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# A STUDY OF SAND-CLAY-GRAVEL MATERIALS FOR BASE-COURSE CONSTRUCTION 

BY THE DIVISION OF TESTS, BUREAU OF PUBLIC ROADS

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THE RESULTS of an investigation of sand-clay materials for base-course construction were reported in the November 1938 issue of Public Roads. A similar investigation of sand-clay-gravel materials for base courses has recently been concluded and the results of these tests are presented in this report.
Insofar as possible, the same general procedure was followed in making this study as was used in investigating the sand-clay materials. Two series, or a total of 11 mixtures, were prepared using water-worn Potomac River gravel, Potomac River sand, pulverized silica, and a red-clay soil from the same local source as that previously used.

The purpose of the study was to determine the effect of variations in plasticity index and aggregate grading on the stability and general serviceability of sand-claygravel materials when used as base courses for bituminous wearing surfaces. Such characteristics of the base-course mixtures as were known to have a direct bearing on their stability were investigated in conjunction with traffic tests in the circular track. These factors included compactibility, resistance to infiltration of water, and resistance to softening and loss of stability when exposed to the action of capillary water in conjunction with traffic.

To enable determination of the effect of variations in plasticity index, the five mixtures of series 1 were so designed that the fractions passing the No. 10 sieve were essentially the same as the five sand-clay materials used in series 1 of the previous tests. The plasticity indexes of the fractions passing the No. 40 sieve ranged from 0 to 16. The material retained on the No. 10 sieve was intended to have the same grading for all five mixtures, but mechanical analyses of samples from the track sections showed that there were minor variations in grading from section to section.

In order to determine the effect of variations in grading, the six mixtures of series 2 were designed to have a wide range of gradings and, with the exception of section 1 , plasticity indexes of approximately 8.

Section 1 was designed to have a plasticity index of 0 .
The gradings and soil constants of the 11 materials used in the sand-clay-gravel studies are shown in table 1.

As in the studies of sand-clay mixtures, the indoor circular track was used to evaluate the serviceability of the various mixtures when used as base courses for a bituminous surface treatment and subjected to traffic under severe moisture conditions.

## MIXTURES TESTED IN CIRCULAR TRACK

For the traffic tests on the materials of series 1, the track was divided into five, 7.5 -foot sections, one for each of the five test mixtures, so that the traffic test could be made simultaneously on all five. The materials of series 2 were also tested as a group comprising six, 6.3 -foot test sections. All the test sections were approximately 6 inches in depth when compacted and were laid over a porous, crushed-stone sub-base through which water introduced from below could pass. They were covered, after compaction, with a thin bituminous surface treatment, the purpose of which was to afford protection from the abrasive action of the test traffic and thus confine the test to a deiermination of the single factor of stability, or resistance to internal movement under traffic with the water table at various elevations in the base course.

The materials for each section of series 1 were prepared for laying by first thoroughly mixing the constituent aggregate fractions together dry and then adding sufficient water to bring the moisture content of the mortar portion, or material passing the No. 10 sieve, to its optimum moisture content as previously determined by Proctor tests on the sand-clay fractions. Because of this use of the fine fractions only as a basis for determining the moisture contents for consolidation, the mixtures proved to be somewhat deficient in moisture for maximum compaction in the track.

In order that there should be no such deficiency of moisture in series 2 , it was necessary to devise a method

Table 1.-Gradings and soil constants of sand-clay-gravel base-course materials


1 Dust ratio $=100[$ percentage passing No. 200 sieve $]$.
that would take into account the coarse aggregate fraction. Since it was considered impractical to make the Proctor tests on materials containing 1 -inch maxi-mum-size stone, the moisture contents for the sections in series 2 were determined by vibratory compaction tests made on the dry aggregates, the volume of water used being that computed to be just sufficient to fill the voids in the vibrator-compacted aggregate. These moisture contents proved to be essentially correct for constructing the test sections since they did not render the material too wet to handle and yet were high enough to allow some drying during compaction operations without lowering the moisture content below the optimum.

The designed moisture contents and the actual moisture contents of samples from the uncompacted test sections immediately after laying are given in table 2. The required amounts of water were added to the aggregate mixtures on the basis of their air-dried weight whereas the actual moisture contents after laying were determined by oven drying. This accounts for the apparent increases shown for the more plastic sections of series 1 and the sections of series 2 having the higher soil-mortar contents.

Table 2.-Designed moisture contents and actual moisture contents of track sections


The procedure for preparing the materials and constructing the test sections was as follows:

1. The moistened sand-clay-gravel materials were thoroughly mixed to distribute the water uniformly and were then placed in the track in two approximately equal layers, each layer being compacted with pneu-matic-tired traffic uniformly distributed over the surface.
2. Compaction was continued on the top layer until no perceptible subsidence could be produced in any section by additional wheel-trips. This required 30,000 wheel-trips for series $1^{1}$ and 42,000 wheel-trips for series 2 .
3. The sections were sprinkled with water to soften the surface slightly and were trimmed smooth with a blade.
4. After drying for a few days the surface was primed with light tar.
5. As soon as the prime had been absorbed and had cured sufficiently to be fairly dry, a $3 / 4$-inch surface treatment consisting of 0.4 gallon per square yard of hot-application bituminous material and 50 pounds of cover stone was constructed.

[^0]6. The surface treatment was consolidated by applying distributed traffic.

