

Governor Elliott W. Major, of Missouri

Missouri "Showed"

A Million and a Half Dollars in Work on Missouri's Public Roads in Two Days

On July 21, 1913, Governor Elliott W. Major, of Missouri, issued his now famous GOOD ROADS PROCLAMATION, setting apart August 20 and 21, 1913, as public holidays in Missouri, to be known as "Good Roads Days."

He supplemented the proclamation with a request that every able bodied man in the State devote these two days to laboring on the public highways.

The proclamation asked for a general suspension of business. Not only was the call made to the men of Missouri, but the women of the State were asked to supply the volunteer workmen with food and encourage them with their presence and good cheer. The commercial clubs, various civic organizations and entire press of the State were called upon to push the good roads movement along and to make the two days count to the utmost in good roads achievement.

The 114 county courts of the State were asked to issue proclamations calling for volunteers in their respective counties to issue directions to the county road overseers and other county road officials to the end that the work might be conducted in a systematic way.

The Governor closed his proclamation with these stirring words:

This will bring to the roads of Missouri for work an army of labor volunteers, grander far than the brilliant pageantry of martial splendor, and whose song of progressive achievements will be sweeter than the rattle of arms.

"By this simple procedure, a million days' work will be placed upon our highways, benefiting the present and, in coming years, bringing a return of an hundred fold and giving the good roads movement an impetus which will not cease until in this respect, we stand first among the States.

"As Missourians have ever been the pioneers in western achievement and civilization, let us now lead the way to a new day in road work and improvement."

The plan originated by the Governor was at once taken up by the people of the State with the greatest enthusiasm. The idea reverted back to older and better notions of citizenship. The "old settlers" of Missouri hearkened back to the days gone by when an entire community gathered for a road making bee, and all the strong men with the best mules and horses and wagons in the country came, like the gathering of a Scottish clan, for the improvement of some neighborhood road that had become impassable.

The press of Missouri hailed the scheme with approval and it did not lack publicity. The large dailies of the bigger cities started honorary subscription lists in their columns, by which the patriotic city dweller, who was unable to get out on the rural roads might subscribe an amount sufficient to employ a substitute to take his place in the field. The commercial and civic improvement clubs throughout the State began an energetic campaign for subscriptions for money and for promises of labor, teams, wagons, and road machinery.

The State Highway Commissioner, Col. Frank M. Bufum, a wealthy manufacturer, drafted into the public service by Governor Major because of his great interest in road improvement, was the Governor's able lieutenant in preparing for utilizing to the greatest good the volunteer work.

He began at once a tour of the State, consulting with county courts, county highway engineers, township road overseers, and with farmers, as to the needs of the roads in the various localities and the manner of working on the big days.

In some counties, it was thought best to drag the roads, in others to grade down the steeper hills, and in some it was planned to build culverts and fill up holes.

In many counties prizes were offered by the county courts for the road districts making the best showing in the number of men and teams at work on the roads, and the regulations for these contests were published in the county papers.

Cash prizes were offered in some instances, but several county courts offered concrete culverts to the winning districts. The State Highway Department of Missouri has prepared standardized plans for concrete culverts in different sizes.

Class A culverts, or the largest, were offered by the county courts as first prizes, and smaller culverts for the lesser prizes.

On August 2, Governor Major was in Kansas City attending a banquet, at which Governor Hodges, of Kansas, was also a guest. There was a great deal of good roads talk. Said Governor Major to Governor Hodges:

"Missouri would like to borrow the Kansas Governor for a few days in its road campaign."

Governor Hodges replied, "The Kansas Governor will be glad to come if you have a pair of overalls that will fit and if you will let him work."

"We'll have the overalls," rejoined Governor Major, "and you will have to work some, if you do as much as we intend to do."

"That challenge is accepted," replied Governor Hodges.

Thus was the Governor of Kansas invited to participate in the great Missouri road making bee.

