

Progress in Public Works Highway Construction

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During the past two years highway work with Federal funds has progressed at a more rapid rate than ever before. In the public works highway program 27,958 miles of road have been completed, 6,386 miles are under construction and 559 miles have been approved for construction. This work has been done with \$400,000,000 provided by the National Recovery Act of June, 1933 and \$200,000,000 provided by the Hayden-Cartwright Act of June, 1934. The funds were direct grants and did not have to be matched by the States.

Classified according to types of construction the program has included 7,048 miles of graded and drained road, 16,233 miles of sand-clay, gravel and macadam, 3,695 miles of low-cost bituminous mix, 1,051 miles of bituminous macadam, 1,631 miles of bituminous concrete, 4,902 miles of portland cement concrete, and 343 miles of structures and miscellaneous types. Included in the structures are 5,669 bridges, 651 railroad-highway grade separations and 64 separations of highway grades.

Prior to the public works program, Federal funds were concentrated on the Federal-aid system in order to provide a system of through highways. This policy was followed because it gave the greatest service to the greatest number. The improvement of the State and Federal-aid systems

brought with it a great development in highway transportation. Serious traffic problems arose in connection with the flow of traffic into and through cities and the need for improvement of secondary roads became evident.

Employment needs coincided closely with highway needs and approximately 50 percent of public works funds have been expended on the Federal-aid system, approximately 25 percent on municipal extensions of the system, and approximately 25 percent on feeder roads.

In the work on the Federal-aid system there was a considerable mileage of surfacing of previously unsurfaced roads but a large portion of the work consisted of widening narrow surfaces and elimination of dangerous grades and curves. There is still much work to be done in improving the system to standards required by the present volume and speed of traffic.

The primary objective in the public works program has been to give employment. During the last fiscal year the employment on projects involving Federal funds was 2,191,264 man-months. The average full-time employment was 182,605 men throughout the year. The number of men actually employed was somewhat greater than this because of labor turnover and it is estimated that approximately 244,000 men were given direct job employment in the average month. To this should be added the indirect employment supplied in the production and transportation

of materials and equipment. It is estimated that such indirect employment required by the work done has averaged approximately 1.4 times the direct employment. On this basis the indirect employment in the fiscal year 1935 is estimated at 3,067,700 man-months, which, added to the direct employment, results in a total of approximately 5,259,000 man-months.

Funds for highways provided by the National Industrial Recovery Act and the supplemental funds provided in 1934 are being rapidly exhausted with the completion of projects. Federal assistance in road construction is to be continued with \$200,000,000 for highways and \$200,000,000 for elimination of hazards at grade crossings provided under the Emergency Relief Appropriation Act of 1935. The funds have been apportioned to the States and rules and regulations issued. These regulations contain provisions insuring that the money will be used for useful projects and relieve unemployment to the greatest extent possible. The various State highway departments are now engaged in planning programs of work to be done.

The policy of Federal aid to the States has been resumed with the fiscal year that began on July 1 and \$125,000,000 has been apportioned. These funds must be matched by the States and are available for use on the Federal-aid system.