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BUILDING MODERN ROADS

In spite of the reaction against macadam road construction, yet probably more money is still being put into this type of construction than into any other. But unless done in the most thorough way, with the closest attention to detail, it is good only for light traffic. Heavy trucking and fast running automobiles will break it down in a season.

The under earth must be thoroughly rolled when wet until soft spots are packed down. If any weak spot is left, the crushed stone will soon drop into it and cause holes. Side ditches and drains must be arranged to carry off moisture.

A firm form of rock must be chosen. Granite is too coarse, limestone too soft, though a small quantity of limestone is often mixed with harder rock and is useful in giving a cementing quality. Trap rock, diabese, basalt, and porphry rocks are most favored. The crushed rock should be laid in a clean condition, so that the interstices will not be filled up by dirt that will wash down later. The rock should pack together into the smallest possible space.

The standard construction of macadam road requires four to eight inches of coarse rock for the base, and two to four inches smaller surfacing rock. The rolling must be very thorough. There is a tendency for the rolling to push the surface up into the form of waves, and some authorities urge rolling diagonally to overcome this. The road will hold only if the rock pieces, which should be sharp, are pressed down so as to interlock mechanically with each other, thus constituting a solid fabric.

The standard binders outside of the bituminous materials, are fine stone screenings and water, sand and water, limestone screenings and water, and clay and water.

THIS WAR OF SCIENCE LOCATING GUNFIRE

One of the most interesting phases of war science is locating the enemy's batteries. The situation of these is constantly shifting. The guns are so camouflaged with foliage and painted substances that they cannot always be placed by air observers or aerial photography.

When a new gun lifts up its voice from some unknown location and begins "strafing" our boys, the technical men begin to observe the sound waves resulting from the original discharge. A station located nearest the front line will get the explosion first. Then by comparing the exact instant when it was heard, with the instant when a receiving station in the rear gets it, and figuring upon the relative distance of the two stations, the speed with which sound is traveling at that particular time can be precisely determined.

The speed sound varies with wind and condition of atmosphere. After this speed is determined, the distance of that gun can be closely estimated. That of course does not show direction. That is to be had only by observation from a number of sound receiving stations.

Then the distance is figured from each rear station, and lines are extended across the enemy's lines on the map. When these lines are swung around through the possible cares that could include the gun, there must be some point where they would all meet at the correct distance from the receiving sound stations. That point should locate the gun.

It is claimed that they can often be figured down to 50 feet. It is said that in the Messines fighting, 63 German guns were located in one day largely by these sound receiving methods. Once located, a well aimed shell takes care of them.

THE FREIGHT CONGESTION

The congestion of freight near the centers of population has becom ea terribly acute problem, and one that will take all the technical skill our railroad men possess to straighten out. It is aggravated by a volume of freight greatly increased by war goods. The cold weather placed physical difficulties in the way of motive power. Back of it all is the fact that our railways were allowed to run down and lack any adequate equipment. The plan of government regulation has not proved successful, as it failed to value the necessity of keeping up the roads.

But the immediate thing is to get the freight moved. Around the big terminals it appears that trains have to unload away out in the conutry. Then their contents have to be transported to their destination or some other terminal by motor truck. Manifestly this wastes a great deal of time.

Business men can help materially, when they have goods come in by freight, by removing the same from cars and freight houses at the earliest possible moment. If they can't get truckmen, they should detail some of their own force. Much of the trouble comes because freight cars are allowed to stand on sidings for a needlessly long time.

Railroad men should expect to put in a strenuous time of it for the next few weeks to get this tangle straightened out. They will be liberally paid under their present wage scales, more than most workingmen earn. It is a time when much overtime work will have to be done. It is the workingman's chance to get ahead.

Everything he does to help straighten out the messin to which our transportation has fallen, will help him get on a better financial basis. Every week should be Freight Moving Week now until this paralyzing congestion is cleaned up.

THE STRUGGLING FARMER

When the farmer complains of the scarcity and high price of labor, he is commonly told that he should fit himself out with machines that will replace hand work. But if he has not yet paid off the mortgage on his land, where will he get the money to buy the machines that he imperatively needs?

It may be said that the farmer who finds himself in this condition is usually the victim of his own unscientific and unprogressive methods. Yet if he started without a dollar, and never had a chance to take any technical education, he can scarcely be considered to blame. He may be an alien who understands English but poorly, and could not grasp any agricultural school course. But any way he has good muscle and industry. If he could but have the benefit of modern tools, he could raise a lot of food.

The needs of every willing and industrious farmer in the neighborhood of Westminster, should be considered by the business men. If a man has shown himself to be trustworthy, and wants to buy a tractor or other machine, there ought to be someone who would lend him money on it at a fair interest rate.

Of course a borrower should be expected to make a moderate cash payment on his machine, and he must show himself to be reliable enough to care for the property. Under such conditions many farmers lend money to their more struggling neighbors, and find the investment pays.