The news of the Governor's proclamation spread beyond the borders of the State. The Brooklyn Eagle, of New York, said, in a congratulatory editorial, that the eyes of the nation were centered on Missouri and were watching the experiment with interest. Like comment was made by the press of New York, Philadelphia and Boston. Even the staid Britisher took cognizance of the mobilization of an army of American road makers, for much comment appeared in the press of London and Liverpool. Missourians, sojourning in Paris, started a generous subscription list for the benefit of the work back home.

A number of road making machine manufacturers and traction engine makers offered their machines and engines for the State's artillery in the battle against bad roads. All such offers were promptly accepted by the Governor, and the machines were assigned to different counties, where the Highway Commissioner deemed their operation would result in the greatest practical benefit.

One large gas traction engine, with four special traction graders, was donated for Governor Major's personal use, and the manufacturers notified the governor that the outfit would be shipped to the State capital in ample time.

Congressman Dorsey W. Shackleford, of the Eighth Congressional District of Missouri, and Chairman of the Roads Committee of the House, came home from Washington three weeks before the roads holidays and despite the intense heat, began driving from county to county, calling upon the county officials and urging them to action.

Congressman Shackleford has long been advocating legislation for government aid to improved highways which are used for rural mail and parcel post deliveries and aside from his personal interest in good roads in his home State, he desired some substantial proof to show Congress that the people are willing to help themselves.

Fully a week before the first day designated by the proclamation, everything was in readiness for the assault upon Missouri's ruts, bumps, and chuck-holes. Governor Major had received thousands of letters and messages, many commendatory of his good roads propaganda, others advising him of plans underway for the organization of the workers. Every county in the State had taken official cognizance of the movement and endorsed it through resolutions or proclamations issued by the county courts. There are approximately eight thousand road overseers in the State, each with jurisdiction over a small district. Each of these officials had received a letter of instructions, directing him to be in readiness to supervise the work on August 20, and to make all necessary preparations beforehand to keep the volunteers busy. Each overseer knew the number and names of the men in his district subject to road tax, but these did not represent by any means all that were willing to report for volunteer work.

The counties where systems of constructing permanently improved highways have been in vogue for some time, were perhaps the best organized for the work. All of them had

Better Roads



Governor Elliott W. Major in front of the Executive Mansion grounds ready for work



A group of State officials and employees ready for road work. Reading from left to right they are: State Highway Commissioner F. W. Buffum, Secretary of State Cornelius Roach, Congressman D. W. Shackelford, Governor Elliott W. Major, State Auditor Jno. P. Gordon, State Treasurer Edwin P. Deal.

practical highway engineers to direct where the laborers should work and the kind of work that should be performed.

The commercial clubs and business men's leagues had turned over to the State Highway Commissioner and to the committee selected for that purpose, thousands of dollars in cash for the hiring of substitutes and for the purchase and rental of road machinery. And here it is well to note, in fairness, that many of the farming counties subscribed more money, by far, than did the large cities of St. Louis and Kansas City, where the largest subscriptions might naturally be expected.

Two days before the first day set aside by the proclamation, there was only one ground for fear that the good roads days would not be a complete success. Missouri had been sweltering for six weeks in a mid-summer drought. For twenty days, the thermometer had registered around the hundredth degree mark, and in some parts of the State the stock were suffering for lack of water and the ground was dry and hard. If the heat continued and no rain fell, it was feared that it would be too hot for teams and men to work, and that the earth would be so hard that plows and scrapers could not be satisfactorily operated. But, on the night of August 18, a gentle rain began falling and continued during nearly all of the 19th. This rain was general, covering a large part of central and northern Missouri. The drought was broken. There was an abundance of stock water, the grass and corn freshened and brightened in color, and the hard earth of the dirt roads was softened.

The morning of the 20th of August dawned cloudless, but the air was cool and fresh after the generous rain.

