

DOINGS OF THE DUFFS



Federal Aid for Highways.
Some difference of opinion as to whether the Shackleford Roads Bill is simply "more pork" or a real godsend to the rural population of the nation is explained perhaps by the New York World's (Dem.) observation that "providing the money is honestly expended, the investment on the part of both the Nation and the respective States will be a good one. If not so expended, the present appropriation will be only in effect opening a rat-hole down which uncounted millions will hereafter find their way." This measure, signed by the President on July 11, provides \$85,000,000 for road construction, of which \$10,000,000 is to be spent on roads in the National parks and forests. The remainder is, during the next five years, to be distributed among the States, a third being apportioned among them in proportion to their population, a third, in proportion to their area, and a third in proportion to their mileage of rural free delivery and start routes. To secure Federal aid, the State must appropriate for road-making a sum equal to that received from the National Government. In spite of this provision, and further stipulations regarding Federal cooperation in, and supervision over, the road-making, the Philadelphia Public Ledger (Ind. barrel, looks upon the Shackleford act as being) is convinced that "the project as part of a policy whose principle

is wrong in principle and is bound to open the door to gross waste of public money." Now that a beginning is made, says the Providence Journal (Ind.), "future Congresses may lend a receptive ear to proposals from hungry States for terms less harsh. So, some day, we may get our good roads' pork without any string to it." And we read in the no less critical Albany Knickerbocker Press (Ind.):
"No State which has had self-respect and enterprise enough to build good roads for itself has sought Government aid. The States, too, which have built and maintained adequate modern highways are the States which have filled the Federal pork-barrel full to overflowing in order that there might be funds available for distribution among the States which depend so largely on pork."
"This \$85,000,000 appropriation is only a starter. Unless the people institute a drastic reform in the character and quality of their representatives in Congress, we may expect within a few years a Federal highway bill which will carry hundreds of millions out of the efficient and independent communities into the backward regions."
Yet the New York Evening Post (Ind.), a consistent foe of the pork-barrel, looks upon the Shackleford act as being) is convinced that "the project as part of a policy whose principle

is fast becoming settled. It calls attention to other measures extending Federal aid to the States, the success of which "would see no augur well for the Shackleford act," although in this case more risk is run, since "the Federal provision for roads can not build upon an organization and methods already perfected." We read further:
"It is hoped by supporters of the Shackleford law that it will more than atone for a little preliminary waste by putting forward the day of a national system of good roads by decades. Since the Agricultural Department must approve each of the road-projects toward which the Government contributes half the cost, and must accept the finished road as reasonably permanent, the States will have at once to learn the principles of good road-making. Fifteen States in 1914 did not spend a cent on roads; probably each of them will hasten to begin road-work in order to get its share."
Behind the highway officials of each State, says the Washington Herald (Ind.), an outspoken friend of the Shackleford act, there will now be placed "the scientific knowledge, practical skill, and great prestige of the United States Department of Agriculture." And The Herald concludes eloquently:

"It is hard to see how politics, State or National, can influence the administration of the bill. But it is easy to see how the Department of Agriculture, by learning the local requirements, local failures, and local successes of road-building in every State, and then studying all these records in the light of its own wide scientific knowledge, can become a powerful agent in lifting the countryside, from Cape Henry to the Golden Gate, out of the mud and dust, giving the farmers access to markets, the children better roads to school, and the farmers' wives a measure of social life with neighbors from whom bad roads now isolate them in a life of drab monotony."

Recreation in the Church

No church alive to its opportunities nowadays neglects the recreational side of human nature, writes Marc N. Goodnow in The Churchman (Prot. Epis., New York). Indeed, "the growth of the recreational side of Church-work, both social and physical, has been more marked within the past two or three years than in the whole quarter century preceding," and the effectiveness of the physical recreation-program is being shown, we are told, in "a closer-knit Church constituency," and in a higher "spiritual standard and morale." The Y. M. C. A., with its 707 gymnasiums, 307 athletic fields, 400 swimming-pools, and 4,045 summer-camps in North America, is noted as a powerful influence tending to broaden the activities of the Church so as to utilize the character values resident in properly administered athletics. Whether or not there is direct religious training, "there are enough of the elements of fair play, good sportsmanship, clean and gentlemanly conduct demanded by the gymnasium game to make it of vital importance." Besides, it is being recognized that "it is rather a difficult thing for an ailing man to maintain his faith at white heat." The writer continues:
"In the diocese of Pennsylvania, recently, the Social Service Commission investigated the recreational facilities in the Philadelphia parishes, finding that as many as forty of the eighty-odd churches of the city were equipped with gymnasiums. The following statements is interesting as showing the various activities of the different Philadelphia parishes in the field of recreation.
"Twenty-six parishes have basketball;
"Twenty-nine parishes have frequent supervised dances, in some cases with employed teachers.
"Sixteen parishes have classes in calisthenics.
"Fifteen own stereopticons and have frequent lantern lectures.
"Four have motion-pictures.
"Among the other forms of recreation reported by the Commission were these: Dramatic entertainments (reported by all parishes), Boy Scouts patrols, military drill, baseball teams, summer-camps and outings, shuffleboard, bowling-alley, pool-and billiard-tables, bathing facilities, reading and game-rooms, social gatherings of parishoners and others, kindergartens, outdoor playgrounds, tennis-courts.
"However, it is interesting to know that it is not only the large cities that have utilized the recreational field for their churches. In the small town of Litchfield, Michigan, with about a thousand souls, a movement was started to install motion-pictures for the benefit of the young and old people of the three churches the community supports. The motion-picture is now an established institution, giving exhibitions of a popular nature on Saturday afternoons and nights and sacred pieces on Sunday nights.
"In Detroit, twenty-two churches have gymnasiums in connection with their regular social work; six churches are renting gymnasiums for their members; eighteen church-teams have combined in basketball leagues; six churches employ athletic directors to supervise all games. In addition to this, Dr. J. B. Modesitt, physical director of the Detroit Young Men's Christian Association, has established a normal class for the training of young men who are expecting to take up gymnasium instruction as a regular part of their church-work or for those who are already instructing churchmen and wish to obtain more theory and practise as teachers of athletics.
"The gymnasium is by no means the solution of the recreational problem of the church, but it is one of growing importance because it is one of growing popularity. Because of the great variety of activities in this direction and the difference in conditions, every church must, through experimentation, work out its own best program; in no case, nowadays, does the church alive to the opportunities and possibilities among its membership neglect this most important side of human nature—the recreational."

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