

# Looking at What Can be Done NOW--Not Backward, Not Forward.

Higher Association of Man Must be  
Looked to, Not Higher Wages,  
Salaries, Profits, Interests,  
Dividends, Tariffs,  
or Taxes.

THE UNION OF THE TRADES,  
NOT TRADE UNIONS, ARE  
WHAT IS NEEDED.

Part I.—By Albert Kimsey Owen

In an interview in the Independent Magazine, Thomas A. Edison says: "The Kingdom of Labor is coming. . . . In 200 years by cheapening of commodities, the ordinary laborer will live as well as a man does now with \$200,000 annual income. Automatic machinery and scientific agriculture will bring this result."

Had Mr. Edison been acquainted with automatic roads which include automatic machinery and scientific agriculture—had Mr. Edison known about the plan to lay out, construct, pay for and operate National and State Auto-Highways, by incorporated public commissions, that has been specifically set forth in a bill (H.R. 23591) now before Congress, he would have seen that the essential part of his prediction can be brought about inside of ten years.

At this stage of our complex society, before the cost of living or any other basic problem can be settled, the first thing for us to do in these United States is to get the entire people together. We must not be only the United States—we must be the States united. Yet, as paradoxical as it may seem, this can be done only by scattering the people further apart. The problem is to get the whole people into coherent touch without having them massed into unmanageable, uncomfortable, disease and vice-breeding cities at any place. The people's labors must be brought into order and system, in ways to be co-related and so there will not be any waste of labor, time or material, before they can be fully useful, economic and progressive; and, to live upon the best social and intellectual intercourse, families must each have its own distinct, separate and beautiful home. Henry Clay said: "*The love that lies in the home, that binds families, that creates order is the most powerful of all our country's pillars.*"

It is the mutuality that exists with the inmates of the home that makes the home powerful for good, and the greatest of all forces in a nation is the mutuality of its citizens in their common weal. This is not yet understood. In times of panic and war it is the mutual interests that the citizens or that the soldiers have in the public good that holds the nation together. In times of great public danger the peoples' mutual interests in the public welfare are always appealed to by those in authority. At such times the people are aroused to unify their thoughts, labors, properties and credits to save the Republic, and the people never fail to act in enthusiastic accord.

Hence, the mutuality of the common interest of the people has been employed to destroy and to kill in wonderful and varied ways but, strange and sad to say, the mutuality of the people in their common welfare and destiny has never been appealed to for the conservation and the general betterment of the labors of the people. This is just what auto-highways are planned to do.

It is the *higher association* of man with man and not the higher wages, salaries, profits, dividends, tariffs or taxes that must be looked to. *Higher Association* is the gospel—is the *new message* of evolution that must now be preached. *Higher Association* is the open sesame to "the promised land"—to the Kingdom of God on earth or to all that is good and beautiful here and now. We stand at the threshold of the *Industrial Re-formation*—at the open-way of the re-ordering and re-systematizing of productive, useful and co-related activities that is to give industrial freedom without which political liberty is but one step removed from chattel slavery. It is only by *higher association* that the "automatic machinery" and the lands, labors, tools and good roads necessary for intensive or "scientific agriculture" can be gotten into the service of the many—into the use of the men, women, girls and boys who do the world's work. If the peoples' industries are not to be made inter-dependent and coherent then the better the "automatic machinery" and the more extensive the good roads and the "scientific agriculture" may be, the greater will be the drudgery and taxes of those who do the labor—who do the service. But with *higher association* man will be attracted to render the service of his better self—his ideas, inventions and discoveries—to the uplifting of society. Then it will be seen that the noblest service of man is to advance the public good; and this service—our duty to conserve labor and to promote the public good—will be the *tie-that-binds*—will be the religion of the auto-mechanic and cultured civilization such as Mr. Edison sees coming.

