DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESS

Press/630

IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 4, 1931.

At the urgent request of the United States Senators for Virginia, Hon. Claude A. Swanson and Hon. Carter Glass, followed up by request of Governor John Garland Pollard, Secretary of the Interior Wilbur to-day agreed to allocate to drought stricken Virginia, $500,000 of the $1,500,000 appropriated for construction of roads and trails in national parks and national monuments under the Emergency Public Works Act for construction of roads.

Half of these funds will be used for building a road through Shenandoah National Park from Panorama to Skyland, thence to intersect with the Rapidan Valley Road. This road would lie in that area approved for park purposes by Act of Congress of May 22, 1926. By legislative act the Commonwealth of Virginia vested in the State Conservation and Development Commission the power of eminent domain, with instructions to condemn, acquire, and turn over to the National Government the necessary lands.

This area covers 500 square miles and lies in the Blue Ridge Mountains in the Counties of Warren, Rappahannock, Madison, Page, Greene, Rockingham, Albermarle and Augusta, a section harder hit by the drought than any other in Virginia and possibly in the United States. The road will develop the most scenic section of the Shenandoah National Park and open that area to thousands upon thousands of visitors. It is believed that its construction will assure the early completion of the park so that it may be turned over in entirety to the Federal Government for protection, maintenance, and development. The main purpose of building the highway at this time, however, is to give the mountain people in this area an opportunity to work and provide food and clothing for themselves and families. As many of the local people as can be employed will be put to work at the earliest possible moment. Construction will be under the supervision of the Bureau of Public Roads.

REPRODUCED AT THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES

The other half of the emergency road funds allotted to Virginia will be expended in beginning construction of the Colonial National Monument Parkway connecting Yorktown and the city of Williamsburg. The parkway is planned for construction along the York River. It is expected this project will be under way during the Sesquicentennial Celebration to be held at Yorktown, October 16-19. This region also has been badly hit by the drought conditions which have affected the entire State. When work recently was started at Yorktown clearing grounds in preparation for the Sesquicentennial, over one thousand men applied for work. Funds were available at that time for only nine men on clearing work.

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