## ADDITIONAL COMPACTION NECESSARY FOR THREE SECTIONS OF SERIES 1

Consolidation of the base and surface treatment appeared to be completed in series 1 after a total of 50,000 wheel-trips, and water was then admitted to the subbase and maintained at a height of $1 / 2$ inch above the bottom of the base course being tested. After only 300 wheel-trips of distributed test traffic, sections 2, 3, and 4 began to move and displace so badly that traffic had to be discontinued. The loss of stability resulting from the introduction of water was accompanied by marked subsidence over the entire area of these three sections. Section 1, which was nonplastic, also showed marked subsidence although it remained highly stable. Tests showed that with the exception of section 5, which had a decrease in moisture of 1.5 percent, the materials had absorbed from 3 to 3.6 percent of moisture in addition to that contained at the time they were laid (see table 3). This absorption of moisture, together with the subsidence of the surface, definitely indicated that the moisture contents used for construction in sections $1,2,3$, and 4 were too low to permit maximum compaction.
In an attempt to complete the compaction without reworking the materials in the weak sections, 7,700 wheel-trips of additional distributed traffic were applied. This additional traffic resulted in the complete failure of the surface treatments on sections 2, 3, and 4 .
Table 3-Moisture contents of the track sections at various stages of the investigation


Samples for moisture content and density determinations were taken and the surface treatment was removed to facilitate drying in conjunction with subsequent compacting operations. At this time the moisture contents of these three sections were approximately 2 percent higher than when they were originally constructed (see table 3). The condition of sections 2, 3 , and 4 just prior to removal of the surface treatment is well illustrated by the photograph of section 3 shown in figure 1.

After removal of the surface treatment from sections 2,3 , and 4, 17,000 wheel-trips of additional compacting
traffic were applied in small daily increments, bringing the total to 75,000 wheel-trips. During this time the moisture contents of the three sections decreased to approximately those at which the sections were originally laid. A new surface treatment was then constructed and compacted with 25,000 wheel-trips of distributed traffic, bringing the total to 100,000 wheel-trips.

The behavior of the five sections under the regular traffic test from 100,000 to 425,000 wheel-trips will be discussed fully later. At this point the behavior of sections 2, 3, and 4 after recompaction, will be discussed in comparison with their above described earlier behavior when not fully compacted.

During the traffic test the water level was gradually raised until a height of $4 \frac{1}{2}$ inches above the top of the sub-base was reached at 370,000 wheel-trips and this water elevation was maintained to a total of 425,000 wheel-trips. Under these extreme conditions sections 2 and 3, because of their increased density, absorbed only 0.3 and 0.4 percent more moisture than they had contained at 75,000 wheel-trips and section 4 actually showed a loss of 0.4 percent moisture. All three sections were quite stable throughout the test in marked contrast to their behavior from 50,000 to 50,300 wheel-trips when each absorbed approximately $3 \frac{1}{2}$ percent of water and became highly unstable because of insufficient compaction.

No difficulties such as those encountered in connection with series 1 were encountered during the compaction of the materials of series 2 because, as previously stated, the original moisture contents were high enough to allow for appreciable drying during compaction. Thus compaction was able to proceed to the maximum density obtainable under traffic before the moisture content passed below the optimum.

## ONLY ONE SECTION OF SERIES 1 FAILED DURING TRAFFIC TEST

Table 4 shows the procedure followed in testing the track sections in series 1 with notations on the behavior of each section during the test. Table 5 gives similar information for series 2 .

Series 1.-After all construction and compaction operations had been completed at 100,000 wheeltrips, water was introduced into the sub-base and set at an elevation of $1 / 2$ inch above the bottom of the test base course. Distributed traffic was applied to a total of 183,000 wheel-trips and then, without changing the water elevation, concentrated traffic was applied to 256,000 wheel-trips, making a net total of 156,000 wheel-trips of test traffic. Section 5 became unstable and was rated as having failed at 150,000 wheel-trips ( 50,000 wheel-trips of test traffic). Figure 2, left, shows the appearance of section 5 at 150,000 wheel-trips when its failure was recorded. On the right is shown the same section at 233,000 wheel-trips when measurements of its surface displacement were discontinued. The other four sections in the series, although showing some movement under traffic and slight cracking in section 4 , were in good condition at 256,000 wheel-trips which marked the conclusion of that phase of the test in which the water was held at the $1 / 2$-inch level.

As shown in table 4, the test with concentrated traffic was then continued with the moisture conditions being made progressively less favorable until the water level had reached an elevation of $4 \frac{1}{2}$ inches and a total of 425,000 wheel-trips had been applied. Sections 1,2 , and 3 remained in good condition. Section 4, although exhibiting a high degree of resistance to softening, considering the severity of the test, developed


Figure 1.-Appearance of Section 3 of Series 1 After 58,000 Wheel-Trips of Traffic.
sufficient rutting and cracking to require its classification as a doubtful or border-line material.

Measurements of average vertical displacement made with the transverse profilometer at various stages of the test are shown graphically in figure 3. In the tests of sand-clay materials described in the previous report, it was found that unmistakable visual evidence of failure such as marked instability, breaking up of the surface treatment, and extrusion of mud through the surface was noted at about the time the average vertical displacement of the surface reached 0.25 inch. Section 5 of series 1 of the sand-clay-gravel materials showed an average vertical displacement of only 0.17 inch at the time failure became visually evident but the vertical displacement continued to increase rapidly, reaching 0.34 inch when measurements were discontinued on the section at 233,000 wheel-trips. The increase in average vertical displacement for the other four sections, none of which actually failed, was very gradual and the total displacement never reached more than 0.20 inch during the regular traffic test.

