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EDITORIAL

IS IT REALLY PROGRESS?

For three years or more State and County officials and citizens have wrestled with the problem of widening Woodward avenue between Royal Oak and Pontiac. That problem has been settled, and yet the first evidence of the work, in Birmingham, must raise in the minds of thinking men and women a question that is even more perplexing, because it goes so much deeper—it penetrates to the very heart of the matter of the "progress" of which this development is an example.

In the way of this huge project stood some human beings who spoke effectively, a few engineering difficulties that bothered but little and a hundred or more magnificent old elm and maple trees lining the street, in Birmingham, that spoke not at all. They were silent, although they had played their part in bringing to Birmingham countless numbers, only to fall in turn before the very growth they helped to create.

Anyone who has driven down Woodward avenue in Birmingham of late, or has even seen pictures of the fine old trees, their limbs cut off just above the trunks, must be hard indeed not to have felt a bit of heart-ache. Silent for generations while unmolested, the trees, attacked by axe and saw, suddenly became more eloquent than words, protesting against the destruction.

Is this progress, beyond peradventure of doubt? Does it represent the world's striving toward better things in life? The trees, raising the stumps of what were once majestic limbs, raise also a question that will probably remain unanswered long after they are uprooted and carried away, to make room for concrete highway.

It may be, of course, that this and similar works are the regrettable yet necessary steps toward civilization. To deny it because of sentiment alone would be as dogmatic as insisting that it must be progress simply because, it means "development." Perhaps, it will benefit in many ways—probably the sacrifice of these trees to modern transportation needs will speed the way of many who seek to escape the city's cares and closeness, to get out on the broad highway and beyond, to places where other trees and grass and flowers make life enjoyable. This generation that has loved the trees will miss them—perhaps the next may never know they existed and were lost.

Perhaps it is progress. And yet, some, if only a few, must wonder when things that Nature fostered for more than a man's lifetime are destroyed by man in a moment—and ask the question—is this really progress?

EACH IMPROVEMENT BUT A FACTOR

The increase in bus fares to Detroit, effective this week, is a good illustration of the close inter-relationship that exists between all matters of public interest and advancement. The volume of traffic on the buses was not sufficient to meet expenses, the receivers declared, and so the fare went up.

OUR OWN ALUMNI

Read at the Sixth Annual Banquet of the Farmington High School Alumni Association, Friday, June 22, by the author.

The word "Alumni" brings us tears
And memories of other years;
Those years have passed, but a few remain
To meet with us each year again.
We're glad to see them here tonight,
And to us all it gives delight
That school days are remembered yet.
We think of them without regret.
For they're the happiest time of all,
And joyous times they now recall.

The books we studied day by day,
When minds were drifting far away;
If only we could be
Forgetting all geography,
And studies which we used to hate;
The most of us could hardly wait
Until 'twas time to put away
Our books and pencils for the day.
But now we have forgotten these,
And in our minds they're memories.

New Seniors every year there'll be
To join our happy family;
And so we're growing more and more,
This year we're adding twenty-four.
A welcome to you we extend,
And hope your feet may homeward wend
As we may meet another year;
Our own alumni greets you here.
So may you all be richly blessed
With peace and joy, and happiness.

—M. Marie Walling.

Suppose the improvements and progressive steps planned for the coming year had been achieved by this time. If for instance, Grand River was widened, the new sewer was laid, city streets paved, and Farmington's growth under way—wouldn't it have been likely that enough additional passengers would be riding on the buses to make them a paying proposition at the established fare? It is quite possible and probable. Many more present residents of Farmington would ride on the buses, it were not for the terrific jolting that passengers get between Division street and Redford. Improvements within the City would help because they would be bringing new residents to the City, who would require transportation in perhaps a greater proportion than the present population.

No one improvement or development can be expected to bring on the many advantages desired, and similarly the neglect of any one limits the benefit that can be realized from the others.

A 'CHANCE OF A LIFETIME'

We are told by representatives of the State Highway Department that never before in its road-building, had the State agreed to construct at State expense, within the limits of any city, such a highway as is planned in Farmington. The cities themselves, as the greatest beneficiaries of such highways, do the building in every case.

The phrase, "a chance of a lifetime" was worn out long ago, and yet it appears to fit the this situation perfectly. The State proposes to build this road at an estimated cost of \$100,000, and maintain it always at State expense. It seems inconceivable that the owners of frontage can be considering the casting aside of this opportunity, only to face later the necessity of the City's building the highway—and assessing most of the cost to them.

The State can worry along without widening Grand River avenue inside the City. But the City can hardly afford to be without it. Aside from the duty of frontage-owners to consider the benefits to their fellow-citizens of Farmington, from their personal viewpoint alone it would seem that in withholding their consent to release the frontage, they are literally throwing away "the chance of a lifetime."

ALL RIGHT—IT DOESN'T GO TOO FAR

From the office of the Oakland County Road Commission comes a bulletin reviewing the improvement work under way and planned for this season. The report

concludes with this statement:

"The major effort of the Oakland County Road Commission's program this season will be concentrated in the greater Pontiac area, and according to the Commissioners, G. Ross Thompson, Luther Allen, and Thomas Lytle, this is most necessary in view of Pontiac's unprecedented industrial growth."

No fair-minded resident of the County will quarrel very violently with this viewpoint. The needs of the greater Pontiac area, resulting from its rapid growth, are not to be denied. What other parts of the County are not infrequently troubled about, however, is that many County officials sometimes have a tendency to forget all of the County except the county seat.

WHY WASTE VACATIONS?

The long school vacation is here. Mothers will be glad to get children out of the grind. Many children will get to organized camps. This is very good. Many will simply have a larger freedom. This, too, is good. But freedom can only too easily degenerate into waste or idleness.

Why not plan a few simple activities for vacation which are unlike those of the school year, or handled differently. Vacation is above all the time for music study. In a term of six weeks, with two lessons a week, with daily practice in the morning when the world and all the energies are fresh, the student will often accomplish as much as in a whole year of lessons and practice when the energy has been exhausted by the school day.

It is time for handicrafts. Let the girls—even rather young ones—make a simple dress or two, taking it easy and not doing enough on one day to get nervous over it. Can't the boys paint the porch floor or help with the washing? It never hurt a boy yet to hang out a few clothes—and it sure helps Mothers' back. Why can't the boys learn to cook? They'll have a much better time on fishing trips later on if they know a few good principles and can add occasional appetizing variety to the usual bacon, fried potatoes and bad coffee.

Why can't the girls put up a few shelves? It never hurt a girl yet to know how to use a hammer, a saw, and a screwdriver properly. When it comes to reading, why must it all be desultory. Some easy-going reading, some purely idle time, is desirable. Otherwise, what are vacations for? But why not plan a little reading about one subject, whether it be fishing or Peter the Great.

And cannot the family get together a little more, do things on shares, talk things over, have some family good times without anybody else along?—Exchange.

STRIVING IN EVERY WAY

Entire responsibility for grade crossing mishaps cannot be laid on railroad companies; most of them must be ascribed to the inexperience or carelessness of drivers these days when vehicular traffic has reached such an enormous volume. At most of the more perilous crossings the railroad companies have flagmen to safeguard the public, and are striving in every way to eliminate these fatalities, as well as those among their passengers.—Ex-



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