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No. 1

Lonesome Pine Trail is Fast Becoming a Reality

Letter From Ben Williamson, President of Lonesome Pine Trail Association.

(Coalfield Progress.)

That the building of the Lonesome Pine Trail is rapidly to reach a point of completion will be seen by the letter from the president of the Trail Association published below.

It is also interesting to note extracts from several reports made to J. M. Allen, vice-president for Virginia of the Trail Association. From these reports we learn that at the northern terminal of the Lonesome Pine Trail at Ironton, Ohio, and Russell, Ky., is being constructed the modern traffic and street car steel bridge across the Ohio River, which will be completed by next May or June. This is the only bridge on the Ohio River for a distance of 200 miles each way and its building has spurred immediate life in the great cross mountain highway recently started.

The road commissioners of Lee county, Va., have made preparation for the grading of the three miles near Blackwater and Hancock county has under construction a bridge across Blackwater creek.

Ashland, Ky., Dec. 7. J. M. Allen, Vice-President, Lonesome Pine Trail Association, Norton, Va.

Dear Sir:—

Referring to your letter of October 14 to Mr. William H. Miller, our secretary, I am writing you some facts relative to what is doing and has been accomplished on this end of the Lonesome Pine Trail. While we have nothing to say up to the present time, yet no time has been lost and no effort spared to keep this work going and to get more of the road under contract.

Up until this time we have not been just sure what we were going to get. Now, however, I am pleased to advise that on December 21 there will be let two contracts, one stretch of eight miles and another of five miles on the Lonesome Pine Trail. The five mile section is that between the bridge at Russell, Ky., and Ironton, Ohio, and Ashland, Ky., namely, the northern terminus of the Lonesome Pine Trail. The other completes that part of the trail in Boyd county, connecting up with an eighteen mile stretch let a short time ago and upon which work is now going on in Lawrence county to Louisa.

In addition, we have a virtual understanding with the highway department that two additional contracts will be let this winter, one of eighteen miles in Lawrence county, south of Louisa, the other fourteen miles in Johnson county, with strong hope of an additional six miles completing the road through Johnson county. In other words, with what has been done and what is now doing and what might be said to be reasonably in prospect, we hope in 1922 to have some eighty-five or ninety miles of the Lonesome Pine Trail completed and under construction. This will leave only the trail through Floyd, Pike and part of Letcher to carry it to Jenkins, Ky., and

I might say, that the necessary bonds required by the state have been voted and appropriated in these various counties. Therefore they are ready just as soon as the state and the government are in position to furnish their part of the money to go ahead with the road. Rest assured that the pressure will be kept on with the earliest possible completion of this road to Jenkins in view.

Now what I would ask of our friends south of the mountain is: What steps are necessary to get the work going over there? Although I am a busy man, with reasonable notice, I will be glad to attend a meeting or meetings deemed necessary to start enthusiasm out of which should grow real effort and must be guided largely by those who are familiar with the situation over there. I am not familiar with the road laws of either Virginia or Tennessee. It was not my good fortune to be able to attend the meeting of the Lonesome Pine Trail Association at Pikeville. I have not, therefore, just the information necessary to an intelligent understanding of what move should be made to get things started.

I feel sure that if the work can be gotten into a similar condition on that side of the mountain to what we have here, we will not have to wait for our grandchildren to drive over the Lonesome Pine Trail. I am willing to lend my efforts to bring about results as quickly as possible.

Very truly yours,
BEN WILLIAMSON,
President
Lonesome Pine Trail Association.

Virginia Man

Elected Chairman of Executive Committee of the American Association of State Highway Officials.

Richmond, Dec. 29.—By the unanimous vote of the state highway officials of the forty-eight states of the Union at the annual session of the American Association of State Highway Officials in Omaha last week, George P. Coleman, state highway commissioner of Virginia, was re-elected chairman of the executive committee of that association. At the same meeting Mr. Coleman was again chosen as chairman of the legislative committee for 1922. W. S. Keller, chief state-highway engineer of Alabama, was elected president of the association.

Since the organization of the American Association of State Highway Officials nine years ago, Commissioner Coleman has served as chairman of the executive committee every year excepting one when he was elevated to the presidency of the association. The bill for the first federal aid passed by Congress in 1915 was drawn by the executive committee of the American Association of State Highway Officials. The changes in the new federal aid act passed by Congress in 1921 were made upon the recommendation of the executive committee of the association. The fight for the adoption of the measure through which federal aid was continued was led by the legislative committee of the association.

Poor little innocent 1922! doomed to die within the year.

FIRST NATIONAL BANK OF APPALACHIA

Now Doing Business in Its Handsome New Stone Building.

