

July 1953.

C O P Y

Outline of Discussions with State Highway Officials  
and Division and District Engineers

What's happening to the Bureau?

Nothing but good. No political changes; Commissioner has come into Bureau alone, bringing not even a private secretary with him. Administrative and organizational changes are being made only after consultation and agreement with staff heads. Management study by Soos, Allen and Hamilton likened to visit to doctor for a check-up. Recommendations from this study to be regarded as advisory, to be adopted only as their merits are confirmed by the introspective knowledge of the Commissioner and staff heads. Review of Bureau's research activities similarly regarded and motivated. Research Advisory Committee: Ballock, Davis, Potty, Needles, Macdonald.

Some organizational and administrative changes planned, some already accomplished.

1. More positive and complete delegation of action authority to District Engineers. Division Engineers, with reduced staff of specialists, to have supervisory and consulting responsibility. Project review functions of Division Offices, (later to be changed in name to Regional Offices) to be reduced to a minimum.
2. Divisions 5 North and South consolidated June 1. Wisconsin transferred to Division 4, June 15. Division Engineer W. V. Buck, Division Office, Kansas City, Missouri.
3. Western Headquarters abolished July 8. On same date appointment of Raymond Archibald as Division Engineer, Division 7 effective. All forest and park bridge design will be centered in this Division.
4. Some further consolidation and regrouping of States forming Divisions or Regions contemplated, to be made effective as enhancement of operational efficiency required, and fair consideration of personnel interests permits.

### How will State-Bureau Relations be Affected?

For the better, we hope. Commissioner has had long experience as a State highway administrator; sees Bureau from State viewpoint. Has undivided interest in furtherance of the virtues, and correction of the faults of past Bureau-State cooperation under Federal law.

Commissioner hopes to visit all State highway departments and field offices of the Bureau before next Spring; has asked each Deputy Commissioner to visit a group of States and corresponding field offices in the same period. These visits intended to elicit State views and suggestions; inform field personnel of the spirit and intention of contemplated organizational and policy changes; and provide opportunity for suggestion by field personnel and consideration of the interests of affected personnel in connection with changes contemplated.

### Basic Concepts of Future Policy

Bureau policy henceforth to be based on following concepts:

1. Bureau will assume the existence of an interest in efficient administration on the part of the State highway departments equal to its own. Will modify this assumption only as events prove the necessity.
2. District Engineers will have maximum feasible authority and responsibility, under supervision of the Division Engineers to approve plans, specifications and estimates for projects, to concur in and authorize award of contracts, within liberalized limits to approve change orders. More precise definition of District Engineer duties to follow discussions with Division Engineers and State highway departments now in progress.
3. Division Engineers will exercise supervisory control over their several District Engineers and District Office forces. This control is to be exercised as largely as possible by direct

personal contact of the Division Engineer and his staff with the District Engineers and their forces and operations, and as little as possible by correspondence and office review and checking of R E R and other documents. The District Office personnel are to be regarded as the decentralized operational forces of the Division Engineers; The District Engineers as the Division Engineers' lieutenants in direct command of the decentralized forces; and The Division Office staffs as the Division Engineers' supervisory assistants and as the resort of the District Engineers for advice and consultation on more difficult problems. For the discharge of its latter function the Division Office staff will include an appropriate choice of competent engineer specialists. Division Engineers will review and recommend programs for approval by the Washington Office, review and recommend planning and research projects, and sign Project Agreements. Auditing of State vouchers to be done by auditors assigned to the Division Offices.

4. Functions of the Washington Office staff will be limited as completely as possible to the consideration and development of policy, and the assembly and digestion of information that is necessary to that end and for the purpose of prompt response to Congressional and other inquiries regarding the status of projects, etc. Review and checking of project plans at Washington will be reduced to the minimum found essential for evaluation of the performance of Division and District organizations. Specialists on the staff of the Washington Office will be available for consultation by Division and District Engineers on problems of the greatest difficulty and complexity. Final review of programs and approval of vouchers will be retained at the Washington Office.

Reorganization of the Washington Staff consistent with these concepts of its functions will be made in due course, and after consideration of the recommendations of the management consultants and suggestions received in the course of the field visits by the Commissioner and Deputies.

5. In the review and checking of State plans and project performance by all Public Roads units, effort will be directed toward an effective cooperation with the State highway departments in the achievement of professional competence, soundness of judgment and decision, and integrity of action in the broader sense. Quibbling over minutia and minor differences of opinion will be avoided. Correspondence and paper work will be reduced as much as possible consistent with an essential adequacy of information in, and control by the Division and Washington Offices. Personal contacts of Division and Washington staffs with work and personnel of the District Offices will be increased. District Engineers, with the cooperation of the State highway departments, will seek to keep abreast of, and exchange views on Federal-aid project planning while it is in progress in the Departments. Ways will be sought to adjust the scale and frequency of construction and maintenance inspection and incident reporting to the actual necessities of effective, but reasonably economical control. On this point the views and suggestions of Division and District Engineers are particularly desired.

**Elicitation of Views and Suggestions of State highway departments and Division and District Engineers**

**From the State highway departments:**

1. Suggestions of Bureau policies and procedures which cause delay, irritation, needless expense, and impairment of relations.
2. Services not now rendered by the Bureau which would be favorably received by the States.

**From the Division and District Engineers:**

1. Ability of District Offices as presently constituted to assure additional responsibilities of the general order indicated.
2. Suggestions of the necessities of adequate construction and maintenance inspection.
3. Limits of the responsibility that should be placed on District Engineers in such matters as approval of contracts exceeding engineers' estimates, approval of contract change orders, and other functions that may require limitation.
4. Indications of procedural routine, reporting demands, and other requirements of the Washington Office found burdensome by the District and Division Offices.
5. Objections, if any, of Division Engineers to the proposed revision of Division Office functions; estimate of personnel requirements to perform revised functions.
6. Results of Washington Office action as seen by Division Engineers.