At this stage of our evolution, the two essential or basic factors to do things are lands and laborers. In the United States, we have both in abundance and in exceptional varieties and qualities. The only reason that every citizen and immigrant, who has worked five years or more in this country, has not a garden-home, a run-about and things in general for use and pleasure at their best and in plenty, is owing to the fact that there never has been a concrete set of thoughts or a specific plan formulated, published, illustrated and explained to show the people how and why they must live along the lines of their own communications, own their own vehicles of intercourse and exchange, be upon their own lands and work for themselves under public "Captains of Industry" in diverse and up-building activities that belong to themselves and that are co-related and co-sustaining. This is precisely what auto-highways or civic-roads are planned to do. So sure is this the case that we may say the plan for "automatic machinery" and "scientific agriculture," foretold by Mr. Edison, is set up and all that is required now to put into action this continent-wide and hemisphere-

long automatic-mechanic-business concern is for Congress to press the button—is for Congress to pass the bill.\* The people will do the rest and without giving one added care or one dollar of expense to the Government. On the contrary, the more miles of auto-highways constructed and the more magnificent they are made the richer, every year, will be the United States Treasury and the Treasury of every State that the National Auto-Highways pass through or that constructs State Auto-Highways, and consequently the less taxes the people should have to pay to The Federal Government and to the said States.

This is not a wild—it is a conservative statement. This is the age of wonders. Within the present decade, we have successfully navigated under the ocean and through the skies, and have put wireless telegraphs, telephones, lights and powers in course of every hour service. Amid such marvelous doings, the surprise is that it should seem miraculous or unexplainable that there is a plan at hand that will lead working men and women to enjoy to the fullest what they, by their own co-relative labors, can grow, manufacture, invent and discover. In face of the wonderful advances that are being made every day in science, mechanics, chemistry and surgery, it reflects upon the sanity of the American people that some one has not long before this worked out a plan by which we each can have environments, encouragements and protections to live decently, to assert our own individuality and to enjoy what we have made or done, or what we may fashion for use, or what we may do to advance the public good.

Common roads and cities, as they are to-day, are not better, in fact in most cases, they are not as good as they were when history first recorded roads and cities. Auto-Highways or Civic Roads are to be wide and magnificent multi-way-park avenues that will separate and keep distinct and make safe the different classes of vehicles of intercourse and exchange. They will run east-west, north-south across and up and down North America. They are to link, with bands of steel and co-related interests garden-cities, factory centers, industrial colleges, mines, farms, forests, mountains, valleys, lakes, rivers and sea-shores, and they will facilitate and encourage their denizens to visit and enjoy frequently whatever may be best in any or in all of these.

At the close of Nov. 26, 1910, there were 95 towns and cities in the United States governed by commission. In every detail of management, towns and cities that have had a year's experience under government by commission show better results than they did under government by ward boss. However, towns and cities, to get the best results, will have to incorporate their respective commissions and then improve upon the business methods of those greatest of all incorporated business concerns—*private trusts*; for good government—city, state and national—is simply good business.

\*Not any bill of importance that is not for *private trusts* will be considered by Congress before there is a panic or war; or before there is a public *sensibility* to enforce it.

Auto-Highways are planned to utilize both of these ideas.

Auto-Highways will attract the entire nation to get upon wheels. Every one will be encouraged to move about to and from near and distant places and frequently.

The convenience, safety and attractiveness of the steel-plate, cement, and other improved and separated roads and their centers of business, accommodation and entertainment will do this. These improved and enjoyable conditions will call into universal uses runabouts, motor-cycles, motor-tricycles, cycles, skates, motor-skates, electric carriages, carry-alls, trucks and cars, and every one will be influenced, in one way or another, to move about quickly and joyously to and from everywhere, and thus the whole people will become acquainted and facilitated to do, well and rapidly, all things that may promote the common good.

On auto-highways the laborer becomes his or her own employer and any work he or she does is for himself or herself; that is to say that everything done is to build, sustain and perfect a great, general plan to build-up his or her city, state and nation. Again, consciously or unconsciously, every man or woman who works for himself or herself on the roads or farms, or in any of the thousand and more varied industries that will follow along and be an integral part of civic roads, will be working for all the other persons who are working on or in them; and, consciously or unconsciously, all those other persons will be working, at the same time and in a thousand and more ways, for him or her. Now as *wealth is having at one's services the services of others*, it stands to reason that when a man lives in his own beautiful-park-surrounded home and works along a civic road he is made richer by the addition of every one who comes to settle and work along the same causeway or its branches. Therefore, if it be true, as Thomas Carlyle has stated, that "*The wealth of a man is the number of things which he loves and blesses and which he is loved and blessed by,*" then it is true also that when there shall be a million, or better still ten million families living and working along these public-company highways, every family will own, within a decade from the time its members begin to work, a beautiful and up-to-date furnished and appointed home and will have at command better schools, libraries, amusements, parks, public utilities, transportations, farms, factories, fisheries, game preserves, stock ranges, protections for limb, life and property and all that goes to make life honorable, progressive and enjoyable than any man with the largest bank deposit can have in the United States to-day. That is to say, every person who works at least ten years on or in the associated industries of a civic road can have at his or her service everything that he or she can use and enjoy to advantage that can be furnished by the greater civilization that will be in vogue at that time under such circumstances.

