

ROAD BUILDING IN '37.

WORK STARTED ON MANY STRONGLY SUPPORTED ENTERPRISES.

Financial Improvement Did Not Begin Early Enough for the Completion of Many New Undertakings During the Year—The Summary.

Advance sheets of the Railway Age contain a review of railroad construction in the United States during 1937. The figures given are from the most reliable sources, and show a very small increase over those of 1936.

While the year 1937 has shown larger earnings and a more active business, the marked improvement in the financial outlook did not begin early enough in the year for the completion of many new railway undertakings, and so it now appears that although much construction work is under way the mileage of track actually laid is not so great as that for the preceding year.

Within the past six months work has been resumed or inaugurated on many of the railway enterprises which, with a little earlier start, would have added considerable miles to the total for the year. Our records show twenty lines on which over 400 miles of track is in progress or is about to begin, much of which will be completed in January and nearly all by March. The work of 1937 represents considerably more railway building than in any year since 1927.

When the point in twenty years, in respect to railway building, was reached in 1927, it was only a little better than in 1926. There was a slight increase in 1928, and 1927 has done a little better than the total now reported to be 1924 miles as will be seen by the following summary arranged in descending order of miles laid from January 1 to December 31, 1937:

Table with 3 columns: State/Territory, No. Lines, Miles. Lists states from Alabama to Wisconsin with corresponding line and mile counts.

Totals in 38 states and territories 133 1,964.32

It will be seen that tracklaying was in progress last year upon 133 of the 150 states and territories. California added 21 miles, Louisiana added 10 miles, Missouri 13, Georgia 10, Pennsylvania 10, Wisconsin 10, Alabama 10, Texas 10, Illinois 10, Mississippi 10, and 11 of the other states named.

In New England steam railway construction is continuing at a rapid pace. As has been the case for several years, only 3 miles being added in the six states. On the other hand, the Southern Railway electric lines has been built for country as well as city service—and this is true, also, of the other major trunk lines.

Small as has been the work of the past four or five years, the ten years following 1927 are looking back by December 31, 1937, to a period in which over 15,000 miles of the railway mileage in the country, an average of 3,200 a year, is being added.

At the commencement of 1938 the United States will have 144,000 miles of completed railway. If the present rate of 3,200 is reached in the next two years, as is not unlikely, the year 1940 will open with 150,000 miles of railway, and it is believed that the next 100 years will add to the next 100 years or less. How much of the railway mileage of the future will be built by steam, however, is a legitimate subject for speculation.

Considerable construction work has been done in the Northern Pacific, the United States. Partial returns, to which there will be several additions, show that during the year 20 miles of track were laid on 13 lines in Canada, and 20 miles on 4 lines in the republic of Mexico.

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