In Jefferson City a good roads parade preceded the attack on the bad roads in the vicinity. The road workers formed in front of the executive mansion. Before seven o'clock, the citizens and state officials and clerks began to gather. Governor Major and Congressman Shackleford marshaled the workers into line. The Governor was clad in a suit of khaki and carried a shiny new shovel. At half past seven, the street was congested with men on foot with picks and shovels, with a brigade of convict road workers from the State penitentiary and with mule teams hitched to dirt wagons, scrapers, and graders. A giant gas traction engine, loaned by the Pioneer Gas Tractor Manufacturing Company, of Winona, Minnesota, came puffing and clanking up the street from the railway station, with its train of graders in tow.

At last the parade was formed and began its march to the county roads. First, came the tractor with the Governor at the throttle and Congressman Shackleford steering, an expert standing behind them to direct them in manipulating the huge machine. Next came the State officials. The Secretary of State and State Auditor each drove a team of Missouri mules hitched to a regulation dump wagon.

At the end of the procession of wagons and graders, marched in double rank one hundred and fifty convicts. Their faces bore happy smiles for Governor Major had promised each that fifteen days would be taken from his sentence for each of the two days if he gave good service on the roads. The convicts couldn't cheer. That would be against the rules. But as all were short termers, the fifteen days meant much to them.

There were two moving picture machines on the ground occupying a point of vantage and countless photographers.

There was some cheering and then the road army marched on and out into the country. The road selected for a try-out for the tractor and graders was a sandy bottom stretch on the Missouri River near Jefferson City. As soon as the tractor reached the point of beginning, the blades of the graders were adjusted and set into the ground, men were placed at the steering wheels under the direction of experts, and at the Governor's command, the Twentieth Century road maker started. At first a little difficulty was encountered because of soft ground, but soon the earth slid smoothly on the blades of the graders, and with exhaust pipe roaring the engine pulled the outfit steadily up the road. A ditch, two and a half feet deep, appeared behind the graders, and the earth was thrown in a level slope to the crown of the road.

At two o'clock in the afternoon, Governor George A. Hodges, of Kansas, arrived at Jefferson City and Governor Major at once piloted him to the scene of activities. The two governors, hilarious as school boys, assisted in operating the grading machines until a quarter of a mile of road was com-

pleted. At this time, the temperature stood at about 100 degrees in the shade, and their job was not an enviable one. Moving pictures were taken as the governors wielded their levers and steering gear.

Reports from virtually every county in the State told of throngs of workers. All evening the telegrams came to the Governor at Jefferson City, and the executive mansion resembled a political headquarters on election night. Governor Major received the "returns" with his wife and Governor and Mrs. Hodges, of Kansas, and fully as much interest was taken in the road news, as if it was the windup of a big political campaign.

It was a general engagement—the first day's battle for good roads. When the seven o'clock whistle blew in the morning, picks and shovels were set in motion in Atchison County, in the far northwestern corner of the State. At the same moment, diagonally across the State in Pemiscot County, five hundred miles away, another wing of the army rushed into the fray. And in Clark County, in the extreme northeast, and McDonald County in the southwest, and in all counties intervening, the same scenes were being enacted. It was real work, too. Men whose hands are tender and unused to toil, fought valiantly by the side of the farmer, whose hands have hardened from intimate acquaintance with physical work.

Governor Major never halted during a daylight hour of the days. After he had graded a mile of road with the big tractor, he left it in charge of its crew and visited a hilly stretch of road where Warden McClung and his force of convicts were preparing a series of blasts calculated to remove a steep and rocky hill at one stroke. When the Governor arrived, the charges of giant powder had been tamped into the holes and wires were strung to batteries to fire the immense charge. Sentinels were posted to warn back sightseers. The photographers and moving picture men trained their machines on the Governor and the hill. A highway engineer waved his hand. The Governor touched two wires together and, with a sullen roar the hill parted in the middle and belched forth an avalanche of boulders, trees, and earth, and a cloud of yellow dust for a moment, obscured everything. When it cleared away, the Governor looked through a wide gap into a level valley beyond. This particular "bad hill" was a bug-a-boo of the past. The convicts were put to work at once clearing away the debris, preparatory to the laying of a smooth crushed rock road through the gap.

