70% of which have gravel or higher-type surfaces. As before stated, the present state highway system consists of 9,289 miles of roads and should eventually be increased to not more than 20,000 miles, or about one fourth of all roads of the state. This increase in mileage will have to be very slow because of the limited funds now available to the state highway commission.

If each of the 92 counties would improve, yearly, 6 miles of county highways along the same standards as the 215 miles of feeder roads which are now being built, the state could well afford to absorb this 550 miles each year and thereby build up the state system and relieve the counties of the maintenance of that mileage. Petitions are continually being presented to the highway commission to take in more roads—hundreds are now on file in the central offices—but until the counties improve along higher standards those roads which petitioners are asking to have incorporated in the state system, it will be impossible, because of the lack of funds, for the commission to take any more mileage.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN COUNTY ROAD MAINTENANCE FUNDS ARE EXCESSIVELY CURTAILED

Todd Stoops, Secretary-Manager,
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This subject can be discussed from two different points of view. One phase of the subject is what actually happens to roads through the lack of proper maintenance which would naturally follow the curtailment of funds. The other phase, a much broader subject, would be the motoring public's reaction to inferior roads due to lack of proper maintenance.

Curtailment of county road maintenance funds—as with any other public fund—can be brought about in two ways: one, by the actual curtailment of the amount of money to be spent, and the other, by unwise and wasteful spending of the fund. In my talk this morning I am assuming that the curtailment is brought about through actual reduction of the amount to be spent.

If the amount of money set aside for county road maintenance has been wisely and judiciously spent and yet is not sufficient to complete the work properly, its expenditure can only be classed as false economy. Any road that is not properly maintained rapidly deteriorates to such an extent that it is only a short time until the road is beyond repair and complete rebuilding is necessary. To allow a road system to get into this condition is obviously false economy.

The majority of roads in this state are now county roads; and, generally speaking, these roads are rapidly deteriorating from lack of proper maintenance. You will find gravel roads
with the metal worn out to such an extent that in numerous cases the surfaces of the roads are below the level of the shoulders. When it rains, the water will not drain off but will run along in wheel tracks, forming gullies on both sides of the road, until it does come to some point where it can drain off. In doing this the good portion of what metal is left is washed off, leaving a rough road full of ruts over which we are compelled to travel.

If higher-type roads, such as black top, oil mat, etc., are not kept in repair, and especially kept water-bound, they deteriorate rapidly until it is impossible to make repairs, and complete reconstruction is necessary.

In practically all cases when sufficient road maintenance funds are not available, in order to get as much work done as possible, it is necessary to employ inexperienced, inferior employees, a further false economy.

Culverts, bridges, and drainage ditches should be kept open and in repair. When they are allowed to deteriorate, excessive expenditures are necessary to bring them into a proper state of repair.

Since maintenance funds have been curtailed and are inadequate to maintain our county road system properly, the next question that arises is: How can we provide adequate funds? This can be accomplished by placing an additional burden, in the form of gasoline taxes or license fees, on the automobile owner, who is now carrying the total load of maintaining the county highway systems, or by placing a levy for this purpose against real estate, which is not now carrying any of the burden of maintaining our county roads.

REAL ESTATE TAX

When you consider the fact that real estate is not carrying any part of the burden, I feel that further taxes levied against the privately-owned motor vehicle would be unjust and unfair, and would tend to retard one of our greatest industries. I say privately-owned motor vehicle because I do not intend to include buses or trucks which are owned solely to be used as common carriers and are using our highways as tracks over which to operate. I have excluded this group because I do not know whether or not they are paying their proportionate share of motor-vehicle taxes.

While, of course, none of us who own real estate wish to pay any more tax than we are now paying, we must look at this subject from an unbiased and unselfish viewpoint. Practically every county in the state has what is known as "land service" roads, and anyone who denies that real estate should bear the burden of maintaining this particular type of road can argue only from selfishness. It is just as right and reasonable to contend that this type of road should be maintained
at the expense of the motor vehicle as it is to take the position that the motor vehicle should bear the burden of construction and maintenance of the lane leading from this type of road up to the farm house, which in some instances is a quarter of a mile back from the road.

In some instances there are roads which might not be classified as land-service roads but do act as connecting links between land-service roads and the state highway system. It isn't fair to expect the motorist wholly to maintain this type of road. As a matter of fact, the motor vehicle should not be expected wholly to maintain any particular type of road, because there isn't any doubt that improved highways enhance the value of all real estate.

Some city administrations have felt that the automobile should bear all the burden of maintaining the streets; yet how could our police, fire, and sanitary departments function without them? Our streets also act as fire breaks and provide space for the installation of various utilities. As a matter of fact, we would be compelled to have as many streets in any city as we now have—probably not as highly maintained, yet we would still have to have as many streets whether we had automobiles or not.

