

to the lake, will he send those goods by road or by water? It is frequently possible to get a clearer understanding of the problems of to-day, by going back to simpler times, and there view the problem shorn of the complications inherent in some modern methods. In the case now under consideration the trader knows that if the goods are sent by land there must be a roadway of some sort along which the beast of burden or the primitive vehicle can travel. If the shores of the lake are densely wooded, or marshy, it will be necessary first of all to make a road either by cutting a way through the trees and levelling a track, or by constructing a causeway through the marsh along which man or beast can safely travel. When this roadway is available it will next be necessary to decide how the goods shall be transported along it. If the roadway be level and smooth a simple sledge drawn by horse or ox may meet the case; or the trader may have been introduced to the wonders of the wheel, and by constructing a rough cart mounted on an axle with two wheels he may ease the labour for his horse or ox very considerably.

The point to note is that if he decide to transport the goods by land two questions have to be answered—is there a suitable road, and what shall convey the goods over the road? In other words, man has to provide both a road and a vehicle. But in the case under consideration the trader is living on the shores of a lake, and as the destination of the goods is near the lake there is an alternative route. Now this route differs in almost every respect from the other. In the first place the roadway is ready for use. There are no trees to cut down or a morass to be rendered traversable. Nature has freely provided a level, easily traversed roadway, and for the use of this, all that the trader need do is to construct some type of boat or craft that will float.

To primitive man living near river, lake or sea, the water road offered many considerable advantages over the land road. And it is fairly certain that, under the conditions stated, the invention of the coracle preceded the invention of the cart.

Throughout commercial history it is safe to say that, taken as a whole, water transport has been cheaper than land transport. Nor is the reason far to seek. Not only has the land road to be constructed, and this frequently entails great labour and expense,