

"As the immensity and diversity of the tasks before this country in the war it has undertaken are understood, road building appears more and more vital as a defensive measure, for while at present the possibility of invasion or attacks upon the coasts perhaps seem remote, that possibility must not be lost sight of. In this war the possibility of to-day may be the probability of to-morrow and a certainty the day after.

"The seacoast of the United States, including the coast of the Gulf of Mexico, has a total length of approximately 5,000 miles. Adding to this the Mexican border gives a total length of coast and southern frontier of not far from 6,000 miles. What is applicable to the defense of the coast at Puget Sound is equally applicable to miles and miles elsewhere along the enormous coast line.

WHERE ROADS ARE MOST NEEDED

"Assuming then - what the facts appear to warrant - that roads are needed for military purposes along the coasts and frontier, the next step is to ascertain where they are needed, and where the need is most urgent. This work, it would seem, can best be done by the State Highway Departments co-operating with the coast defense branch of the military - the State highway officials furnishing information as to existing roads and their condition, and the military authorities indicating the requirements for defensive work and operations. It is obvious, even to the layman, that little work would be required in some sections and large amounts in others. It would, however, entail a very great loss of energy and funds were the civil authorities to go ahead blindly without the advice of military experts.

"Plans for the work having been prepared jointly by the State Highway Departments and the War Department, the actual work of construction could well be left to the States, using therefor State and Federal funds. Convict labor could also be employed to advantage, and it might even be found feasible to utilize prisoners of war, as has been advocated