But to provide all the machinery needed in such cases, much capital will have to be loaned by banks and co-operative associations. They can handle the proposition advantageously, and can give careful supervision to their loans that the arrangement calls for. If a man occasionally fails to make his payments, the revenue of the business should cover the small loss. If we are to develop our farm resources, there must be this willingness to help the struggling man.

WINNING THE WAR—BREAKING UP AUSTRIA

Were conditions reversed, and were one of our allies so torn by internal dissensions as is Austria-Hungary, how the German spies would jump to the job of promoting revolt there. Secret agents and revolutionary literature would be found on every street corner, breaking up order and government as they broke up Russia.

Now our government and our allies have just the same chance to promote revolt in Austria-Hungary, where reports of strikes in all the big cities are coming out. The people of Austria are in a mood to throw off the lid. Germany is sitting on the safety valve, but the steam is far beyond the boiling point.

Austria is a great heterogeneous mass of nationalities. The majority of them are not favorable to German pretensious. About half of them are Slavs, closely related to the Russian people. The German minoritly by superior force and cunning holds down the anti-German majority, compels them as slaves to fight for the people they dislike, and uphold a cause they are hostile to, or not interested in.

We cannot of course improvise on the moment a spy system to do the needed work after the German manner, for her spy system has been working in all countries for many years. But there are many Austrians in this country who would gladly undertake to go home and tell their compatriots some truths about the war. Also no end of revolutionary literature could be distributed by airplane.

It is time to drop some of the missionary seed of democracy in this fertile field. Literature containing President Wilson's war terms, the truth about Germany's deceptions and her cruelties, should be dropped by airplane in every Austrian city. It should call on the subject peoples to rise and throw off the yoke and cease to fight for the privilege of being salves.

THE PRESIDENT AND PARTY SPIRIT

It must be a matter of regret to every patriot that a bitter division of opinion has appeared at Washington in the conduct of the war. The fact that so large a section of the Democratic majority is strongly critical of the war management, suggests that this is no mere partisan battle, but is a sincere effort to improve our war efficiency.

If the President had gone ahead to conduct this war in a strictly non-partisan way, he would have disarmed a great deal of criticism. He was willing to relax party lines in the appointment of the Commission of National Defence, but the business men on this commission had merely advisory powers. The real authority has been gathered together in a small group of men nearly all Democrats.

This is not the way to run a war, when all party lines have to be set aside to win the common national end. In England it has proved necessary, in order to concentrate the administrative ability of the country, to appoint coalition cabinets, and drop party politics out of consideration.

The President seems to entertain some feeling of prejudice against business men. He needs executives who have had the management of great business corporations, and are used to positions of concentrated responsibility. But few of the men in the highest positions about him are of that type. They are more politicians, college presidents, and lawyers.

If he could only set political relations aside, drop party considerations and affiliations, he could assemble a group of war executives that would make the war machine operate efficiently. If he would pick Democratic business men used to handling great positions of executive management, it would make a big improvement. But it is to be feared that it will always halt and drag until this concentrated business responsibility is created.

PIGMY BUREAUCRATS

It is perhaps significant that the larger part of Senatorial criticism of Dr. Garfield's fuel fast came from the Democratic side of the Chamber, and much of it from men who have hitherto held steadfast to the theory that "the king can do no wrong." It is beginning to peep through the consciousness of public men and of the public generally that some if not most of the President's subordinates are not big enough for their jobs. It may be that none of them will furnish so signal a demonstration of this fact as Garfield has; but the old Latin proverb has its application: Ex uno disce omnes—From one judge all.

A CONSTITUTIONAL OBSTACLE

Constitional lawyer in Congress, and on the Democratic side, point out that the proposal to hold the railroads in government possession for an indefinite period cannot be carried out as a war measure, since the Constitution limits the authority of Congress to appriate money for military purposes to two years. Of course, the Constitution is not now the reputable and potential instrument that it was before Congress began conferring who has passed them along to irresponsible subordinates—but the point is of sufficient consequence to have checked the movement for "railroading' the railroad bill through the House, Despite urgent "suggestions" from the White House, the committee will take its time in conducting hearings and in determining its course.

CATCHINGS COURAGEOUS

Waddill Catchings, of the Sloss-Sherffield Iron and Steel Co., of Birmingham, Alabama, tells the Senate committee on Military Affairs that "we are at sea without a chart," that Secretary Baker's plan of making purchases for the army is "most pernicious,' and that the shipping programme has not been given the right of way which it merits. These are the doctrines of revolution if not of treason, according to the definitions of Democratic publicity agents—and their revolutionary and treasonable character is made all the more flagrant because Waddill Catchings has only recently been named a member of the one of the numerous boards or commissions which spring up in such profusion at Washington. Mr. Catchings' views and the language he employes in expressing them do not augur for a long tenure in his government job.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND FAILURES

There will be a general disposition to be generous toward Secretary Baker and give him credit for the much he has done toward improving our war machine. He has faced stupendous difficulties. A great deal has been done, but it still remains true that a man with training in a great executive position, and a man with a more practical foresight of the future, could have avoided some mistakes that have been made.

