

**THREE HIGHWAY COMMISSIONS.**

Most Montana people will feel a sense of satisfaction that the controversy over the State's Highway Commission is passed so far as the retirement of the old board members and the appointment of new ones by former Governor Holt is concerned. There was thorough concern throughout the state that our highways, the pride of Montana, might suffer as the result of political or personal differences.

Most people have judged the members of the Highway Commission by the results obtained. Up to the present time these results have been all that could reasonably be expected. Whether there might be technical departures from strict methods of procedure never bothered the public, although there had been a very general public impression, as a result of the imperishable record of the original commission, composed of O. S. Warden, J. H. Howe and the late William Muivaney, that administrative overhead costs were being held to an astonishingly low point.

In justice to the commissioners who have been retired it should be stated that these administrative costs have continued to be very low by comparison with those of other states, in the face of increasing responsibility and the increasing need for travel.

The original commissioners—Warden, Rowe and Muivaney—organized the highway system of Montana, established this state in the eyes of the federal bureau, secured the services of the most competent highway engineers for mountain road building to be found in America and proceeded with a construction program that carried Montana within 10 years from near last place among the states to the very foremost group. All that was achieved quietly, without friction and with a maximum of forward-moving work that repeatedly surprised and gratified the people of the state.

The second commission, composed of Dr. H. J. McGregor, L. J. Croonenberghs and Rockwood Bowen, carried forward that magnificent construction program and added the Highway Patrol, a difficult but essential service and a valuable protection to the motoring public. They also licensed automobile drivers. The Highway Patrol, day by day and month by month, has increased its efficiency and has become an indispensable service in the eyes of the public. Unfortunately, controversy arose in the difficult times of the last few years and politics undertook to make an entry into highway affairs, a menace which the public generally had dreaded and always will disapprove. The second commission maintained the thoroughly trained, precise and accurate technical staff of engineers who are the backbone of Montana's vast and varied highway system.

The third commission, now in charge, composed of F. A. Flisman, D. L. O'Brien and Thomas O. Collins, has not yet had opportunity to prove itself. Its members have come into office under trying circumstances. It has made some changes in personnel which have been startling. They may have been necessary. However, it is but proper to assert that these new commissioners are men of highest repute, of proven loyalty and of great devotion to the public interest. Their opportunity for service lies in the future, unless, as is now proposed in the Legislature, their duties are merged with those of other boards in the organization of a State Department of Public Works.

## It's Finally Over (Editorial)

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