What more than this can a multi-millionaire or a king have? A multi-millionaire or king can not possibly have more things and conveniences than labor has or can furnish for use and luxury, and if laborers can furnish everything

for multi-millionaires and kings, is it possible that some one of us ninety million people can not devise a plan so that laborers can do as much if not more for themselves? Such a plan should be easier to formulate than the Topsy-like plan for the nondescript tangle of common usages, that have simply "grewed," now used by society by which those who do not do any productive or serviceable labor get the first choice of everything that is grown and made, and every year take and waste more and leave less for those who grow, make and serve. What society lacks and must have, before it can move forward and upon a higher plane of thought and action, is a constructive plan, that can be made universal in its extensions, that will conserve and utilize the technical efficiency of labor and land. And this is just what auto-highways, or public trusts will do.

Mr. Edison, the greatest genius living or dead, clearly sees that he or any other man can not do anything worth the doing if it were not for the labor services of others past and present, and that there should be a plan made by which everything that is grown or done may be *not necessarily owned but enjoyed* by those who grow and do it. Emerson saw this when he wrote: "*All power is cumulative and the virtues of by-gone days work their worth in this.*"

## PART II.

Mr. Edison says: "Not individualism but social labor will dominate the future. You can't have individual machines and every man working by himself. Industry will constantly become more social and inter-dependent."

The socialization of labor—that is to say to unite the farmer, mechanic, teacher, accountant and general helper into a cooperative-integral union is the basic idea upon which civic roads are formulated. Civic roads will attract these producing and sustaining forces in society to range themselves, with order and system, along their own good roads, upon their own lands and into their own factories and mines, and where the by-laws of the public companies respectfully will put every family into its own home and every girl and boy into school and industrial college and will do away with the middle-man—with the manipulator, the man of the three-shell game, broker, merchant or shopman, the insurance, real estate and commission agents, the landlord, railroad baron, hotel proprietor, private banker, private employer of labor, and private contractor. The trade unions will then become the union of the trades and as there will not be any man, woman or child employed by a man or by a private company, on civic roads or in their associated industries, there can not be antagonism, strikes or boycotts or injunctions.

There is a general demand that the people "go back to the farm" and as it is impossible to put the country into the cities, civic roads will put the cities into the country. Along or close to these roads the cottage or bungalow home of every man can be embowered with roses, have park environments, hot and cold water, electric light, heat and entertainment, every factory window can open upon green fields and beautiful gardens, and the songs of birds can be heard in the groves close by. Under

such conditions the first and best thoughts of man and woman will be how best to live—how best to work, how best to promote the public weal, how best to assist man to assist himself, and then the necessity for alms, charities, tariffs and taxes will have ended as far as the denizens of civic roads are concerned. The power to do good will then be the ruling force.

Auto-Highway Commissions will give prizes for the best plans for garden-cities, factory-centers, industrial-colleges, commercial-terminals, public buildings, clock and chime towers, parks, fountains, arches, statues, etc. It is inconceivable the amount and variety of finished accomplishments that civic roads will call forth, encourage, utilize and perfect, and how everything that is grown, made or done will go first to the use and betterment of those who do the work. These civic road managements, that is to say these public companies, are to be holding or parent companies in much the same way as private trusts are, or as J. P. Morgan's Merger or "Community of interests" is; and as they will be automatic in their construction and will furnish their own credits to pay for themselves and one third of the money to start their sub-companies, they will have ever-increasing revenues at hand to take over and to put to use the inventions, discoveries and ideas that can serve mankind and advance the commonwealth. And, it is just possible that not any person will be more surprised and delighted than Mr. Edison to see how quickly and generally, his storage batteries and every other electric device that can aid man in his work and entertainment will be put into service, how rapidly and well his varied and beautiful plans for concrete cottages, bungalows, factories, etc., for the millions "will be poured up," and how soon and grandly staged hundreds of factory-centers and industrial-colleges will have his cinemato-phonograph dramas, operas and lectures opened at nominal prices every evening and holiday. Then, as Mr. Edison has told us in a previous interview, "the saloon will have no further attraction for the working man" for under such circumstances, he with his wife and children, will look for diversions, instructions and rest in the lecture halls and refreshment and music gardens where the revelations of science, chemistry, discovery, travel and invention will be explained by lecturers and illustrated with moving-picture exhibits.

