

CONSERVATION

Improvements Need Not Be Ruinous, Rules Suggest

WITH A NEW public works program about to get under way, it is worth while taking a critical look at plans for some of the improvements that are intended at once to make our communities more livable and to give jobs to the unemployed. Too often, public improvements have been synonymous with wholesale destruction by grader and steamshovel.

Recently a group of European conservationists and landscape engineers got their heads together and drafted a set of rules to be consulted when waterside improvements are being made. Their suggestions are worth pinning on the walls of local public works committees—and pasting in field supervisors' hats:

1. Improvements should leave the landscape as nearly as possible in its original state, or at least able to return to that state very quickly.

2. River courses should be changed only when absolutely necessary; and then they should not be made rigidly straight, but laid out in gradual curves.

3. Islands, as ideal breeding places for wildlife, should not be destroyed or disturbed.

4. Streamside vegetation should be left undisturbed as far as possible. If a stream must be widened, the cut should be made on the side with the least timber.

5. When trees and shrubs must be removed, they should be replaced immediately, preferably with native species.

6. New banks on a cut should be of natural materials, such as sod, brush, and broken stone; concrete walls are to be avoided.

7. Natural lakes and ponds should not be drained or destroyed, and their shore vegetation should either be left undisturbed or restored to its natural state as quickly as possible.

8. Planners should carefully consider

whether projected improvements will cause a lowering in the water table.

9. Bridges, dams, etc., should utilize local material as far as possible.

10. Long, straight lines in dikes, levees, etc., are to be avoided.

11. Drainage projects should spare trees and shrubbery.

12. Definite plans should be fully worked out before digging begins.

Science News Letter, September 10, 1938

ENGINEERING

Blowouts Blamed on Careless Parking

BETWEEN 60 and 70 per cent. of all four-ply passenger car tire failures may be attributed to one of the American driver's worst habits, jamming the tire against the curbstone through careless parking, research workers of the Fisk Tire Company report.

The danger, they declare, lies in subsequent blowouts of damaged tires, which may wreck a car and result in personal injuries and death. Such careless parking may also knock front wheels out of alignment.

Science News Letter, September 10, 1938

PALEONTOLOGY

New Fossil Ape Genus Found Near Vienna

Fossil bones of a kind of higher ape not hitherto known to science have been recently discovered in Austria near the village of Klein-Hadersdorf. They were in a stratum of miocene age, with an estimated antiquity of some 20 million years. Prof. Kurt Ehrenberg of the University of Vienna has named the new genus *Austriacopithecus*.

Science News Letter, September 10, 1938

ZERO TO EIGHTY

by Dr. E. F. Northrup

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