

GOOD ROADS OF THE SOUTH

RURAL FREE DELIVERY FACTOR

Annual Report of the Director of Public Roads Which is to Appear Soon, Will Contain Much Valuable Information—The Object Lesson Method Found Successful—19,163 Miles of Public Road in North Carolina, of Which 1,250 Are Improved—What Virginia is Doing—South May Secure Aid From Congress.

By W. W. PRICE

The annual report of the director of public roads for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1906 to appear soon, will contain much valuable and interesting information relating to the Southern States and to the efforts that are being made in that section to better the public highways in the rural districts.

No other factor has been more potent in the development of the highways of the United States during the last few years than has been the inauguration and development of the rural free delivery system, and to this source many localities, especially in the rough mountainous sections of Virginia, North and South Carolina, Georgia, Tennessee, and other States in the piedmont section, that were inflicted with roads that were hard to travel in the summer and impassable at times in the winter, have made considerable improvement.

A few years ago when the free delivery system was commenced system was commenced there were localities in the states named that made it impossible for them to receive its benefits on account of the condition of the roads, but with its development together with the encouragement that the Department of Agriculture has extended from time to time, many sections now have their roads in a fair state of improvement and the outlook is good for more development hereafter.

OBJECT LESSON METHOD.

The object lesson method, that has been found effectual heretofore in the work of road construction, was continued during the past year. A large number of object lesson roads were built. The plan pursued by the department is that upon request of a local community an engineer is detailed to make a preliminary examination for the purpose of determining what character of work is best suited to the locality, what materials are available, and what the probable cost will be. In many cases he makes necessary surveys and prepares plans and estimates. Later an expert and road machinery expert are sent, and in many cases a full complement of road-building machinery is sent out. This work has been carried on in various sections of the South during the past year, and local authorities have, in many cases, been instructed in scientific road-making.

It has been one of the chief aims of the road-making bureau of the Department to devise means of adapting and utilizing local materials, wherever found, for road-building.

In a great many instances it has been found sufficient to send an engineer to examine into the local conditions and give advice as to what course should be pursued. Much of the work that was done during the past year was of this character.

A plan that has been found by the department to work successfully is that of employing each year several graduates of reputable engineering schools throughout the country as civil engineer students. These students are given instruction and practical training in all branches of highway engineering, including laboratory and field work, and they are allowed a salary of \$50 per month and field expenses for a period of one year, after which they are entitled to promotion.

NO DATA AVAILABLE.

There is practically no data available from which it can be ascertained how much money is being expended in the United States on roads, how it is being spent, and what are the results of such expenditure. Such a work of compilation and collection is now being carried on, and reports will shortly be available for every county in the United States.

Director Logan Waller Page, of the good roads bureau, Department of Agriculture, was seen to-day and asked what progress was being made by the Southern States in comparison with other sections. He said that according to the latest available figures in his office there were 49,763 miles of public road in North Carolina. Of this number 1,259 are improved roads. While there was one mile of road to every 38 inhabitants in the State there was but one mile of improved road to every 1,504 inhabitants. Out of a total of 49,763 miles of roads in the State, 438 were surfaced with sand-clay mix-

ture, 422 with gravel 399 with stone. The total amount of property tax was \$624,330.78, and the number of people subject to the tax 161,773, the cash value of the labor tax being \$734,306.45. By comparing the total revenue with the total mileage of public road and with the population of the State it is found that the funds collected and expended for road purposes amounted to \$27.30 per mile, of public road, or 71 cents per inhabitant.

VIRGINIA STATISTICS.

In Virginia there were 51,812 miles of public road according to latest measurements. Of this mileage 720 miles were surfaced with gravel, 755 with stone, 100 miles with shells, and 25 miles with slag, making in all 1,600 miles of improved road. It will be seen from these figures that about 3 per cent. of the roads are improved. By comparing the total road mileage with the area of the State, it appears that there was 1.29 miles of public road per square mile of area. A comparison of mileage with population shows that there was one mile of road to every 35 inhabitants, but only one mile of improved road to every 1,158 inhabitants.

Exact figures are not available at this time showing what has been done in South Carolina, but W. L. Spoon, road expert of the good roads bureau, went to Abbeville and Union, and while in that section gave information and advice concerning the building and maintaining of good roads to those who asked for it. He also visited Marion,

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Rockingham and Lumberton, N. C. Director Logan is enthusiastic over the prospects of good road building in the South and he believes that as soon as it becomes generally known that communities are willing to help themselves the government will do more for them hereafter than has been done heretofore.

While there is a general belief that Congress will never pass a bill appropriating as much as that call-

ed for under the bill introduced by Senator Latimer, of South Carolina, (\$20,000,000) still Director Page and other officials think the South will have no trouble in securing help when it evidences a determination to help itself.

Cheap Round Trip to New York

On account of the home-coming of William Jennings Bryan, who will land in New York August 30th, the Southern Railway will sell round trip tickets from Greensboro to New York for \$17.45. Tickets will be sold August 28th and 29th, good to return until September 4th.

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