Inasmuch as practically all real estate owners have motor vehicles, it is merely a question of from which pocket the taxpayer is going to take the money. One might think that inasmuch as the real estate owner has to pay it out of one pocket or another, it doesn't make any difference from which one it comes.

When you consider taxation, all types of citizens must be considered, and in regard to this particular subject, by far the greater number of vehicle owners do not own real estate. Therefore, when the total burden of road maintenance funds is saddled onto the motor-vehicle owner, he is being discriminated against in favor of the real estate owner; and if we continue to add taxes to the already overtaxed motor vehicle, sooner or later this vehicle will be taxed off the highway.

We all know that it costs considerably more to operate a motor vehicle over a good earth road than to operate one over a good gravel road. The same thing is true in the operating costs of driving a motor vehicle over a good gravel road as compared to driving over a hard-surfaced road. And if these roads are permitted to deteriorate through lack of sufficient funds, this operating cost obviously is going to increase.

We cannot assume that our highways are built purely for the benefit of the motor vehicle. What would a good piece of land be worth if there were no roads or any means of transportation? Even at my age, I can remember heavy growths of timber in the various sections of the state which
were practically worthless because of the lack of roads. Either it was impossible to get the timber out, or the cost of removal was prohibitive.

When the law was passed creating a weight tax for trucks, there were objections from the rural sections. The argument that they put forward was that the farmer should be exempt, whereas, as a matter of fact, this weight tax goes to help maintain roads in order that produce may be delivered from the farmer to the consumer. If the present conditions are allowed to continue, it is only a question of time until there will be no roads over which produce can be hauled from the farm to the market. This statement may sound far-fetched, but it states exactly the situation we are facing.

DIVERSION OF ROAD FUNDS

While we do not have any direct diversions, generally speaking, in this state, we certainly do have indirect diversions, because when the gasoline tax was allocated to the cities, towns, and state highway systems, the counties immediately removed the road tax levy against real estate. I also know of some instances in which funds were used to meet municipal payrolls.

Another form of diversion is the use of gasoline tax for the retirement of gravel road bonds, some of which were issued to cover the cost of building land-service roads, and others for roads built before the time of the automobile.

Another point I should like to stress is that it behooves you gentlemen to make a careful study of your county road problems and to be especially careful that every cent appropriated for maintenance of county roads is wisely and honestly spent.

We must face the fact that at the present time our tax burden is extremely heavy, and that unless we are very careful in the expenditure of our road maintenance funds, it is only a question of a short time until we are going to have an extremely serious situation on our hands.

Oregon was the first state to pass a gasoline tax law, with a tax which was very small. Since that time this type of tax, along with increase in license fees, has been enacted in every state, and the amount of taxes has been increased from time to time. Until about four years ago, there were no objections to these taxes on the part of the motorists. Formerly motorists were perfectly satisfied with the tax inasmuch as it was being spent for roads. Within the past four years the opinion regarding this tax burden has been reversed, and a large majority of the motoring public is insisting on a reduction of motor-vehicle taxes. During the years that all of the motor-vehicle taxes were spent in maintaining highways, the motorists were perfectly satisfied; but when these taxes were in-
creased to an excessive amount and diversion was applied, they rapidly became more and more dissatisfied.

Congress and eight or nine state legislatures that meet in regular session during 1936 will convene this month, and there are indications that most of them will consider legislation affecting the interest of motorists, particularly tax reduction.

In conclusion, I wish to lay stress on the point that with the curtailment of county road maintenance funds, two conditions will result unless we make proper correction. We know that with improper maintenance our county highways will eventually pass out of the picture, and, secondly, that unless the roads are properly maintained, the motorist is going to wake up to the fact that he is not getting what he is paying for and will demand a reduction of taxes. I believe it behooves us to recognize the seriousness of the situation and to begin to take immediate steps to correct it.

ROAD WORK ON CONSERVATION PROPERTIES

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Indiana's Conservation Department is entrusted with the operation and maintenance of 68,000 acres of the state's holdings in parks, forests, game preserves, and fish hatcheries. These lands are operated by the three land-controlling divisions, namely, State Parks and Lands and Waters, Forestry, and Fish and Game. The Engineering Division acts as a service division to these three units, in addition to performing its statutory duties relating to drainage and flood control.

You represent organizations of the county and state having to do with construction and maintenance of county, state, and federal highways, which form a network of communication between the cities, towns, and villages of the state. These same highways, incidentally, are feeders to conservation properties. Last year a paid attendance of 770,000 persons visited state parks, with an estimated total of more than a million and a quarter visiting the conservation properties. Many of these visitors came from other states and many from our own. In either event, many thousands of dollars in gasoline tax monies came to Indiana's highways from conservation property visitors alone.

Roads and drives in conservation land areas are not the same high types of highways as those in the state system. They are designed for less speed and for passenger vehicles rather than for the heavier type of freight carriers common on all our state and federal highways.