

Good Roads Idea Gaining Favor

WHILE the statement that 16,000 miles of surfaced roads were constructed in the United States during 1913 and 18,000 miles during 1914, or a total of 34,000 miles in the brief period of two years, is impressive, it does not convey an adequate conception of the great progress that is being made in the building and management of good roads. To grasp the significance of the movement it should be borne in mind that in 1904 there were in the United States only 153,500 miles of surfaced roads of all types, and this included many thousand miles of road which in the year 1914 would not be regarded as improved. In the brief period of ten years 96,000 miles of surfaced roads have been completed, which would mean an average yearly increase of 9600 miles. The year 1914, with its 18,000 miles, shows a rate of progress nearly double the average for the ten-year period.

The total amount of money expended on road construction during 1914 was \$225,000,000. In 1910 the total was slightly in excess of \$79,000,000.

Discussing the progress in highway administration, J. E. Pennypacker, chief of road economies, United States office of public roads, said recently:

"Many recognized authorities have pointed out what a large percentage of this is wasted because it is expended under local control. Unquestionably this is true in a very large measure. That the results under state aid are becoming evident at a rapidly increasing rate is proved by the fact that during 1913 and 1914 nearly 10,000 miles of state aided roads were completed as compared with 20,000 miles for all the previous years.

State Control Essential.

"It must be admitted that the efficiency of state highway departments is greatly hampered because their supervision extends to only a limited portion of the great system of 2,230,000 miles of public highway in the United States. Most of this mileage is still under local control, but gradually state control is reaching out into the local field. Already the State of New York by its elaborate system of aid to the various classes of highways, practically centralizes supervision in the state highway department. The same holds true of Pennsylvania. Last year the Iowa law placed all road work in the state under the directions of the state highway department. The trend is inevitably toward the centralizing of supervision in a state highway department so that the work throughout the state may be corrected and standardized and so that the efficiency of the highway department may replace the inefficiency which marks local control in many hundreds of counties.

"Admittedly the weakness of state highway work in its earlier stages was the failure to provide efficient control and adequate funds for road maintenance. The result was that many thousand miles of well constructed highway were in serious danger of utter disintegration. This condition is rapidly being met by remedial legislation and large appropriations, and the much abused automobile is proving a saving factor in this crisis. During the first ten months of the year 1914, 1,750,000 automobiles were registered, and it is estimated that the annual revenue from this registration will exceed \$11,500,000. Most of this sum goes to the maintenance of state highways.

What States Are Doing.

"The year 1914 was marked in the field of legislative enactment by the action of Kentucky in joining the ranks of state-aid states and providing a system of state roads. A levy of one-half mill tax has been authorized, which will provide about \$600,000 annually, and this fund will be available for 1915. Colorado has also taken steps to provide adequate state road funds by authorizing at the last election, a measure for a one-half mill state tax, which will provide about \$500,000 per annum. Illinois, which enacted legislation in 1913 for state aid, actually got under way in 1914, and this year awarded contracts for 100 miles of improved roads. The appropriation for 1914 was \$400,000, and for 1915, \$700,000. An equal amount must be raised by the counties to make these appropriations available, and in addition an appropriation of \$100,000 per annum was made for engineering and administrative work.

Mississippi took an important step looking to adequate supervision by

providing that all roads built from county bond issues should be supervised by skilled highway engineers. California and Maryland have gone steadily ahead with the building of their state systems of highways by means of bond issues. California spending about \$5,000,000 and Maryland authorizing an additional bond issue of \$6,000,000 to carry on the work."

Northwest News

Highway Boost.

Pendleton, Or.—A meeting has been called at Stanfield for the purpose of boosting for a hard-surface highway from Umatilla to Pendleton. A very enthusiastic meeting is expected.

Pumping Plant Arrives.

Enterprise, Or.—The power pumping plant which is to be installed on Sam Litch's Snake River ranch has arrived. The pump will be driven by gasoline power and will water 80 acres of rich bottom land, which will be almost exclusively used for alfalfa.

Van Winkle Speaks.

Lebanon, Or.—J. S. Van Winkle, of Albany, was the principal speaker at the banquet at the Hotel Lebanon Friday night, at which time plans were adopted for the co-operation of a Linn County Co-Operative Fruit Association.

Lands to Be Opened.

Vale, Or.—On April 26 a large body of land in the Warm Springs reservoir site will be thrown open to settlement by the United States land office at Vale. This opens up a splendid farming territory.

School Bonds Carry.

Cathlamet, Wash.—The bonds for the erection of a new high school building at Cathlamet carried by a large majority and a new high school building will be begun at once.

New Flax Factory.

Salem, Or.—The last Legislature appropriated \$50,000 for the installation of a flax factory in the Penitentiary, which will serve as a great stimulant to the flax industry in the state. Governor Withycombe has appointed Emil Hansett, a flax expert, to install the factory.

Much Wheat Sown.

Nampa, Idaho.—Spring has opened here early and the ground is in better condition than the farmers of this vicinity have seen it in years. Reports show that Spring sowing of wheat is much larger than usual. The acreage in wheat is about 40 per cent greater than in previous years; the acreage in oats is about 50 per cent less.

On the new irrigated tracts barley and rye are the favorite grains.

Ranch Trade.

Joseph, Or.—Joe Taylor and Dan Hunsaker have traded their ranch on Upper Prairie Creek for the J. N. Roberts ranch near Elgin. Mr. Roberts takes in exchange the Hunsaker building in Joseph.

Plowing at Condon.

Condon, Or.—Heavy rains during this month and February, with fine growing weather, has caused the prospects for grain in Gilliam County to be the best for years and the farmers are jubilant. Every man who has any land is plowing and a large acreage of Spring wheat and barley will be sown between now and April 15. The ground never was in finer condition and is breaking up loose like a garden.

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