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Parkway Started Monday

Above Lowgap

Construction Of Scenic Giant Shovels Moving Dirt On 12-Mile Section In N. C.

**Virginia Part Must Wait For
Meeting Of Its Legislature;
Right-of-Way Is Questioned;
Law To Be Enacted.**

More than 100 men started work on the Parkway at the Carolina-Virginia line above Lowgap Monday morning, this being the first 12 mile section of the Parkway which was recently awarded by the Federal Bureau of Road to Nello Teer, road contractor of Durham. The men were secured from the relief and unemployment roll of Alleghany County, with a representative of the unemployment office of Winston-Salem on hand personally Monday morning to see that the contractor was provided with sufficient labor from the proper source. As this project is a relief measure all labor as far as possible must be secured from the relief and unemployment rolls.

The first job given the men was that of clearing off the 200 foot right of way. Work was started where the Parkway crosses the Lowgap-Sparta road at the Lyons brick house. It continues in almost a straight direction from that point to the top of the mountain and reaches the crest of the Blue Ridge at Cumberland Knob where a fine view of the lowland and surrounding mountain peaks is had.

While the workmen are clearing off the timber and growth along the route others are engaged in unloading and assisting in getting a huge dirt shovel from the railroad siding at Galax to the scene of operations. One thing noticeable about the work is that all material and machinery with which to work have been purchased new. The shovel has a capacity of two yards of dirt, weighs 45 tons, and is powered with a Deisel engine of 125 horse power, using 40 gallons of fuel oil each day. This is a new outfit, is of the latest design and is said to cost about \$25,000. Numerous caterpillar tractors are on hand and about a dozen large dump trucks will haul the dirt away from the shovel.

Engineers of the government and state are on the ground to see that everything is done according to specifications. Since the state is furnishing the right-of-way state engineers will keep a check of the land that is used for the Parkway and the Federal Bureau of Roads will have men to supervise the construction work. The foremen on the job say the grading will not be of any extreme heavy character since the survey of the route has followed the contour of the mountain, making long sweeping curves, and avoiding deep cut and high fills. The preliminary survey established a base or center line from which to work and it is said the final survey of the highway has not varied from this first line more than 200 feet.

North Carolina state highway office
(Continued to back page)

Officials are making every effort to hurry along the Parkway construction by getting the deeds to the rights-of-way prepared as quickly as possible. With the first 12-mile section now under construction the state hopes to soon have things ready for the government to contract other sections through Alleghany and Ashe Counties. Mr. Teer, contractor of the first section, has 365 days in which to complete his section, but has stated he expects to cut 100 days off this allowance.

Considerable delay over the right-of-way is being experienced in Virginia and it is now improbable that there will be any construction work done in Virginia before spring. The trouble lies in the Virginia Highway Commission not having sufficient legal authority to condemn and seize land for the purpose of the Parkway. The North Carolina legislature in session the first of the year passed the necessary laws to enable the state to satisfy the government as to the right-of-way, but Virginia's legislature does not convene until January, 1936, and everything is tied up until it meets and passes laws that will empower its highway commission to seize and convey land to the government for the use of the Parkway. It is admitted Virginia has the power at the present to take over land for state highways but there is doubt about the law permitting the road officials to possess land for the use of the government.

The road now being built from the state line above Lowgap toward Sparta will have a 50-foot roadbed with 20-foot roadway. The contract with Mr. Teer calls for rock surfacing of the road after it is graded and the top coating will be added later in another contract.

While the road work is now under construction on the Parkway there is established at Galax a group of engineers from the National Park Service whose duty it is to make a study of the scenic beauty that exists along the route and work out plans for its preservation and development. These men are landscape architects and now that the road has been located they will follow up the contractors and make plans for the beautification of the Parkway.

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