Section 2, judged by its rate and total amount of vertical displacement, was markedly superior to any of the other sections in series 1 and its general behavior in the track as judged by visual inspection confirmed the evidence of the displacement measurements. In this respect, it conformed to the behavior of the corresponding section of the sand-clay materials from which it differed physically only in having 46.5 percent of the sand-clay replaced with rounded gravel ranging in size from No. 10 to 1 inch.


Figure 2.-Appearance of Section 5 of Series 1: Left, After 150,000 Wheel-Trips, When Its Failure Was Recorded. Right, After 233,000 Wheel-Trips, When Measurements of Its Surface Displacement Were Discontinued.

Table 4.-Schedule of operations and behavior of test sections in circular track tests, series 1

| Operation | Traffic | Water level above top of sub- | Behavior |  |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  |  |  | Section 1 (plasticity index $=0$ ) | Section 2 (plasticity index $=5$ ) | Section 3 (plasticity index $=9$ ) | Section 4 (plasticity index $=11$ ) | Section 5 (plasticity index =16) |
| Compacting base course- Compacting base and | $\begin{gathered} \text { Wheel-trips } \\ 0-30,000 \\ 30,000-50,000 \end{gathered}$ | Inches <br> (1) <br> (1) | Stable but raveled ${ }^{2}$ Good$\qquad$ do. 4 $\qquad$ | Stable but raveled ${ }^{2}$. Good. | Stable but raveled ${ }^{2}$.Good | Stable but raveled ${ }^{2}$. Good. | Unstable at first. ${ }^{3}$ Good. |
| surface treatment. | 50, 000- 50,300 |  |  | nstable | Unst | nstable | Do. |
| Compacting base course | $50,300-58,000$ | $\begin{aligned} & \text { (6) } \\ & \text { (1) } \end{aligned}$ |  | Surface treatment destroyed. ${ }^{7}$ <br> Unstable at first but improved rapidly. <br> Good. $\qquad$ | Surface treatment destroyed. ${ }^{7}$ <br> Unstable at first but improved gradually. <br> Good. $\qquad$ | Surface treatment badly damaged. ${ }^{7}$ <br> Unstable at first but improved gradually. <br> Good | Do. |
| Drying and recompacting hase ccurse. | 58, 000-75, 000 |  |  |  |  |  | Do. |
| Compacting base and new surface treatment. | 75, 000-100, 000 | (1) |  |  |  |  | Do. |
| Testing with distributed traffic. | 100, 000-183, 000 | $1 / 2$ |  | , | d | Good but moved slightly under traffic. | Quickly became un. stable and failed at 150, 000 wheel-trips. |
| Testing with concentrated traffic. Do | $8183,000-256,000$ $256-000-320,000$ | 1/2 | Good but developed slight rutting. | Good but developed slight movement. | Good but developed slight movement. | Good but developed some cracking. |  |
| $\begin{aligned} & \text { Do } \\ & \text { Do } \end{aligned}$ | $\begin{aligned} & 256-000-320,000 \\ & 320,000-370,000 \end{aligned}$ | 21/22 | Good but cracked somewhat along center line. | Good but cracked somewhat along center line. | Good but cracked somewhat along center line. <br> Good; some rutting and cracking. <br> No change in behavior. | $\begin{aligned} & \text { Movement increased } \\ & \text { appreciahly. } \end{aligned}$ |  |
| Do-.--------------- | 370, 000-425, 000 | $41 / 2$ | Good; some rutting and cracking. | Good.-....-.-...........- |  | Appreciable rutting and cracking. |  |
| A 2 -foot segment of each section was frozen with dry ice and tested after thawing. | 425, 000-445, 000 | 41/2 | No change in behavior. | No change in behavior. |  | Frost heave, 0.03 inch; increased rutting and cracking. | Frost heave, 0.1 inch; extremely unstable. |

[^1]- Water drained out of sub-base to allow unstable sections to dry and compact. T Evaporstion of the excess capillary moisture, admitted because of the incomplete early compaction, was so slow that the base course material had to be partially dried by remixing
Road on each wheel increased from 8.0 pounds to 1,000 pounds at 233,000 wheeltrips


Figure 3.-Rate of Surface Displacement Under Traffic, Series 1.
Table 5.-Schedule of operations and behavior of test sections in circular track tests, series 2

${ }^{1}$ No water in sub-base.
${ }^{2}$ Because of its ability to drain readily, sec. 1 required frequent sprinkling during
After the conclusion of the regular traffic test on series 1 at 425,000 wheel-trips, the effect of freezing and thawing was investigated to a limited extent. A segment of each section about 2 feet long and 18 inches wide was frozen by placing a layer of crushed dry ice over it and covering the dry ice with blankets. Freezing to a minimum depth of $21 / 2$ inches was accomplished in about 5 hours. Measurements of surface elevations at this time revealed a heave of 0.1 inch on section 5 and 0.03 inch on section 4 with no change in surface elevation for the other three sections. After the frozen segments had thawed out, 20,000 additional wheeltrips of concentrated traffic were applied. Cross section profiles indicated additional average vertical displacements as shown in figure 4 from 425,000 wheeltrips to 445,000 wheel-trips.