The State of Missouri had contracted for over 1,200 feet of moving picture film of the road workers, and especially of the operation of the modern road machinery. A considerable portion of the Governor's time was taken up in selecting scenes for the taking of the "movies." It was easy to find just plain workers with teams and scrapers and shovels and picks, for they were everywhere, but the road gangs with power driven machinery were not so numerous.

On the second day, Governor Major, accompanied by Governor Hodges, began a tour of inspection over the roads of Callaway, Boone, Cole, and Moniteau counties. The Governors rode in a big, six-cylinder touring car, and another car carried the moving picture machines and operators. The first inspected was the Ashland road which connects the State Capital with the city of Columbia, where is located the University of Missouri. Here the big tractors were not only dragging graders, but one was hauling a long train of improved dump wagons loaded with gravel. These wagons were loaded by a power elevator and, after being transferred five miles by the tractor, were automatically dumped, so that not a shovelful of the gravel was handled by the hands of men. The Governor inspected all of this machinery and had moving pictures of them taken in operation.

These, and the other road pictures, constitute the finest set of road pictures ever produced. They tell the tale of the efficiency of modern road machinery in the hands of Missourians better than can be described in mere words.

These films of men and machinery at work will be shown in every State in the Union, as the State of Missouri owns the reel of about 1,200 feet and it is proposed to exhibit them free of charge, so the world may know that Missouri stands second to no state or community in road enterprise. Already re-

Better Roads

OCTOBER, 1913

49



Governor Elliott W. Major in center leaning on spade ready for work. A glimpse of Col. F. W. Bufum, State Highway Commissioner, on the extreme right



On left, Governor Elliott W. Major, of Missouri. On right, Governor Geo. H. Hodge of Kansas.



On tractor engine. At left, Governor Elliott W. Major; center, Highway Commissioner F. W. Buffum; right, Congressman D. W. Shackleford



Governor Elliott W. Major driving road scraper

quests are coming to the Governor from good roads boomers for the loan of the films.

The two governors did not neglect the earnest workers who toiled with pick and shovel. On the Ashland road, they drove up to a very busy group of workers who were engaged in dislodging a rocky "hump" from the center of the highway. "Let's help them out, boys," said Governor Major, and the machines were stopped and the two governors climbed out and for an hour valiantly wielded pick and shovel in the blistering sun. All along the road the machines were stopped and the governors cheered on the workers with their presence and words of encouragement.

Halting for lunch at Columbia, Governor Major made a brief good roads speech to the Commercial Club. The return trip to Jefferson City was made over a different road from that traveled in the forenoon, and more machines and men were found and added to the moving picture film, and the workers were encouraged by the Governor.

Sunset put an end to the work on the second day.

It was estimated that 250,000 business men and farmers forsook their business and their farms and went to the highways to give their work that Missouri might receive impetus to become one of the leading good roads States of the Union. When the last man laid down his pick and shovel on the night of the 21st, it was estimated that the work done, had it been paid for, would have amounted to at least \$1,000,000. To this, must be added the \$200,000 in cash contributions to the good roads cause. Not less than \$300,000 worth of contributions in the way of material and work donated by the manufacturers of road making machinery, must also be added to make up Missouri's grand total of one million and a half dollars worth of road work in two days.

This includes work of every description. Hundreds and hundreds of miles of roads were stripped of weeds and underbrush. Thousands of loads of gravel were hauled from creek bottoms and deposited in the holes in the roads, so that when

the wet weather comes, Missouri will for once, be free of mud holes. Some of the dusty pike roads were oiled. Ditches were cleared of obstructions. Much permanent work was done, such as putting in concrete culverts and drains. There are many special road districts in Missouri, organized for the purpose of making permanent rock roads. These districts are equipped with modern road making machinery. All of this machinery was at work on the two days, and fully 300 miles of permanent new road was built.

Last, and grandest result of all, was the great and vital interest stimulated in road improvement.

"But it is not the actual work done or the number of miles of new road or repaired road that counts," said Governor Major. "It is the road improvement spirit aroused and the educational features of the work in road building. Once we know how to build roads, the rest will be easy."