The First National Bank of Appalachia has moved into its new building, which was erected by the Berks Construction Company the past year. On Monday which was the New Year holiday the building was open to visitors and hundreds of the bank's friends and customers were shown by officials through the different departments and had explained to them the many features connected with up-to-date banking.

The building is 40x60 feet three stories high with one story below the street level, which is used as storage vaults. The walls of the building are brick with Bedford, Indiana, stone veneer and tile roof. The main floor is beautifully finished. The floors are Tennessee marble and the wainscoting of Italian marble, which presents a very artistic and pleasing effect. On the main floor is located the banking room with four steel cages for the cashier and tellers, the vaults, the directors' room, the stenographers' office, the president's office, toilets, etc. All the furniture in the building with the exception of one table in the directors' room are of steel. All the doors except the front door are made of steel. The building is absolutely fire and burglar proof. The door to the money vault and safety boxes weigh thirteen tons and eight hundred pounds and has four combination and two time locks. With the four locks it will be impossible for it to get out of adjustment unless all four go wrong at the same time, which is not at all probable. This door is made of ten inch tool proof hardened steel and the whole vault is lined with the same metal one inch thick.

On the mezzanine floor above is located a rest room for ladies which overlooks the main banking room, toilets, office rooms, etc. The building is very conveniently arranged and beautifully and artistically finished and furnished and is one of the best banking houses in the south and cost with equipment about seventy-five thousand dollars.

The First National Bank was organized in 1909 and has a capital stock of \$50,000 with a surplus of \$50,000, and at the present time the deposits are about \$900,000. The officers and directors of the bank are all prominent business men of this section and are as follows: C. F. Blanton, president; George Jenkins, vice-president; W. A. Jones, cashier. The directors are: C. F. Blanton, George Jenkins, E. J. Prescott, Otis Mouser, H. L. Miller, Dr. C. B. Bowyer, H. L. Fuller and Dr. R. W. Holly.

Down Go Prices to Pre-War Levels

The Caloric Pipeless Furnace has put on a nation-wide advertising campaign announcing the drop in the price to pre-war prices and have a double page advertisement in the Saturday Evening Post.

This advertisement also mentions some new improvements in the Caloric which will add to the efficiency. W. G. Coutts, the agent for the Caloric, has placed some 60 of these furnaces in Wise county.

Mr. Coutts states that he has cut his plumbers to 60 cents an hour and is out for the business.—adv.

Road Change

Made by Highway Commissioner Not in Interest of People.

Members of the State Highway Commission of Virginia, Hon. Geo. P. Coleman, State Highway Commissioner, Richmond, Va., and Hon. Wade H. Massie, Chairman, Washington, Va., Hon. Henry P. Beck, Secretary, Richmond, Va., Hon. Horace Harlaw, St. Paul, Va., Hon. Frank W. Davie, Lawrenceville, Va., and Hon. John A. Bear, Roanoke, Va.

Gentlemen:—I noticed in the Roanoke Times of yesterday that you had recommended a change in that part of Route No. 11 from Coeburn via Clintwood to Grundy, as the same was fixed by the Legislature of Virginia by Acts of 1918 at page 10, by cutting off the part of this state road from Fremont to Grundy, and changing this state road so as to go from Grundy to Raven. I feel confident that you were not fully aware of the true situation in connection with this road or you would never have recommended this change. You certainly have only had one side of the case presented to you. It would be a grave mistake for this change to be made by the legislature, which only has the right to make the change, but I do not like to see the State Highway Department of Virginia make the mistake of recommending this change.

No one in Virginia has been a better friend of the state highway system or stood by it and the State Highway Department better than I have. I have confidence in the ability and uprightness of all the men connected with this department and I feel confident that if you were convinced that you had made a mistake in this recommendation that it would be your pleasure to withdraw the recommendation; and in an effort to show you that you have made a mistake I am writing you this letter. All I ask is for you to give our side of this controversy a fair and impartial consideration. We ask nothing more and we feel that we are entitled to this. I shall now proceed to give you a statement of the reasons I have for urging you to withdraw this recommendation.

This state road from Coeburn to Grundy, a distance of about fifty-eight miles, passes through Clintwood, the county seat of Dickenson county, and Fremont in which is one of the largest lumber plants in the state if not in the whole United States, a town of some fifteen hundred people, and Moss, which is the best constructed and equipped mining town in Virginia, a town of some two thousand people, and Haysi, a prosperous and growing railroad town, and on to Grundy, the county seat of Buchanan county; on the proposed Raven route you do not pass through a single village or town from Grundy to Raven, a distance of twenty-eight miles, and mostly sparsely settled country.

