63
Rivers and Harbors

The Rivers and Harbors Congress has just sent out a synopsis of the rivers and harbors bill which was passed just before the expiration of the session and which the congress strongly endorses. The bill carrying $47,868,894 exceeds the appropriation of the last congress by $15,000,000. In addition there are continuing contracts for which it is expected that $10,000,000 will be carried in the sundry civil bill for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1914. This appropriation brings the total for seven years to $274,338,228, against $141,674,299 for the previous seven year period.

The Rivers and Harbor Congress advocates "a policy and not a project." It believes that the government is on the way toward the establishment of a policy and hopes that it may include in a permanent policy, an annual appropriation of $50,000,000 for rivers and harbors.

But any policy the government may adopt should abandon the present plan of itemizing the appropriations as has hitherto been done. No doubt the larger projects for which appropriations are made are meritorious ones and the proposed work is necessary. But to secure the appropriations concessions had to be made for projects that are not meritorious.

There are altogether about 300 projects scattered over thirty-seven states. This geographical distribution indicates on the face of it, much unholy cooperation; it gives a hint that concessions had to be made to secure support for the bill. We notice in the list that provision has been made for "Newton Creek," "Absecon Creek," "Woodbury Creek," "Osage River" and numberless creeks and rivers of varying unimportance.

But we observe with regret and shame that our senators and representative did not take an active, or at any rate, a noticeable part in the making up of the rivers and harbors bill. What, we ask, has been done to improve the navigability of the raging Santa Cruz or the tumultuous San Pedro? Tucson has been left without a harbor and we of Phoenix for the next year at least will not see vessels of commerce and pleasure plowing the broad bosom of the Rio Salado. Why did not our congressmen get in while the getting was good; while the water was fine?
If a man be endued with a generous mind, this is that kind of nobility. —Plato.

The State and the States

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