## WATER ELEVATION OF $1 / 2$ INCH PROVED SEVERE TEST CONDITION

The average vertical displacements at 370,000 and 425,000 wheel-trips from figure 3 are repeated in figure 4 to show the effect of freezing and thawing on the rate of displacement. The nonplastic material of section 1 was apparently not affected, displacement
${ }^{3}$ Load on each wheel increased from 800 pounds to 1,000 pounds at 175,000 wheeltrips.
caused by traffic continuing at the same rate after freezing and thawing as before. The plastic materials in sections 2,3 , and 4 , were affected roughly in direct proportion to their plasticity indexes. Section 2, with a plasticity index of 5 , showed only a slightly increased rate of displacement after freezing while section 4, with a plasticity index of 11 , showed a very marked increase. Section 3 was intermediate between sections 2 and 4 in this respect.

Series 2.-As shown in table 5, preliminary compaction of the base and surface treatment was completed at 65,000 wheel-trips. Throughout the subsequent traffic test with water in the sub-base and at gradually increasing heights in the test base course, sections 1 , 3 , and 5 remained stable and showed no indications of failure. Section 2, as shown in figure 5, developed considerable movement and local depressions under concentrated traffic while the water level was still at $1 / 2$ inch and was rated as having failed at 205,000 wheeltrips. Section 6 was decidedly unstable throughout the test period, indicating impending failure while the water level was at $1 / 2$ inch, and was rated as having failed at 250,000 wheel-trips or shortly after the water level was raised from $1 / 2$ inch to $2 \frac{1}{2}$ inches. Its appear-


Figure 4.-Effect of Freezing and Thawing Circular Track Sections, Series 1. (The Displacements at 370,000 and 425,000 Wheel-Trips Are Replotted from Figure 3.)
ance shortly before complete failure is shown in figure 6. Section 4 behaved well under the test traffic until after the water level had been held at $3 \frac{1}{2}$ inches for
some time. It then developed two chuck holes and was definitely nearing failure when the test was discontinued at 330,000 wheel-trips. The latter circumstance necessitated its classification as a doubtful or borderline material.

The development of vertical displacement as measured with the transverse profilometer on the six sections of series 2 is shown in figure 7. For sections 2 and 6 the average vertical displacement at the time visual evidence of complete failure was noted was approximately 0.24 inch, which is in close agreement with the results of tests on sand-clay materials. Although section 4 showed only a slight increase in displacement up to 255,000 wheel-trips, the curve (fig. 7) broke abruptly upward efter the water level was raised to $3 \frac{1}{2}$ inches and apparently would have passed 0.25 inch at about 350,000 wheel-trips had the test been continued.

In tests of both the sand-clay materials previously reported and the sand-clay-gravel materials here discussed, the definitely unsatisfactory materials were clearly distinguished from the rest by the fact that they either failed completely or showed unmistakable evidence of impending failure during the portion of the test when the water level was only $1 / 2$ inch above the bottom of the test bdse course, and in no case were more than 140,000 wheel-trips of test traffic necessary to bring out this initial distinction. This initial classification was facilitated by the fact that the displacement curves of the unsatisfactory materials invariably



Figure 5.-Appearance of Section 2 of Series 2: Left, After 205,000 Wheel-Trips, When Failure Became Evident (Note That the Surface Treatment Was Completely Sheared Through at the Depression in the Outside Rut); Right, After 255,000 Wheel-Trips.
rose steeply or broke upward fairly early in the test whereas the displacement curves for the satisfactory and borderline materials tended to flatten out after the first few thousand wheel-trips of test traffic (see figs. 3 and 7 ).

Additional traffic and elevation of the water level were resorted to only after the definitely unsatisfactory materials had been identified, the purpose being to ascertain if any of the remaining sections were composed of borderline materials.

Figure 8, showing section 4 of series 1, well illustrates the appearance of one of the borderline materials at various stages of the test. The two upper views show the section in excellent condition after, respectively, 50,000 and 133,000 wheel-trips of test traffic. It these stages its condition was typical of that of any of the wholly satisfactory sections during the traffic test. The two lower views show the results of prolonged application of concentrated traffic under highly unfavorable conditions. Even at these stages the indications of failure, although sufficient to place the section in the border classification, were not extensive.

Figure 9 shows the condition of the other borderline material, section 4 of series 2, at 330,000 wheel-trips (the conclusion of the traffic test). Complete failure had not occurred but impending failure was clearly indicated by the deep depression in the inside wheel lane. The test conditions had been made so severe during the later stages of the tests of both series that not even the complete failure of a section could hare been construed to indicate a seriously inferior material.

NEW INSTRUMENT USED TO TAKE LONGITUDINAL PROFILES
In addition to the transverse profiles which were taken at two stations on each section and from which the average vertical displacements of the surface were calculated (see figs. 3 and 7), longitudinal profiles were taken along the center lines of the wheel lanes with a new instrument designed especially for use on the circular track and used for the first time in these tests.


Figure 6.-Appearance of Section 6 of Series 2 Arter 255,000 Wheel-Trips of Traffic. Failure is Indicated by the General Roughness, Rutring, and Breaking of the Surface-Treatment.


Figure 7.-Rate of Surface Displacement Under Traffic, Series 2.


Iigure 8.-Appearance of Section 4 of Series 1 After Various Amounts of Traffic: A, After 150,000 Wheel-Trips; B, After 233,000 Wheel-Trips; C, After 425,000 Wheel-Trips; and D, After Freezing, Thawing, and the Aprlica ilon of 20,000 Additional Wheel-Trips, Bringing the Total Traffic to 445,000 Wheel-Trips.

