu.  
" oats.... 659,618,000 bu.

APRIL 15TH, 1888.

"Cold dry and backward. Very little corn land plowed or planted done. Spring seeding fourteen to twenty days late."

Yield of spring wheat } 415,868,600  
" winter " } bushels  
" Corn...1,987,790,000 bu.  
" Oats.... 701,705,000 bu.

APRIL 15TH, 1889.

"Largest proportion of the spring wheat crop seeded. Winter wheat in excellent condition. Corn lands plowed and ready to plant."

Yield of spring wheat } 490,560,000  
" winter " } bushels  
" Corn...2,112,792,000 bu.  
" Oats.... 751,515,000 bu.

APRIL 15TH, 1890.

"Oat crop practically all seeded. A spotted and uneven winter wheat outlook. Kansas and Missouri planting corn. A late season in everything, but nothing very discouraging except the winter wheat outlook."

Yield of spring wheat } 399,262,000  
" winter " } bushels  
" Corn...1,489,970,000 bu.  
" Oats.... 523,621,000 bu.

APRIL 15TH, 1891.

"A cold, very wet, backward season. The oat crop not seeded. Very little preparation for corn. Fair progress with spring wheat seeding. Winter wheat doing well but backward. Grass short, but prospect good. Reserves of all kinds of grain unusually low."

Yield of spring wheat } 611,000,000  
" winter " } bushels  
" corn...2,050,000,000 bu.  
" oats.... 739,000,000 bu.

APRIL 15TH, 1892.

In many respects the present spring is similar to the spring of 1891. So far the last thirty days have been cold, and with more or less rain all over the country. In fact we have had an excess of moisture. In Missouri, farm work has been more or less retarded by excessive rains. In Kansas, the eastern portion of the state has had more rain than was needed. While in the central and western portions there has not been as much. Very heavy rains have fallen all over the state of Illinois, but owing to the fact that so much of the land in this state has been thoroughly tilled, little inconvenience so far has been experienced. The same condition of things exists in Indiana and Ohio. The rainfall in Michigan has been above the average. In

Iowa the soil has been too wet to work. The same condition of things in Nebraska. Excessive rain in Minnesota, and also excessive moisture in the Dakotas, yet notwithstanding this excessive moisture the earth has been in great need of it, for we hear very little complaint of water standing on the ground. We have had very dry seasons for the last two or three years, and as we say the reserves of moisture have been reduced to a very low point. Looking at the crop situation from as broad a standpoint as we ought to the country starts off fully as well if not better than it did last year, when the earth gave forth such an abundance of grain, fruit and root crops.

**Spring Seeding.**

Of course with the general conditions which have existed and as I have tried to correctly state, we cannot expect to be able to report but very little progress with spring seeding. In North Dakota, the spring so far has been unusually wet, and practically no work has been done. As the season advances the fact becomes more and more apparent, that there is a much larger proportion of the stacked and shocked wheat in the northwest (North Dak.) that is going to prove worse than was thought. A great deal of it has stood in water for some time, and the grain has been more or less damaged from the effects of rain recently, and driving snow storms earlier in the season, and it does not now seem to be any longer a question of speculation but one of fact, that there are millions of bushels of wheat which will be utterly useless for bread making and will only be fit for feed upon the farm.

Taking all the territory north of Grand Forks, and there was not to exceed twenty-five per cent. of the plowing done last fall, and as a large proportion of that country is now more or less under water, farmers will not be able to get on their lands before the twentieth or twenty-fifth of the present month.

With these surroundings, the ground being wet, so much shocked and stacked wheat standing in the fields, and a shortage of fall plowing, it does not seem at all probable that North Dakota will seed more than five-sixths or three-fourths of last year's acreage.

In Minnesota the general spring prospects are favorable. The ground will be in excellent condition for the reception of the crop and the present week will show fairly good progress with spring wheat seeding in this state.

**Oats.**

The seeding of the oat crop promises to be very late. Illinois, the largest oat growing state in the country, commenced this important work ten days ago but storms very soon put a stop to all kinds of work and ever since then and up to the opening of the present week, nothing has been done. The oat crop will be very late in this state and if the season from now on is not an exceptionally good one, the prospects for a full crop are not favorable. Very little, if any seeding of oats has been done in Iowa, owing to the fact of the ground being so wet that farmers could not get into their fields.

