

OUR HIGHWAY COMMISSIONERS.

The administration of Montana's highway affairs goes now into new hands. The new commissioners have a monumental task before them if they determine to hold the pace which has been set for them and which the public has been led to expect. It is a matter of record, known to every citizen, that probably the highest excellence in public service ever reached in Montana is that achieved by the State Highway Commission, presided over by O. B. Warden of Great Falls and fired with energy and vision by the incomparable James H. Rowe of Butte. Likewise the nearly \$60,000,000 so wisely and carefully invested in Montana highways under the direction and supervision of these men has constituted an economic factor for the well being of Montana people and their progress to which no other state enterprise can compare. They were ably assisted first by the late W. J. McKinstry of Billings and later, for a short period by Axel Nelson of Sidney and L. J. Croomenberg of Missoula.

Within the period of this incomparable but gratuitous service rendered to their fellow citizens by Warden and Rowe through the Highway Commission, Montana has moved from last place to first among all the states in highway improvement. Ten years ago the vision of paved roads over the prairies of Montana and through her mountain fastnesses seemed a hopeless dream. Today that dream is a reality.

So well grounded were the broad plans of these two commissioners, so logical their decisions, so indefatigable their enterprise and so thoroughly state-wide their objectives that their devotion to the enthusiasm for their task has transmitted itself to the entire populace. Every section of the state has been warm in its commendation of the commission and eager to co-operate with it. As a result we have surpassed the aspirations of the people gladly and eagerly paying their heavy gasoline tax because they could see and feel and realize the direct benefits that were accruing to them.

Through the efforts of Warden and Rowe, the Montana commission won and held the confidence of the federal bureau of roads. Allocations of federal money always were quickly forthcoming for Montana. These federal funds constitute by far the largest part of the total invested in Montana's modern highway system. Through the decision and with the advent of relief and make-work appropriations the confidence of federal agencies in our Warden-Rowe commission was even increased. When federal authorities pleaded for quick transformation of federal funds into local payrolls for needy workmen, Montana was the first state to achieve such conversion on a real and permanent project. The plans and specifications always received Washington approval. The highway system has continued to be the greatest state outlet for employment that Montana has enjoyed.

Montanans generally have understood and appreciated these remarkable accomplishments. In this entire section of the state, Butte's Jim Rowe is universally regarded with respect and affection because of his tireless energy in public service. For him and Warden this highway system should stand in the minds of the people as a monument to the finest type of public service.

It is the hope of Montanans generally that the new commissioners, Dr. H. J. McIndregt of Great Falls and Rockwood Brown of Billings, together with Mr. Croomenberg will have the energy and the vision to emulsa the greatest work of their predecessors. The people will support them in such efforts because, aside from our school system, it is the most valuable public service that has been performed in the history of the state.

Editorial: Our Highway Commissioners

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Sat, Oct 17, 2020