

**FIELD WORK KEEPS FEDERAL MEN BUSY INTERIOR DEPARTMENT**

**Wrestling With Problems Which May Mean Millions to Public; Some of the Tasks Given Them**

Field administrative work of the department of the interior is this summer wrestling with problems that millions to the public. Scattered through the public-land States are some twenty stations from which petroleum and mining engineers of the Geological Survey supervise the development of lands of the United States and of its wards, the Indians. Conservation of mineral resources, wise development and use of nature's heritage, maximum ultimate recovery of mineral deposits under safe mining and producing conditions, are the goal for which these servants of the station are striving, saving values many times the amount of the cost of their work.

**Values Save**

Each monthly report of supervisory operation tells some story of essential values saved and demonstrates conservation in actual operation. The system of regular periodic mine inspection is a prolific source of suggestions for better mining and milling practices that not only lead to more complete production at reduced cost but also tend toward better working conditions and increased safety for employees.

A current monthly report includes an estimated saving of five million cubic feet of gas per day, valued at \$75,000 a year, through the extinguishing of flares and collection of residue gas from gasoline plants, thereby increasing the life of gas field reserves. In another locality the storing of surplus gas in a partially depleted field has driven back the water encroaching on the producing area.

**Eliminate Difficulties**

Carefully controlled engineering operations in numerous oil fields have resulted in eliminating water troubles, developing production in neglected sands, plugging old wells that have ceased to be profitable and become a menace to surrounding areas, and in bringing out information on underground conditions capable of wide application in increasing ultimate production. Plans worked out for unit operation and repressuring will add

largely to more complete extraction of oil. While the number of men engaged in supervisory activities is small their task is stupendous. During the current year minerals recovered from the earth under supervision of the department's engineers will be valued at upwards of \$150,000,000, and the returns in rental and royalty will amount to between 15 and 20 million dollars.

**PROSPERITY RESERVE PLAN IS NOT NEW ONE**

**Idea of More Government Work During Slack Times Is Revived**

An old idea with new plait in its robe has been dressed up and presented by Doctor John M. Gries, of the department of commerce.

In a memorandum prepared for the senate committee on commerce, Dr. Gries suggests a policy of creating work during periods of national unemployment by undertaking public improvements which have been authorized by the government, whenever it is found that the volume, based on the value of contracts for construction work in the United States has declined ten per cent for a three-month period below the average of the corresponding three-month periods of the preceding three years.

The United States government is in the construction business to the extent of about \$150,000,000 a year, and a "prosperity reserve" seems to be a practical way in which industry and employment may be stabilized by the expansion of public works. Dr. Gries in his statement said:

"Certain works of the federal government, such as reclamation, flood prevention, river and harbor work, roads and public buildings, are peculiarly suited for consideration as large undertakings covering a long period and capable of elasticity of execution to synchronize with cycles of business depression."

**PRISON POPULATION IN ILLINOIS GROWS**

**Increases Ten Per Cent in Less Than Seventeen Months, Report Says**

The population of Illinois three principal penal institutions, Joliet, Chester, and Pontiac, has increased approximately ten per cent in less than 17 months. The figures for these three prisons show a comparative population as follows:

Feb. 3, 1927, population ..... 5928  
May 24, 1928, population ..... 6497  
Statistics show that the population of the Illinois prisons has been growing steadily since July, 1926, when Hinton G. Clabaugh took charge as chairman and supervisor of the parole board. Commenting on the situation in the prisons, Mr. Clabaugh said recently:

"It will be noted that there has been a tightening up and strengthening of the parole system all along the line during the last twenty months. Much more severe sentences are being imposed for all crimes of violence than ever before in the history of Illinois.

"Insofar as murder, rape, robbery with arms, burglary and similar crimes of violence are concerned, the parole board takes the position that regardless of the importance of reformation and rehabilitation, the safety of the law-abiding citizen and the protection of life and property are of paramount importance. Every gun hold-up, bandit or burglar is a potential murderer and should be treated as such. Except in rare instances of extreme youth or other outstanding, mitigating circumstances, it is impossible to exaggerate the value of severe punishment as a deterrent to criminal activity."

Which is very much the same as saying that gangsters and professional criminals will find it difficult to get out of prison in Illinois via the parole route.

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**Question and Answers**  
Q—How does Illinois rank among the states in agriculture, manufacturing and mining?  
—J. I. K., Rockford.  
A—Illinois ranks second in agriculture, fourth in the manufacturing and sixth in the production of mineral wealth.

Q—When and where did the white men establish his first permanent settlements in Illinois?  
—J. A. B., Zion.  
A—Controversy has raged for a hundred years or more as to whether the first permanent white settlement was established as Kaskaskia or Cahokia. Settlements were established at both these places either in 1699 or 1700. Cahokia borders East St. Louis on the south and Kaskaskia is at the mouth of the Kaskaskia river. Both places were settled by the French.

Thriving settlements were scattered along what is known as the "American bottom" extending from East St. Louis to below Kaskaskia nearly a hundred years before the half dozen white men took up abode on the site of the present Chicago. The first general migration into Illinois came down the Ohio river and up the Mississippi. Northern Illinois was settled largely by New Englanders who came via the Great Lakes and Southern Illinois largely by Virginians and Kentuckians.

Q—Can you give me any figures showing the rate of growth of electric service in Illinois in, say, the last twenty years?  
—W. B., Marion.

A—The most handy available comparison shows the figures for 1910 and for 1928, a matter of eighteen years. In 1910 approximately 200 towns, cities and communities in Illinois were served with electricity; in 1928 there were 1,208. In these eighteen years approximately 7,000 miles of "high line" has been built in Illinois costing more than \$300,000,000. This means that power for motors is available in practically every hamlet in the state. There is probably no territory of like size anywhere in the world better served with electricity for light and power than Illinois.

Q—What is the value of farm property in Illinois compared with the state's entire property wealth?  
—H. A. T., Rock Island.

A—Statistics recently compiled gave the value of all real property in the United States as \$176,414,444,000. Out of this total of \$12,568,726,000 was credited to Illinois or about seven per cent of the whole. Farm lands and farm property in the United States was put at \$49,550,000,000 out of which Illinois was credited with \$4,200,000,000 or about 8 1/2 per cent of all.

**ASBESTOS COVERING ON CALIFORNIA HILLS**

**Grow Type of Plant on Them Which Not Inflammable, Says Report**

An "asbestos" covering for the foothills of California to eliminate the menace of brush fires is a possibility.

This declaration is made on the authority of Fire Chief Ralph Scott who witnessed the tests of a new plant importation at the California botanic garden at Mandeville Canyon. While the plant is not exactly composed on the order of asbestos, plant scientists convinced Chief Scott that it is equally as effective as far as its non-burning qualities are concerned. Newly arrived from South Africa, the asbestos plant answers to the formal name of portulacastrum and thrives on arid slopes which makes it particularly well adapted for introduction to the foothills of southern California.

The plant is composed almost wholly of water and is an evergreen that is unaffected by dry seasons. The plant spreads rapidly and in addition to its qualities as a ground cover it is declared, by Chief Prosector M. L. Bryan of botanic garden, to be excellent for cattle feed.

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