To cut off the Coeburn-Clintwood-Grundy road at Fremont you cut Moss and Haysi off of a state highway and you take away from Dickenson county sixteen miles of state road, and you place Grundy by state road twenty-eight miles from the railroad at Raven; while it is only eighteen miles to the railroad at Haysi. So you place Grundy ten miles further from a railroad by this state road. I shall stand behind the statement that there are five times as many

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people living within one mile of this state road between Fremont and Grundy as there are living within one mile of the road from Grundy to Raven. This is entitled to consideration, as roads are built to accommodate the most people possible.

I fully realize that part of the people living in Grundy want this road out to Raven and that the people living along the route of this proposed road to Raven want the road to Raven, this is but natural, the same condition would be found in any other part of the state; and part of the people living in Grundy want this road out to Haysi, likewise the people living along this Haysi road want the road to Haysi. But a very large percent of the people of Buchanan county have very little choice between these two routes and will be satisfied with either route. It is Tazewell county that is leading this fight. It is Tazewell county that wants to take away from the prosperous growing towns of Moss and Haysi, and take away from Dickenson county sixteen miles of road so as to get a part of this state road from Grundy to Raven in Tazewell county. This is simply a fight by Tazewell county to take a piece of state road from Dickenson county.

I had the honor of being a member of the legislature at the session of 1918 when the state highway system was first laid out, and I had in mind at that time that this Coeburn-Clintwood-Grundy state road would some day be extended on from Grundy up Slate Creek and down Knox Creek to the West Virginia line; and that this would then become one of the most important thoroughfares in the state of Virginia, as it would connect the coalfields of Tug River and the counties of Mingo and McDowell with the coalfields of Southwest Virginia in the counties of Lee, Russell, Wise and Dickenson. Look at your maps and you will see that this road between the two states, and between these two great coalfields, would connect these two coal fields by a road of less than a hundred miles; while it is some two hundred miles from one of these coalfields to the other by railroad, either by Bluefield or Louisa, Kentucky, and Fort Gay, West Virginia. Now if you want to help Buchanan county why not recommend that this state road from Coeburn by Clintwood to Grundy be extended from Grundy on through to the West Virginia line, as this would then give to Grundy two outlets to the railroads, one to the C., C. & O. at Haysi and the other to the N. & W. at some point on Tug River?

If, however, you are determined to establish a road from Grundy to some point on the Clinch Valley railroad, you would be making, in my opinion, a grave mistake to locate this road to Raven. It should go to Honaker in Russell county instead. The distance would be about the same, but the road would accommodate more people. The road from Grundy to Honaker would pass by Council, where the Baptists have a large mission school, that is doing great work in the education of the boys and girls from this mountain part of the state. While the road from Grundy to Raven would only serve the few scattering people living along this route the Honaker route would help build up this very excellent school. But our Tazewell friends, in their innocence, can not see that any road is of much importance unless it gets into Tazewell at some place, so they would doubtless seriously object

Town Council Preparing to Commence Work in the Early Spring.

It looks now like Big Stone Gap will have some good streets and roads if the plans of the town council are carried out. The matter of better streets and roads has been discussed for some time, but the council decided to wait until next spring before any actual work is commenced on them. In the meantime all the preliminary work is being done preparatory to work as soon as the weather permits.

At a meeting of the council on Monday night a committee of citizens composed of Judge H. A. W. Skeen, Otis Mouser, J. W. Chalkley, A. L. Witt, W. T. Goodloe, W. W. Taylor, H. E. Fox and J. P. Wolfe were appointed to go thoroughly into the streets and roads matter and recommend to the council at an adjourned meeting on next Monday night the kind of streets and roads the town should build and the probable cost of them. This committee will confer with a committee of the council composed of W. T. Goodloe, E. T. Carter, W. H. Wren and D. B. Sayers previously appointed to ascertain the costs of such improvements. The object of the council in appointing a committee of citizens was to get all the information possible as to the wishes of the citizens of the town as to the streets that should be improved and the kind of construction most desired.

Judge Skeen was present and stated to the council that they had the authority under the present law to issue bonds for street improvements without having to hold an election, and this being the case the council will proceed at once to make all preparations to commence these improvements by early spring. It is thought the town will have no trouble in selling sufficient bonds for the improvements undertaken. Sufficient bonds should be issued to make the improvements wherever made permanent and improve enough of the streets, especially in the business section of the town, to show the outside world that we are at least keeping up with other towns in this section.

The town can do nothing that will improve conditions and enhance the value of property here more than good permanent streets. Norton has almost doubled in population and importance since they improved their streets and Appalachia has just completed some street improvements that will benefit the town more than anything else that could have happened.

We are glad to see that the town council, which is composed of leading business men, are taking such an interest in the welfare of the town and we believe every true and loyal citizen will back them to the limit. We want improved streets and we want them at least as good as any other town in Southwest Virginia.

In the national capitol the other day eggs sold for fifty cents a dozen, of which the farmer received twelve. A right liberal distribution of the profits for all except the farmer and the hen.

(Continued on Fourth Page)