Figure 10 is a photograph of the new longitudinal profilometer in position for making a recording of the profile of the track surface. It consists of a radial frame pivoted at the central pedestal of the track structure and supported at its outer end by two flanged wheels arranged in tandem and running on a peripheral steel track attached to the outer curb of the track. One of these wheels drives, through an appropriate
transmission system, the vertical drum that carries the record sheet as shown in figure 10 . This drum is mounted on a radially sliding cage that can be clamped at any desired radius within the width of the track. The cage also carries a vertical sliding measuring rod on the lower end of which is a small caster that rests on the track surface and moves up and down in conformity with the contour of the surface. At the rod's
upper end is a stylus which draws the surface profile on the drum as it revolves when the instrument is moved around the track. The drum makes one revolution while the profilometer is making one trip around the track, so that a continuous profile of all the test sections in a track is made on one sheet $21 \frac{1}{4}$ inches long.

Longitudinal profiles of the test sections in both series 1 and 2, taken on the wheel courses where concentrated traffic was applied, are shown in figure 11. The upper one of each pair of profiles shown was taken at the conclusion of the compaction period before any test traffic had been applied. The corresponding lower ones were taken at the conclusion of the traffic test and show the depth of the ruts that were formed.

These longitudinal profiles were found to be fully as satisfactory as the cross-section profiles as a means of evaluating the comparative quality of the materials. Tests with both instruments on this series of materials indicated that the average depth of rut was about 1.8 times the average vertical displacement as calculated from the cross-section profiles. While this factor might vary somewhat for different types of materials, the comparative results in a series of tests on similar materials are consistent and if desired the value of the factor is easily obtained for other types.

Compaction tests similar to those used in determining the moisture contents for constructing the sections of series 2 were made on the aggregates of both series. The vibratory compaction test was modified to the extent that about 5 percent by weight of kerosene was mixed with the aggregates before vibrating them, to prevent segregation of the coarse stone. It was found that this produced somewhat higher densities than were obtained by vibrating the dry aggregates as was done in setting the moisture contents.

A comparison of the densities obtained by the modified vibration method with those of the track sections at the conclusion of the traffic test is shown in table 6.

Table 6.-Comparison of densities obtained by vibration and by testing in the circular track

|  | Density (aggregate volume per unit of total compacted volume) |  | Behavior of section under traffic |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | Compacted by vibration | Track section at end of test |  |
|  | Percent <br> 89.7 <br> 88.0 <br> 87.5 <br> 87.1 <br> 87.2 | Percent 82.8 <br> 87.0 <br> 86.4 <br> 86.2 <br> 84.0 | Satisfactory. <br> Do. <br> Do. <br> Essentially satisfactory. <br> Failed. |
| Section 1--......- | 86.9 | 77.8 | Satisfactory. |
| 2 | 86.7 | 83.9 | Failed. |
| 3 | 89.9 | 89.1 | Satisfactory. |
| 4. | 87.5 | 87.3 | Approached failure. |
| 5 | 89.9 | 89.3 | Satisfactory. |
| 6. | 87.7 | 85.1 | Failed. |

SATISFACTORY Plastic MATERIALS HAD GREATEST COMPACTION IN TEST TRACK

The relations between service behavior and relative density, as shown in table 6 , were consistent with those noted for the sand-clay materials of the previous investigation.

The satisfactory and borderline plastic sand-claygravels (sections 2,3 , and 4 of series 1 and sections 3,4 ,


Figure 9.-Appearance of Section 4 of Series 2 at the End of the Traffic Test ( 330,000 Wheel-Trips). The Deep Rut in the Inside Lane Indicated an Impending Failure.


Figure 10.-Longitudinal Profilometer Used for Recording Longitudinal Profiles of Circular Track Sections.
and 5 of series 2) attained densities in the track within from 0.2 to 1.1 percent of the densities of the vibrated samples. The unsatisfactory materials (section 5 of series 1 and sections 2 and 6 of series 2) all of which were plastic, had densities that were $3.2,2.8$, and 2.6 percent, respectively, less in the track than in the vibrated samples. The two nonplastic materials, section 1 of series 1 , and section 1 of series 2 , because of their harshness, were the least compactible under


Figure 11.-Longitudinal Profiles of Circular Track Sections Showing Matimum Displacement or Rutiting.
traffic, their densities in the track being 6.9 and 9.1 percent less than those of the vibrated samples. However, both gave satisfactory service because of the same inherent characteristic that caused their noncompactibility under traffic, namely their harshness.

The numerical differences in density of the plastic materials appear small and for that reason, their importance might easily be overlooked. To realize their importance where plastic materials are concerned, it is only necessary to analyze the data showing the densities of sections 2,3 , and 4 of series 1 at 58,000 wheel-trips when absorbed water had rendered them extremely unstable, the densities of the same sections at 425,000 wheel-trips after further compaction had made them highly resistant to the action of water, and their maximum obtainable densities as determined by vibration (see table 7).