The greatest mistake was in the failure of the war department to realize what we were getting into. In the early part of last winter the international situation was very black. Ambassador Gerard was telegraphing home that Germany would resume submarine warfare against our ships. He was convinced that Germany meant to come over here after the war and collect an indemnity from us.

Most far sighted people at that time were convinced that war was probable. But the war department plodded on unconcernedly. It should have been laying plans for a great expansion of our munition supplies, and training facilities. Everything should have been ready for action by April, which would have saved six months delay in our preparation.

Again, it is just announced that Gen. Goethals, in his work of reorganizing the quartermaster corps, has dismissed two brigadier generals, and replaced a number of other men with business experts. If this is necessary now, why was the need of business experience not seen six months ago.

These points will not be made in a spirit of destructive criticism, but to urge the war department to look ahead, to foresee its needs, and if a thing has to be done, Do It Now!

WINNING THE WAR—THE GERMAN PEOPLE

It is generally felt that if the German people only knew the real situation, they would stop fighting. When the American air fleet gets down to business, it ought to take up on a far bigger scale the work of distributing information throughout Germany. Good work has already been done in dropping copies of President Wilson's speeches from planes flying over the German lines.

A rugular weekly or perhaps daily publication ought to be got out, and printed in German and several of the tongues spoken by the Austrian peoples. This should be a newspaper devoted to telling the truth. It should be edited and written by some of the many Germans who have escaped from that country and who disagree with the ruling powers. They have plenty of friends left at home who would hear what they have to say.

These publications should be fair minded, should not abuse the German people, but should simply give a truthful account of military operations, particularly the growth of the American forces now in France.

It should be shown how the Germans are fighting to prevent themselves from getting any rights. It should be pointed out how the Kaiser and his military clique are sacrificing the lives of Germany's sons by the million to perpetuate their own tyrannical rule and to grab more territory.

Then there should be a systematic distribution of this publication by airplane over the German cities and towns. The inhabitants would of course be forbidden to have these newspapers in their possession. But the literature already dropped has been eagerly sought after. If this material was dropped by night, it would disappear into the homes of the people before dawn, and it would produce its effect.

TOWN BOYS ON FARMS

Last spring when it was proposed that high school, college, and other young men and boys be organized to do farm work, on account of the scarcity of agricultural labor, the farmers were quite scornful. The old saying "A boy is a boy, two boys are a half boy, and three boys are no boy at all" was emphatically quoted.

The farmers were quite sure that this inexperienced help would be so ignorant of farm methods that it would be of little help. This attitude was illustrative of the farmer's traditional caution and conservatism, and perhaps illustrates why many farmers don't havce a larger success.

It is interesting to learn that a great many farmers are now coming to the labor and employment bureaus and conservation committees, and asking for help from the high schools and colleges. Evidently the farmers found these fellows a great deal better workers than they ever expected.

The manager of one large fruit orchard wrote to one of these bureaus that it would have been utterly impossible for him to have harvested his crop last summer, had it not been for this despised boy help. He said he harvested last summer $30,000 worth of fruit, largely done by boy work. This year he wants all the boys he can get. When a young man has gone part way through a college or high school, he may not know much about farm tools or methods of cultivating. But his mind has been awakened by his study, and he takes in new ideas a great deal faster than ordinary ignorant farm help.

Wherefore the people who are managing the campaign to increase farm production should canvass very thoroughly for boy labor. Every high school, academy, and college should be urged to recruit boys and young men for this purpose. And the farmers should be encourage to take them. They will pick up new ideas quickly.

BUILDING MODERN ROADS

As labor has greatly increased in cost, the expense of stone roads has become very large. Many engineers have abandoned the formulas recently thought essential, and have reduced the thickness of the stone layers to six inches, and sometimes as low as three inches.

Just how permanent any road with only a three inch stone layer can be is yet to be determined. It is not wise policy to lay a wide road through most country districts. The traffic on ordinary roads can get along on a 12 foot strip of macadam very nicely, and allow the work to cover a proportionately greater distance.

The use of coal tar and oils with an asphaltic base to make a solid crust has become very general. It seems an almost hopeless proposition nowadays to lay a macadam road without some such binder. The asphaltic material must be mixed very thoroughly with the stone forming the crust. It is recommended that the base of the road be coated with asphaltic cement, about a gallon being applied to the square yard.

The surface course is composed of fine stone mixed with the asphaltic material, spread on and rolled while warm. Then sand or stone srceenings are put on the top to keep the surface from running. It makes a hard crust that will stand the more moderate wear very well.

Maintenance has to begin the day after the road has been completed. Ordinary maintenance, according to the government bulletins, may be expected to cost $100 a mile a year. But it is a great deal less expensive to spend that amount than to rebuild a road.

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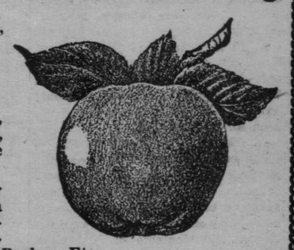
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