

The Legislature.

The charters of the road companies being obtained when little or no experience was possessed, the tolls were fixed arbitrarily at so much for each horse, according to the kind of carriage. An empty wagon pays as much as one with the heaviest load, if the number of horses be the same. Hence the various complaints of have probably commenced, for it would be the interest of an empty wagon, with a strong team of horses, to make a circuit to get on the common earth road and avoid the toll. In loaded waggons, it has also become very common to procure heavy and strong horses, and put as much load upon them as they can draw. It appears likely that these evils would be remedied by a total change in the rating of the tolls paid by carriages of heavy burdens, and by charging the toll in proportion to the weight actually carried. Of the advantages of such a change little doubt can be entertained; the only apparent difficulty is in the trouble of its execution. This, however, may be easily obviated by a platform sunk in the road at the toll house door, and balanced as the common steel yard, or one of the kind which is common on the Turnpikes of England, and which would ascertain the rough weight in as little time as it takes to make change; and once fixed, a ticket can be given for the whole distance. The principle is adopted on the English Turnpikes, and is carried so far, that the load carried on wheels of a certain breadth is fixed by law. The gate keepers have the right to weigh a wagon and load when they choose, and if they find the weight allowed by law to be exceeded, the offence is punished by a severe forfeiture.

The diminution or increase of the tolls, according to the season of the year, would be found to check, in a very great measure, the practice of evading the gates. If the toll was made light during the fine season, there would not be so much reason to avoid the turnpike, and it might then be increased in the winter and spring when the earth roads cannot be travelled. The fairness and justice of this manner of collecting tolls, entitled to attention. It has been, at times, proposed to the companies, but doubt entertained of their power, under their charters, to make a change in the mode there pointed out, have prevented its adoption. The practice of locking the wheel of a wagon heavily loaded on descending a hill, is one which is very pernicious to a Turnpike, if the wheel is masonry in the type. It tears up the road, especially when firm frost and no weather the foundation has become soft. The mountain roads are particularly exposed to injury from this practice, which is general on them because of the long continued descent, and the extreme fatigue which otherwise come upon the wheel boxes. Where this practice is continued for any time, with masonry wheels, it will ruin any road that can be made, if the injuries are not repaired constantly and at a heavy expense. A substitute, the shoes which is generally adopted in Europe, is so extremely simple, and saves the wear and tear of the wheel so much, that it would be rendering a great service to the waggons themselves to compel its adoption on the