Every State in the Nation will be asked by Governor Major to join in the proclamation of two Good Road Days in 1914, so that the Nation from Maine to California may catch the spirit of co-operation in road building.

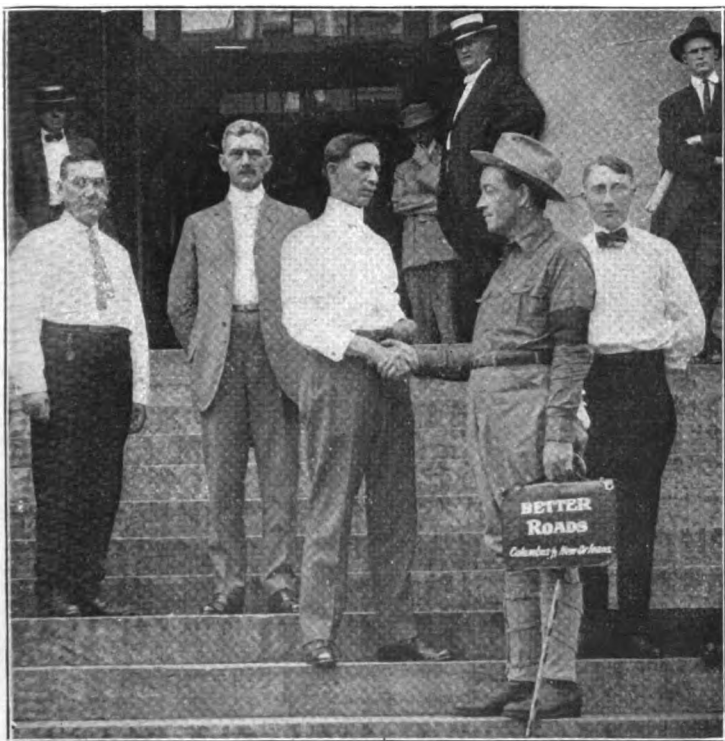
This plan will serve to stimulate the growing sentiment for national aid in road building.

The United States Good Roads Association will hold a convention and exposition in St. Louis, Missouri, November 10 to 15, 1913. This convention and exposition is for the purpose of arriving at some uniform method to ask and seek national highways. There will be present Governors, U. S. Senators, Congressmen and delegates from every State in the Union. Few subjects are of more importance to the American people than the securing of the construction of national highways. The convention in St. Louis is called upon the eve of the convening of the "long session" of Congress, where beyond a doubt a fight for national highways will be waged. Therefore, the big meeting will be of supreme importance to the cause of good roads, for at it the final scheme and campaign for the onslaught upon Congress will be outlined and adopted.



Walking "Better Roads" Booster

There are many ways of attracting the public to the necessity of the early improvement of public roads throughout the country, but the most novel one is now being worked out by



Starting from the steps of the State Capitol at Columbus, Ohio, on his long walk to New Orleans, La. Hon. Geo. F. Burba, Private Secretary to Governor James M. Cox, "lending a hand" and wishing him a good walk, good health and Better Roads everywhere

Mr. J. E. Kavanaugh, who is walking over public roads from Columbus, Ohio, to New Orleans, Louisiana.

He started from the State House at Columbus, Ohio, on Saturday, September 6 at 10:30 o'clock A.M., and expects to

make the trip on foot to New Orleans, Louisiana, at the end of seven weeks. He is of a pleasing personality, and it is believed that he will finish the trip in good shape and that he will arouse much enthusiasm in the country, villages, and cities through which he passes. He carries with him letters of endorsement by many Chambers of Commerce and Boards of



"Good Luck to You," by Frank Lyon, Manager, Columbus Citizen, Columbus, Ohio

Trade and has a strong letter written by Governor James M. Cox of Ohio to Governors of other States. He is not paid a salary by any individual or association, but depends wholly upon commissions on subscriptions to BETTER ROADS for funds with which to pay his expenses. He is being well received wherever he goes and BETTER ROADS wishes for him good health and a successful journey.