

Grinstead on Drainage

Making and maintaining good roads in the most economical way is at this time the concurrent desire of all citizens of this county. In this we should be careful to avoid mistakes.

About five years ago the Falls City Precinct Board of Supervisors had the County Surveyor and his deputy to make survey of road from center of section 16 South to a point near center of section 21, thence in a S. E. direction a short distance to the Nemaha River.

The object of this survey was for letting contract to make a graded dirt road from center of section 16 to center of 21 with excavation from center of section 21 to river for outlet of surface water. From the center of 16 to the top bank of the river the surface raises gradually to an elevation of 3 1/2 feet; hence to give water channel on each side of road a 12 inch fall to the river, beginning at center of 16 with channel one foot deep, the same was made gradually deeper until at the river the bank was cut away until the depth of the channel was 5 1/2 feet below surface. This dirt was hauled to the north end of the road so that when the road was finished up the grade was approximately level. The road was all right until the water raised in the river to within about 3 1/2 feet of top of bank when the water ran out into and over banks at north end of channel near center of 16. The water breaking the banks above in times of flood came down onto this grade at the north end where the trouble had been before and now the road is impassable. The surveyor insisted at the time that this work would be worse than useless and should not be done but recommended that a channel should be cut from about the N. W. corner of S. W. 1/4 of S. E. 1/4 of 16 belonging to G. W. Fisher, running about S. 75 degrees E. to intersect road running south from Burlington depot to Smith's Mill near bridge across ravine.

If this had been done, or could be done yet, with a sufficient water-way at or near center of section 16 and the channel were made two to three feet deep and five feet wide and the aforesaid grade were made 12 or 18 feet wide 1 foot high in center with water channel on each side 1 foot in depth emptying into channel running S. 75 E. from center of 16. We say if this had been done instead of what was done then the result would have been worth the money expended. This was recommended by the County Surveyor. The Board was excusable however because

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of the fact that some of the land owners refused to give right of way for channel greatly to their own disadvantage. This ditch if it had been made then would now probably be 10 feet deep and 10 feet wide and would have doubled the value of every man's land through which it would run, by relieving the broad bottoms materially in that vicinity of the congestion of water in times of overflow. What was done however simply aggravated instead of relieving the unfortunate con-

ditions. I mention this case in particular because of the fact that we are all in distress together over the deplorable condition of the roads, and we may in our great eagerness to better them do the wrong thing. There is perhaps not a township in the county that has not a piece of road situated similarly to the one described and at which place the same kind of a mistake may be made. Salem has four different roads on which the same mistake can be made.

Don't forget that the owners of the bottom lands will, at their own expense, make it possible to have good roads across these bottoms by putting this water-plane entirely below the surface of the ground and at the same time quadruple the value of their own lands; in many ways greatly to the advantage of all.

Yours truly,
R. E. Grinstead.

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