Table 7.-Comparison of densities obtained by vibration with densities of track sections after various amounts of traffic

| Series 1 | Densities |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | In track at 58,000 wheeltrips (unstable) | In track at 425,000 wheeltrips (stable) | Samples compacted by vibration |
| $\text { Section } \begin{array}{r} 2 \\ 3 \\ 4 \end{array}$ | Percent 83. 2 <br> 84.5 <br> 84.3 | Percent 87.0 86.4 86.2 | Percent |

At 58,000 wheel-trips, when the track sections were highly unstable, the densities of the three sections were respectively only $4.8,3$, and 2.8 percent less than the maximum densities obtained by vibration. The additional compaction obtained by the application of additional traffic in conjunction with the drying out of from 1.1 to 2.1 percent of moisture (see table 3) increased their densities by, respectively, $3.8,1.9$, and 1.9 percent or to within $1,1.1$, and 0.9 percent of their maximum densities obtained by vibration. This small increase in density accounted for their alteration from a condition in which they were highly susceptible to softening in the presence of capillary water to one in which they had a high resistance to the action of water.

A volumetric analysis of the composition of all of the test sections at the conclusion of the traffic tests is shown in table 8. The highly capillary nature of the plastic materials, comprising all of the test sections except section 1 of each series, is strikingly shown by the very low percentage of residual or air-filled voids. These residual or air-filled voids represent, in each section, less than 2 percent of the total volume of the traffic-compacted plastic materials. The water contents show considerable variation, being relatively low for the more compactible materials and high for the noncompactible ones. In other words, the capacity of these materials to absorb water seems to be limited only by the volume of pore space available with a small allowance for nondisplaceable air. Thus again is emphasized the importance of obtaining thorough compaction in plastic, highly capillary materials.

In contrast to the plastic sections, the nonplastic materials of section 1 of series 1 , and section 1 of series 2, had higher percentages of residual or air-filled voids and water contents no higher than those of the plastic materials indicating low capillarity and a susceptibility to gravity drainage.

Table 8.-Composition of track sections at conclusion of traffic tests, series 1 and 2

|  | Water content by weight | Composition by vclume |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  |  | Aggregate | Water | Air |
| Section 1 S.-.----- ${ }^{\text {S }}$ - ${ }^{1}$ | Percent $\text { 5. } 3$ $\begin{aligned} & 4.9 \\ & 5.1 \end{aligned}$ $5.5$ <br> 6. 6 | $\begin{array}{r} \text { Percent } \\ 82.8 \\ 87.0 \\ 86.4 \\ 86.2 \\ 84.0 \end{array}$ | Percent <br> 11.7 <br> 11.7 <br> 12.6 <br> 14.8 | Percent$\begin{aligned} & 5.5 \\ & 1.6 \\ & 1.9 \\ & 1.2 \\ & 1.2 \end{aligned}$ |
| 2 |  |  |  |  |
| 4 |  |  |  |  |
| 5 |  |  |  |  |
| Section 1 SERIES $2{ }^{2}$ |  |  |  |  |
| Section ${ }_{2}$ | 6.9 | 77.8 | 14.2 | 8.0 |
| 3. | 4.0 | 88.1 | 9.4 | 1.5 |
| 4. | 4.9 | 87.3 | 11.3 | 1.4 |
|  | 4. I | 89.3 | 9.7 | 1.0 |
| 6. | 6.2 | 85.1 | 14.0 | 9 |

1 At 425,000 wheel-trips.
: At 330,000 wheel-trips.

TESTS SHOWED IMPORTANCE OF CONTROLLING PLASTICITY AND GRADING

As in the tests of sand-clay mixtures the delineation between good, serviceable materials and those of inferior quality was distinct. Again, the great importance of close control of both plasticity and grading was demonstrated and it was also shown that, where plastic materials are concerned, no amount of control of the quality of the materials will prevent failure if thorough compaction of the materials is not obtained during the construction operations.

Confirmation was found for the belief of some authorities that the behavior of a graded aggregate base-course material is largely dependent on the quality of the soil mortar or material passing the No. 10 sieve. The results of these tests indicate this to be true if more than about 40 percent of the total aggregate passes the No. 10 sieve, while if the total aggregate contains less than about 40 percent of soil mortar the effect of the quality of the soil fraction is modified or obscured by the coarser material. A discussion of the test results leading to this conclusion follows.

Figure 12 which was prepared from the data in table 1 shows the grading curves for the 11 sand-clay-gravel materials used in these tests. The shaded areas which are identical for both series were drawn to include the grading curves of all of the wholly satisfactory materials. They are limited on the left or fine side, as nearly as possible without introducing misleading undulations, by curves for the two borderline materials, section 4 of series 1 and section 4 of series 2 . Their limit on the right or coarse side is established by curves for the materials of sections 1 and 3 of series 2 , since theirs were the coarsest gradings used.

Figure 13 shows the gradings of the mortars or fractions passing the No. 10 sieve of the 11 sand-claygravel materials. The two identical shaded zones, reproduced from figure 13 of the report on sand-clay materials, include the gradings of all the wholly satisfactory sand-clay materials tested in the previous investigation and are limited on the left by curves for the borderline sand-clays and on the right by curves for the coarsest materials used in that investigation.

As shown in figure 13, the grading curres of the mortars of all but one of the sand-clay-gravel materials fall either partially or almost entirely outside the shaded area on the left or fine side. The amount of this divergence has no significance in the case of the nonplastic material of section 1 of series 1 , and may not be sufficient for sections 2, 3, and 4 to impair seriously their quality as sand-clay materials for base courses. The divergence is extensive for section 5 of series 1 , and sections $2,3,4,5$, and 6 of series 2 , which leads to the conclusion that the mortars of these sections would be unsatisfactory for use as base-course materials by themselves. The mortar of section 4 of series 2 was the extreme example in this respect and yet because this inferior mortar comprised only 41.9 percent of the total base-course material as tested, the section withstood traffic well enough to be classed in the borderline group.