On civic roads, electricity will be used in everything and in every way possible; for light, heat, power, communication and entertainment—for manufacturing, transportations, motors, batteries, street cleaning, house keeping, plowing, harvesting, construction, etc. There will not be any occasion for the use of coal or of steam power. These two great sources of dirt, smoke, cinders and noise can be done away with entirely by the harnessing up of water power and by generating electric power and heat at the mines and transmitting them by wires rather than the coal by cars.

Mr. Edison, in his interview, June 1910, "*The To-morrow of Electricity and Invention,*" says: "As for the electric motor, it will not be perfectly utilized until everything we now make with our own hands, and every mechanical

motion, can be effected by throwing a switch. I am ashamed of the number of things around my house and shops that are done by animals—human beings, I mean,—and ought to be done by a motor without any sense and fatigue or pain. Hereafter a motor must do all the chores. . . . There is absolutely no reason why horses should be allowed within the city limits, for between the gasoline and the electric cars, no room is left for them. They are not needed. The cow and the pig have gone and the horse is still more undesirable. A higher public ideal of health and cleanliness is working toward such banishment very swiftly; and then we shall have decent streets. . . . The worst use of money is to make a fine thoroughfare and then turn it over to horses. Besides that the change will put the humane societies out of business." On civic roads horses, dogs, cats and all other unclean animals, and fowls, are barred from resident districts. Order, system, cleanliness, quiet and safeguards for men, women, and children in their enjoyments and every day life are to be the rules.

Mr. Edison says: "Many people now charge their own batteries, because of lack of facilities; but I believe central stations will find in this work very soon the largest part of their load." Civic Roads will have all kind of electric facilities—storage plants, repair shops, supplies, factories of every kind of electric device, etc.—at distances of every 12 1-2 miles, that is to say, at every factory-center and industrial college.

Mr. Edison says: "I am convinced, pretty firmly that a large part of our heightened expense of living comes from the cost of delivering small quantities to the ultimate consumer. . . . What is needed is to devise automatic stores where the distributing cost is brought down to a minimum on every article handled. A few electro magnets controlling chutes and hoppers and the thing is done. . . . But homes and rents are still much too high in price because of the cost of construction. . . .

"My plans are very simple. Nothing that is fundamental and successful in dealing with the wants of humanity in the mass, must ever be complicated. I just mold a house instead of a brick."

The plans for civic roads are very simple also. Instead of leveling and paving 3,500 to 4,000 miles of tangled streets, lanes, and avenues all in a bunch that are forever being torn up and are always filthy and expensive to live on, and dangerous to cross and to travel on, as are those, for instance, of New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, etc., civic roads will be a series of a thousand or more miles of straight, wide and magnificent park avenues on which traffic and travel will be separated and kept upon distinct ways; and on or near to which every family will own its own garden-home, and every factory and place of amusement will be built and operated with a view to make life sweeter and better for the denizen as well as for "the stranger within the gates."

Mr. Edison says: "A single house can be cast in six hours. . . . I believe that the houses can be erected and completed with plumbing and heating apparatus for \$1,200 each. . . . Each house may be different in combination or design, color and other features;

and an endless variation in style is possible. The house that I would recommend has a floor plan of 25 by 30 feet, three stories high, with cellar, six large living and sleeping rooms, airy halls, bath and every comfort. In cut stone such a house would cost \$30,000." There have been such advances, within the last few decades, in machinery and general technology that the productive power of the individual laborer has been multiplied about five times; but all these advantages have gone to those few persons who have incorporated to monopolize the credits, deposits, transportations, and machinery of the whole people and now they simply hire those men, women and children who have labor power and the necessary technology to do whatever is wanted. The auto-highways—the public companies—are to do for the men, women and children who have the labor power and the technology just what the private companies or trusts have done and are doing for their few directors, and in these "intrinsic good ways of doing things," the houses that Mr. Edison says, under present conditions, will cost \$1,200 will cost, probably \$600, and will be better made and be more beautifully park-enviored than Mr. Edison yet dreams.

