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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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SNOW DRIFTS ON ROADS

The following facts about the drifting of snow on roads are set forth by Mr. V.R.Burton, a well-known highway engineer, on the basis of his long experience in fighting the snows of Michigan.

The topography combined with the culture of the country through which a road runs influences the amount of drifting to a great extent. Rolling wooded country, where the road grade follows the surface of the ground very closely, gives the least trouble. Large flat fields of cultivated land, especially where autumn plowing is practiced, are often swept bare and then snow, stopped by a fence or by weeds, falls on the highway. Even such small obstructions as the weeds and corn stubble remaining in the field after the harvest are sufficient to reduce materially the amount of drifting adjacent to such fields,provided the snow is not so deep as to cover these objects completely.

Long shallow cuts are difficult to keep clear of snow, but the deeper cuts do not usually give much trouble. The snow storage capacity of the side slopes is so great as to take a large amount of snow before the roadway is blocked. Fills give little trouble, and in many cases are swept bare by the wind, except in the case of high fills provided with the old-fashioned type of wooden guard rail, which is a serious drift-former. The cable guard rail is therefore preferable wherever snow is a highway problem.

Snow fences, set far enough back from the roads so that the drifts formed in their lee will not reach the roadway, are now erected permanently or temporarily on an extensive scale. In recent years a good many roads have been relocated so as to remove them from exposure to excessive drifting.

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