The mortars of the unsatisfactory sections 2 and 6 of series 2 were virtually identical in grading with those of the satisfactory sections 3 and 5 of series 2 . The plasticity indexes of sections 2 and 6 , which were respectively 9 and 7 , did not differ sufficiently from those of sections 3 and 5 , which were respectively 8 and 6 , to account even in part for their difference in behavior. The only significant difference was in the percentage of the total aggregate passing the No. 10 sieve. For the unsatisfactory sections 2 and 6 , these percentages were 65 and 66.1 as compared to 31.9 and 38 for the satisfactory sections 3 and 5 .

## FINDINGS USED IN DRAFTING SPECIFICATIONS FOR SOIL AND

 GRAVEL BASE COURSESSection 5, series 1, in which a sand-clay material known to be unsatisfactory for use as a base course by itself comprised 47 percent of the sand-clay-gravel mixture, failed quite early in the traffic test.

Thus with definite failures recorded when poorly graded or highly plastic soil appreciably exceeded 40 percent of the aggregate and borderline behavior when 41.9 percent of an unsatisfactorily graded soil mortar was used, while satisfactory service was recorded for sand-clay-gravel mixtures containing 31.9 and 38 percent of poorly graded soil mortar, the critical percentage seems to be quite well established as being in the neighborhood of 40 with the rounded-gravel coarse aggregate used in these tests.

For convenience in studying these relationships, the percentages passing the No. 10 sieve and the plasticity indexes of all the sand-clay-gravel materials as shown in table 1 are repeated in table 9.

Table 9.-Quantity and character of mortar fractions of track sections, and behavior under traffic

|  | Fraction of total aggregate passing No. 10 sieve | Plasticity index of fraction passine No. 40 sieve | Behavior of section under traffic |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Section 1-....... | Percent $53.5$ | 0 | Satisfactory. |
| - 2 | 47.9 | 5 | Do. |
| 3. | 47.9 | 9 | Do. |
| 4 | 50.3 | 11 | Essentially satisfactory. |
| 5 | 47.0 | 16 | Failed. |
| SERIER 2 |  |  |  |
| Section 1... | 42. 3 | 0 | Satisfactory. |
| 2 | 65.0 | 9 | Failerl. |
| 3. | 31.9 | 8 | Satisfactory. |
| 4. | 41.9 | 7 | Approached failure. |
| 5 | 38.6 | 6 | Satisfactory. |
| 6 | 66.1 | 7 | Failed. |



Figure 12.-Gradings of Materials in Series 1 and 2. Shaded Area Indicates Zone Within Which All the Wholly Satisfactory Materials Are Included.


Figure 13.-Gradings of the Mortars of the Sand-Clay-Gravel Materials Tested. The Shaded Areas, Reproduced from Figure 13 of the Previous Report on Sand-Clay Materials, Show the Grading Range of the Satisfactory Sand-Clay Base-Course Materials.

None of the nonplastic materials, either in the tests of sand-clays or of the sand-clay-gravels, showed any indication of lack of stability and it is obvious that mixtures of nonplastic, satisfactorily graded sand-clay
materials with coarser aggregate could be expected to make satisfactory base courses for bituminous surfaces regardless of whether 40 percent or even as much as 100 (Continued on page 16)

# SIMPLIFIED COMPUTATION OF HYDROMETER TEST DATA FOR SOIL 

BY THE DIVISION OF TESTS, BUREAU OF PUBLIC ROADS

Reported by EDWARD S. BARBER, Junior Highway Engineer

USE is made of a hydrometer in standard methods of test ${ }^{12}$ to determine the size distribution of soil grains smaller than 0.05 millimeter in diameter. Direct computation of the size distribution by means of the formulas involved in interpreting the test data is rather laborious. To simplify this work a graphical method of computation was devised by the Bureau of Public Roads. ${ }^{3}$. The present report describes a slide rule with special indicator and scales that is particularly useful in obtaining the size distribution when the data are reported as an accumulation curve. Each method has certain advantages and the choice of a particular one depends upon individual preference and the testing equipment used.

In the hydrometer method of mechanical analysis, Stokes' law for the velocity at which a small solid sphere falls through a liquid is used to determine equivalent grain size, which is the diameter of a sphere that would fall at the same velocity as the soil particle. Stokes' formula with reference to soil tests may be written

$$
\begin{equation*}
d=\sqrt{\frac{30 n L}{980\left(G-G_{1}\right) t}} \tag{1}
\end{equation*}
$$

in which
$d=$ equivalent grain size in millimeters.
$n=$ viscosity of water, in poises, for any temperature $T$.
$L=$ distance, in centimeters, through which the soil particles fall during a time, $t$, in minutes.
$G=$ specific gravity of the soil.
$G_{1}=$-specific gravity of water.
The numerical values presented in this paper are for a particular Bouyoucos hydrometer calibrated to read grams of soil per liter of suspension (in water) at $67^{\circ} \mathrm{F}$. with a soil whose specific gravity is 2.65 . However, the method of computation is applicable to any hydrometer of either the Bouyoucos or specific gravity type.

