

INDEPENDENCE ENTERPRISE

CHARLES EDWARD HICKS

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OUR ROADS COMPARED

The present road situation in the United States may be briefly summed up as follows:

In mileage we have the most tremendous system of roads which any country has ever possessed since the world began. According to a careful road census, the length of all of our roads amounts to 2,155,000 miles. The most liberal estimate of our annual expenditure on these roads, both in money and labor, was a fraction over \$70,000,000 in 1904, or about \$1.05 per capita. At the same rate this would be an expenditure of about \$90,000,000 a year at the present time.

According to our road census, we have less than 40,000 miles of stone surfaced road, or about 2 per cent of the total mileage. We have 108,000 miles of gravel road, or about 5 per cent of the total mileage. Small as our annual expenditure for roads has been, it has aggregated during the thirty year period from 1870 to 1900 a total of upward of \$1,800,000,000. We may therefore say that the road building in the United States is, considering area, population and wealth, at the same point at which it stood thirty years ago and the seventeen hundred and odd million dollars have produced few appreciable results.

When we turn to the subject of road administration in the United States we find that about half of the states are operating under practically the same road laws as prevailed in England when America was a colony. This system of road administration provides for the payment of road taxes partly in labor and localizes the work to an extreme degree by placing in authority the district or township road overseers or road superintendents.

When a road is built, no special knowledge of road building on the part of these petty officials. With few exceptions no system of accounting is in force, so that an intelligent idea may be obtained as to the disposition of the road tax, and no definite lines of authority are established such as would guarantee the wise and equitable conduct of the work.

A number of states have adopted in principle or practice, or both, the system of centralizing under a state highway department the conduct of all or

part of the road work of the state, thereby securing uniformity in methods, economy in administration and skill in supervision. In some of the state highway departments the work is educational and investigative, with a view to ultimately giving these departments administrative powers.

It is not possible in a short article to enter into a discussion of the various systems of state aid in effect in this country. Suffice it to say that the principle of state aid and supervision constitutes the germ of the only road administration which has proved successful in other countries.

This movement is gaining headway at a very rapid rate, and when we consider that it has been little more than a decade and a half since its inception the fact that half of the states have adopted it in principle and have actually expended from state treasuries considerably over \$56,000,000 we may well feel encouraged for the future of road building in this country.

The striking feature of the French road system is the skilled supervision provided in every grade of road work and in every unit of the administrative organization. The basis of the system is the school of roads and bridges, one of the great technical schools in the world, maintained at the expense of the national government. In this school are trained the highway engineers to whom are intrusted the building and maintenance of the roads of France.

At the head of the administrative organization is an inspector general of bridges and highways, under whom are chief engineers in charge of the road work of single departments and communes. Single arrondissements are under the direction of ordinary engineers and underengineers, the latter being equivalent in rank to noncommissioned officers in the army. The subdivisions are under the direction of principal conductors and ordinary conductors.

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Mrs. Cohrs is the daughter of Mrs. Henry Hill of this city and has dur-

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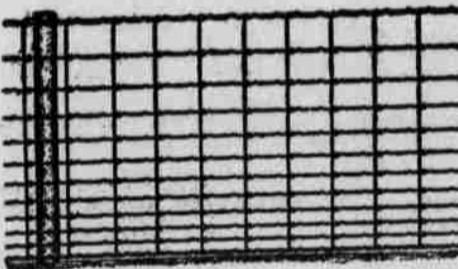
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HANNA BROS.

ing some time past been a teacher in schools of Washington. Last year she taught school at Goldendale, Washington. It will be remembered that she was sent from Independence to unveil the Sacajawea monument at the Lewis and Clarke fair. Mr. Cohrs was formerly a jeweler of Pomeroy, Washington. They will locate at Long Beach, California, where they are now at home at 223 Kinta Avenue.

The New Reading Club

The Baraca-Philathea Reading Club met at their new reading room in the home of Wm. Ford Monday evening and elected officers. The following were elected: Earl South, president; Beula Bramberg, vice-president; Clyde Dick, secretary; Elmer Johnson, treasurer; Rev. Maynard R. Thompson, teacher. The club spent an hour of marked interest in Bible study on the subject of "Christian Baptism". Donations and loans of good books and magazines will be thankfully received.

Those joining the Baraca and Philathea Bible clubs, meeting at the Baptist church Sunday mornings, may become members of this joint reading club.

Knights Banquet their Friends

A very enjoyable time was had at room of Knights of Pythias Monday night when that order held public installation of officers before members and a few invited guests. The beautiful ritualistic work was very impressive, occupying the first part of the evening and following after it was rendered a splendid musical and literary program. This was followed in turn by games and a sumptuous banquet, completing a very successful evening's entertainment.

Philatheas Enjoy Social

The Philatheas entertained the Baracas and friends at the home of Mrs. Baldwin Saturday evening. The evening was spent in games after which a delightful luncheon was served.

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