Mr. Edison says: "These houses can be built in batches of hundreds and then the plants can be moved elsewhere. When built these communities of poured houses can become flowered towns with wide lawns and blooming beds along the roadways. Rats and mice and croton bugs will have as much show in them as in a steel safe in a bank. Cement neither breeds vermin nor harbors it. *There is nothing in all this that is not common sense and easy of practice.*"

"Who would not forsake the crowded apartment or tenement on such terms for roomy, substantial houses, fitted with modern conveniences, beautified with artistic decorations, with no outlay for insurance or repairs and with no dread of fire or fire bugs."

Auto-highways—Public Companies—will take from profits that go, under existing conditions, to the merchant and to the manufacturer, sufficient money, whenever required to restore to the denizens loss by fire, flood, storm or earthquake; also to provide necessary funds in case of accident, illness, unprovided-for-old-age, motherhood, widowhood or orphanage, and to make up any deficiency in funds necessary for kindergartens, schools, hospitals, asylums and so forth. This will be done without assessment or tax upon any person at any place or time. It will be the business of Public Companies to see that every man, woman and child within their jurisdiction are well housed, protected by every safeguard and always provided for above the suspicion of want or neglect. Order, system and business in public affairs will do away with any necessity for alms or charities.

In another interview (London Times, December 1908.) Mr. Edison says: "In combination with cheap houses and cheap transport the great towns will be broken up and the population scattered back to the land."

But enough! There are so many striking features in the plan for auto-highways or civic roads that absorb and bring Mr. Edison's ideas and inventions

into immediate and general service, that Mr. Edison might claim this good road plan to be a child of his own mind in order best and quickest to put into the use of the plain people, on the farms and in the factories, his storage batteries, trackless cars, electric carriages, trucks and omnibuses, cement houses, cinematograph dramas, operas and lectures; acousticons, lights, powers, heats and motors.

Again, if "coal is the stored up sunlight—is the storage battery of the sun to what we owe about all our energy," as Mr. Edison says it is, then it is true, also, that the laborer is the stored-up-intelligence that has used "the stored up sunlight" to feed, clothe, house, transport and entertain the people of the past and present civilizations. And if after all our boasted intelligence, scientific research and application of mechanics and chemistry we have not been able to get more than 15 per cent of the energy from the coal we use, and that we are still ignorant of what constitutes electricity, heat, light or gravity, it need not surprise any person, who thinks seriously upon any subject, that as yet probably not one hundredth of one per cent of the force and intelligence of the laborer has been utilized to serve himself by uplifting his fellow laborer and his nation.

The first step to solve Twentieth Century Problems is to get the whole people into coherent touch in ways and under such order and system that even the man with the most selfishness and the greatest brute instinct, consciously or unconsciously, will be attracted to employ his services in connection with the best "automatic machinery" and the "most scientific agriculture" of his day under such conditions that the more he works for himself the more beautiful and civilizing he will make his environments, the more he will assist himself and his fellow workers to be his and their better selves and the greater he will make his city, state and country.

This is the mission of auto-highways! They will harness up the selfishness of man and use this selfishness to serve man, nation and world just as sure as Mr. Edison has harnessed up the Thunder Bolts of Jove, that were the terrors of our forebears, and has made them the most wonder-creating forces and the mightiest civilizing influences of our epoch; and this will be doing right now and here just what Mr. Edison predicts shall be the case in the future.

Baldwinsville, N. Y., Dec. 1, 1910.

House of Governors,  
In conference,  
Louisville, Kentucky.

GENTLEMEN: While the forceful and ringing words of Governor-Elect Woodrow Wilson, November 29th at Frankfort, Kentucky, are still fresh in mind and I hope in heart, permit me to call your attention to the enclosed Leaflet No. 11 and to add the following paragraph:

Our Sovereign States—particularly New Jersey—have been the Frankenstein that have created and set in motion these incorporated-PRIVATE-monster business concerns or trusts that "centralized business has built up . . . which overtop all states and seem to have no match or competition except the Federal

