

## ROAD LAWS OF ARKANSAS.

Since the Department of Agriculture began a systematic inquiry into the conditions of our roads, it has been discovered that the losses by wear and tear and time and small loads and lateness in market, etc., amount to as much as the annual expense of our government, about one billion dollars. These estimates are reliable, too, being based upon information carefully gathered from all sections—manufacturing, grain growing, cotton, mining, lumber States, etc., etc.

The unit used is the cost of hauling one ton one mile, and this is found to be greater in the United States than elsewhere.

It is gratifying to know that there is now a strong and growing tendency toward improving these conditions. It began in the east—notably New Jersey, New York, Massachusetts and Connecticut, and is rapidly spreading.

Arkansas has made a long step forward in the last few years. After floundering along in the mire for nearly three-quarters of a century, her freight wagons are now emerging from the ruts of bad roads and a bad road system on to a higher, dryer, firmer plane.

It is true, there is still room for improvement in our road laws, but it is also true that our present laws are vastly in advance of those which prevailed even a few years ago. At that time we still had the time-worn, time-dishonored method of "warning out hands" to (ostensibly) work the road, but who really spent the day in such sports as fancy suggested "to kill time."

The new law provides for a "road tax" at a maximum of three mills, and the unanimity with which this has been voted by farmers shows that they are not only willing, but eager, to bear a share of the burden of road improvement in order that all may enjoy the benefit. It should not be forgotten by those who live and do business in towns that good wagon roads throughout the country mean as much to them as to the farmer. The farmer must bring his products to market. The merchant wants the farmer's trade. Good roads help the farmer, the gardener, the fruit grower and the miner to take advantage of the market by shorter time, more frequent trips and bigger loads at less expense. The benefit is mutual; so should the burden be.

### ROAD TAX.

The road tax must be voted by the people at the election for county officers. The amount of the tax is levied by the quorum court.

As to taxes collected on property in cities for road purposes,

it is provided by Act of May 23, 1901, that, "Whenever, under the provision of an Act approved May 8th, 1899, . . . a tax shall be collected in cities of the first class. At least one-fifth of taxes so raised upon the taxable property within said city limits shall be appropriated for the purpose of road and bridge building outside of the city limits . . . according to the discretion of the county judge. . . ."

### Number of Days for Road Work.

Formerly parties were warned to work five days—not more than three in any one month—or pay one dollar per day. October of 1897. The road working age under this Act was 18 to 45 years. In counties where the road tax is not voted this Act has been amended by Act of February 23, 1901, making the time three days in any one year, and two days in any one month. At present, however, where the counties have voted for the road tax the following law prevails: "When a road tax shall have been voted by the electors of any county, in addition thereto each male person in said county, between the ages of 21 and 45 years, subject to road duties, under the old laws shall be subject to four days' work on said roads and bridges.

Provided that each person may, when he is lawfully warned, as now provided by law, pay the road overseer of his district in lawful money of the United States, seventy-five cents for each day he is warned to work, said tax to be collected as other taxes are collected, provided that each of said persons or taxpayers shall be allowed to work out his tax, and shall be allowed the sum of seventy-five cents for each day's work, and that each overseer shall give his certificate showing the amount of time said person has worked, which certificate or receipt shall be accepted by the tax collector in payment of the taxes of said person in any amount not to exceed the total amount of his road tax.

Provided further, that when any person shall reside in the corporate limits of any city or town, who is required to perform labor upon the streets of said city or town, or who is required to pay a corporation tax in lieu of services upon said streets, shall be exempt from labor upon the public roads."

Approved May 23, 1901.

The time of residence in a road district requisite to liability for road duty is ten days. Residence is defined to be for a man of family, "where his family resides;" for any other person, "where he boards."

Three full days are required for legal warning to work the road.