

ROAD CONSTRUCTION HAS NOT IMPROVED

IN 3000 YEARS

by Guy B. deVall

Hermann Schreiber, in his book "Merchants, Pilgrims and Highwaymen: A History of Roads through the Ages," on page 115 wrote: "...for between the roads of ancient Crete (3000 B.C.) and the modern U. S. Highway No. 40 NO MORE THAN HALF A DOZEN TECHNICAL DISCOVERIES HAVE BEEN MADE THAT ARE OF ANY SIGNIFICANCE."

Before we look at a new idea, the words of Thomas Edison in regard to new ideas should be recollected:

"Convention requires that we all look at things in the same single way. 'Thus far shalt thou go, and no farther' is the staid remonstrance of convention. Our very familiarity with a specialized field of experience conditions us to think about it conventionally. We may become so accustomed to doing things in a certain way that it does not occur to us that it can be done in another and perhaps better way."

For 3000 years roads have not only been constructed practically the same way, but have rendered only ONE service: to allow vehicles to travel from point A to point B - and that is all!

For 3000 years roads have been financed in two ways: (1) by the taxpayers; and (2) by private individuals who were permitted to charge a "toll" to the road users.

The 3000-year-old systems of building and financing roads are responsible for our cities' growing HELTER SKELTER and bringing almost incredible congestion which greatly affects the economy of the nation.

The WALL STREET JOURNAL of January 24, 1963, in an article pertaining to roads, states:

"One distribution consultant estimated that up to 80 cents of the consumer dollar goes to cover distribution costs on such products as sulphur, certain drugs and some cosmetics.

"For all U. S. corporations Charles Beard, director of distribution cost for Union Carbide Corporation, figures distribution cost swallows more than \$100 BILLION A YEAR, OR ABOUT 20% OF THE TOTAL NATIONAL OUTPUT OF GOODS AND SERVICES" (in 1963).

(With today's increase in the Gross National Product, how much higher is the cost today than in 1963?)

Roads not only affect the consumer's dollar but also the Government's dollar - whether it is Federal, State, or Municipal.

The LOS ANGELES TIMES of January 20, 1966 carries the headline:

"TAXES TOP ISSUE IN GUBERNATORIAL RACE

"According to the State Poll, as of today the State Structure in the State of California appears to be the major issue in the 1966 Gubernatorial campaign."

Such conditions prevail not only in all 50 states but in every U. S. city, large or small.

In recent years the property taxes in the small city of Santa Monica, like many other cities, were substantially increased. The City of Santa Monica could, by adopting the deVall system of constructing roads, reduce taxes and, at the same time, have a more "livable city."

Santa Monica can acquire, at no cost to herself, the following:

(1) the land comprising the two-mile-long section of Highway 101 which runs parallel to the ocean, thus returning it to the tax roll and bringing considerable new revenue to the city.

(2) better housing for low-income families, the aged, and public servants of Santa Monica.

(3) elimination of the dangerous bottleneck which the new Santa Monica Freeway has created in Santa Monica.

At the same time, Santa Monica can avoid:

(1) the high cost of building a causeway (one of the ideas that has been considered for the extension of the Santa Monica Freeway).

(2) placing the Santa Monica Freeway in the middle of the city, which would greatly reduce the tax income to the city.

Moreover, the deVall road would permit a steady flow of traffic, which today is non-existent.

The deVall road does not consist of pulling rabbits out of a magician's hat; deVall only proposes to adopt already-used systems and to adopt the very same systems to today's technology and ways of doing business.

Private road financing is not new; some of the best roads in America in the 19th Century were built by private capital. Private capital built the roads because they brought a profit through "toll charges" to the road users, who consisted only of auto and truck drivers. Specifically, the profits were produced only through ONE service: to permit a vehicle to travel from point A to point B.

The deVall road, instead of ONE service, would render many services, the combined services bringing considerable revenues. Private capital would be anxious to invest in a new project where their investments would bring a good rate of return.

Once the necessary consent is obtained from Santa Monica, the State of California can put up at bidding the construction of the deVall road on that section of Highway 101 located in Santa Monica.

Construction companies such as Kaiser, U. S. Steel, Bethlehem, and others would bid. The winner would build on the land which has been granted by the State and the City.

The builders, at completion of the deVall road, would receive the total revenue which the road would bring and would pay taxes to the City, State, and Federal Governments.

The City of Santa Monica can not only increase considerably its revenue but also can acquire many acres of valuable land within the city limits IF it will consider incorporating some of its agencies and services (such as the police, fire, and first-aid stations) as an integral part of the deVall road.

The city could then make an agreement with the builders of the road to secure the needed space free of charge.

The city could then easily dispose of some of the land and structures in the city where said services are today located.

The road that deVall proposes to be built in Santa Monica is, comparatively, a very simple road.

The three-dimensional model of the Freeway that deVall has built represents a much more complex system; however, it becomes very simple once it is viewed. The structure is provided with models of electric trains, buses, autos, and trucks, each of which travels on separate routes. Accesses and exits for the vehicles clearly show that all the "buts" and "ifs" have been eliminated by the simple procedure of having previously made more than 100 experimental models, and each one never measured less than 20' x 30'.

In viewing the model, the viewer cannot help recollecting the history of roads in America. When the Pilgrims landed, they found the footpaths of the Indians. The Pilgrims first created the unpaved roads. A generation later the macadam road evolved, then cement roads.

Is it not logical that in the 20th Century Americans should build freeways in steel (and cement)?

The deVall model shows much more than mere roads; it shows that, in order for roads to render their intended services, whole new cities must come into being. The structures and buildings which were built beside the roads of early America have gone. Only the roads remained. Today the cement pavement is a "tombstone" of the valuable land which it covers. The deVall system merely builds on the "tombstone" and, in so doing, will benefit not only the pocketbooks of all, but the nervous systems and general state of health of all citizens.

If today 196 millions of Americans were to land on virgin soil, as America was in the days of the Indians, with their modern tools and machines and with steel and cement, WOULD THEY HAVE BUILT THEIR ROADS AND BUILDINGS AS WE SEE THEM TODAY?

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January 26, 1966

P.S. LIFE's January 12, 1962 issue featured an article regarding mass fall-out shelters. The idea of "shelters," although practically ignored today, has not been forgotten in the Pentagon and in the White House.

The deVall road would provide not only fall-out shelters (at no cost to the taxpayers) but also an "escape route" for city inhabitants to the sea, where boats or trains could take them to safety. With China a member of the A-bomb club, can we afford not to give consideration to the "shelters"?