In Nebraska, about twenty-five per cent of the oat crop is now in the ground and by the close of the present week, from one-half to two-thirds of the oats in that state ought to be in.

In Eastern Kansas, the oats are all sown but they have been put into the ground in poor shape.

**Corn.**

It is too early to say anything about the coming corn crop more than this: That with the lateness of the oat seeding we shall see this spring, even under the most favorable circumstances, very little corn planted during the present month. It will take us until the last week in April to get through with oat seeding, and then the preparation of the ground for the coming corn crop will have to be commenced.

**Old Corn.**

It is an old story to say "that there is plenty of corn in the country," and yet, after all, what is there? Simply the corn which was raised in 1891. We thoroughly cleaned up last season the accumulations of former years, and with all the contingencies which are likely to arise before another crop is made, I can see no reason why corn should sell lower than is ruling to-day. The summer feeding is a great feature. Cattle men did not, a few years ago, do much in this line, but they found by experience that the heat of the summer, in connection with plenty of corn, made fat cattle. Hence, a great many large

cattle men now feed but little corn in winter and commence their heavy feeding just as soon as the grass is large enough for feed. With all the stock there is in the country to be fed, and with the consumption of the next six months, there ought not to be much corn in the country on the first of next November. Then again, the farmers never were better able to carry a crop over into another season than they are to-day, and, in fact, I expect to see more corn carried over until 1893, unless prices advance, than the trade has any idea of.

**Winter Wheat.**

With the lateness and the backwardness of the season, with the small growth which the wheat has made so far, it is almost an impossibility to say just what the condition of the growing crop is. Now we know that the wheat has only just commenced to grow; that in height it is not nearly as large as it was at this date in 1891. It does not cover the ground as well and I do not think that the stand of wheat is as good as the stand of 1891, and, all things considered, we have not as good a prospect for a full crop as we had a year ago at this time.

I do not think there is anything the matter with the early sown wheat, but, on the other hand, there is little doubt in my mind to-day but that the late sown wheat is weak, thin on the ground and it is shooting up spindling. While these are the general conditions, during the last fourteen days there has been a marked improvement in the crop conditions as a whole.

My winter wheat report from 324 points, which gave a general average of 75 per cent., was made about ten days ago. This report covers the states of Illinois, Kansas, Missouri, Indiana, Ohio, Michigan, Kentucky and Tennessee. The state averages then were made as follows: For Illinois, 81 per cent.; Kansas, 75; Missouri, 74; Indiana, 61; Ohio, 65; Michigan, 84; Kentucky, 76; Tennessee, 79. General average, 75 per cent.

The condition at the same date in 1891 was 95 per cent.; in 1890, 87 per cent. The government report just made gives Illinois 82 per cent.; Kansas, 77; Missouri, 72; Indiana, 78; Ohio, 71; Michigan, 83. There is very little difference in my report and in that of the government, the widest difference being in the State of Indiana.

**California.**

The rainfall up to date is 15 1/2 inches. This will insure a crop in some sections. In other sections more rain will be needed. Reports show a generally favorable condition of grain, and also fruit crops, in all parts of the state.

**Reserves.**

Millers very generally all over the winter wheat belt report that they have difficulty in getting supplies from farmers, and yet a short time ago we were told that farmers had become thoroughly disgusted with the prices of wheat and were letting it go rapidly. This, however, has not been the case for the last fourteen days. Farmers have not for the last ninety days held on to their wheat as tenaciously as they are doing at present, and it seems to me that it means one of two things, and that is that the crop prospects are not as favorable as they would like to see them for winter wheat, or there is not as much wheat in the country as we have been led to believe there was. Then another fact, which I do not think we give half the credit we ought to, is that the farmers are so well off. They never were in a better position to keep their wheat until it gets somewhat nearer to their own ideas of value than it is to-day.

**Conclusions.**

I should sum up to-day the general outlook of the country in which we are interested about as follows: The spring is late; with the exception of the far Northwest there is nothing very discouraging in the outlook. The lateness of the season, with good weather from now on, will all be overcome by the excellent condition of the ground and the abundance of moisture. Our prospects for winter wheat are below those of last year.

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Dwight, Ill., February 10, 1892.



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