Table 1 gives the equivalent grain size in millimeters under standard conditions of temperature and specific gravity for various combinations of hydrometer reading and time. The viscosity of water is taken as 0.0102 poise at $67^{\circ} \mathrm{F}$. and its specific gravity is taken as 1. Following the practice of the Bureau of Public Roads, ${ }^{4}$ $L$ in formula (1) is taken as 0.42 times the distance from the surface of the suspension to the bottom of the hydrometer.

Table 2 gives the factors by which the grain sizes of table 1 are multiplied to correct for variations in temperature and specific gravity. The temperature
correction factor for $G=2.65$ is $\sqrt{\frac{n}{0.0102}}$ and the specific gravity correction factor for $T=67^{\circ} \mathrm{F}$. is

[^2]$\sqrt{\frac{2.65-1}{G-1}} .4$ The combined correction factor for both
temperature and specific gravity is obtained by multiplying the temperature correction factor by the specific gravity correction factor.

For example, if $t$ is 2 minutes and the hydrometer reading, $H$, is 34 , table 1 gives a grain size of 0.0266 millimeters. Then for $T=70^{\circ} \mathrm{F}$. and $G=2.6$, table 2 gives a combined correction factor of 0.995 . The product 0.0266 times 0.995 gives 0.0265 millimeters as the corrected value of the equivalent grain size.

Table 1.-Equivalent grain sizes in millimeters under standard conditions ${ }^{1}$ computed from Stokes' formula

| Bouyoucos hydrometer reading, $I I$ | Equivalent grain size for periods of sedimentation of - |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | $\begin{gathered} 1 \min - \\ \text { ute } \end{gathered}$ | $\begin{gathered} 2 \min - \\ \text { utes } \end{gathered}$ | $\underset{\text { utes }}{5 \text { min- }}$ | $\begin{array}{r} 15 \min - \\ \text { utes } \end{array}$ | $\begin{gathered} 30 \mathrm{~min}- \\ \text { utes } \end{gathered}$ | $\begin{gathered} 60 \mathrm{~min}- \\ \text { utes } \end{gathered}$ | $\begin{aligned} & 250 \\ & \text { min- } \\ & \text { utes } \end{aligned}$ | $\begin{aligned} & 1,440 \\ & \text { min- } \\ & \text { utes } \end{aligned}$ |
| $10$ | $\begin{gathered} M m \text { M } \\ 0.0435 \\ .0432 \\ .0428 \\ .0425 \\ .0422 \\ .0418 \end{gathered}$ | Mm. 0.0307 .0305 .0303 .0300 .0298 .0296 | $\begin{gathered} \mathrm{Mm} . \\ 0.0194 \\ .0193 \\ .0192 \\ .0190 \\ .0189 \\ .0187 \end{gathered}$ | $\begin{gathered} M \mathrm{Mm} . \\ 0.0112 \\ .0111 \\ .0111 \\ .0110 \\ .0109 \\ .0108 \end{gathered}$ | $\begin{gathered} M m . \\ 0.0079 \\ .00079 \\ .0078 \\ .0078 \\ .0077 \\ .0076 \end{gathered}$ | $\begin{gathered} M m . \\ 0.0056 \\ .0066 \\ .0055 \\ .0055 \\ .0054 \\ .0054 \end{gathered}$ | .012 0.00275 .00273 .00271 .00269 .00267 .00265 | $\begin{gathered} \text { Mm. } \\ 0.00115 \\ .00114 \\ .00113 \\ .00112 \\ .00111 \\ .00110 \end{gathered}$ |
| $\begin{aligned} & 12 \\ & 14 \end{aligned}$ | .0415 .0411 .0408 .0404 .0400 | $\begin{aligned} & .0293 \\ & .0291 \\ & .0288 \\ & .0285 \\ & .0283 \end{aligned}$ | .0186 <br> . 0184 <br> . 0182 <br> . 0180 <br> . 0179 | .0107 .0106 .0105 .0104 .0103 | . 0076 <br> .0075 <br> . 0074 <br> . 0074 <br> . 0073 | . 0054 <br> .0053 <br> . 0053 <br> . 0052 <br> . 0052 | .00262 .00260 .00258 .00255 .00253 | $\begin{array}{r} .00109 \\ .00108 \\ .00107 \\ .00100 \\ .00105 \end{array}$ |
| $\begin{aligned} & 24 \\ & 26 \\ & 28 \\ & 30 \end{aligned}$ | . 0397 <br> . 0394 <br> .0391 <br> . 0387 <br> . 0383 | .0281 .0279 .0276 .0274 .0271 | .0178 .0176 .0175 .0173 .0172 | .0102 .0102 .0101 .0100 .0099 | .0072 <br> . 0072 <br> .0071 <br> .0071 .0070 | .0051 <br> . 0051 <br> . 0050 <br> . 0050 <br> . 0050 | $\begin{array}{r} .00251 \\ .00229 \\ .00247 \\ .00245 \\ .00243 \end{array}$ | . 00105 <br> .00104 <br> . 00103 <br> 00102 <br> 00101 |
| $32$ | .0380 <br> .0377 .0373 .0369 .0366 <br> .0377 .0373 .0369 .0366 <br> .0377 .0373 .0369 .0366 | .0269 <br> . 0266 <br> . 0264 <br> . 0259 | .0170 <br> .0168 <br> .0167 <br> .0165 <br> . 0164 | . 0098 <br> .0097 <br> . 0096 <br> .0095 <br> .0094 | .0069 <br> .0069 <br> .0068 <br> .0067 <br> .0067 | $\begin{array}{r} .0049 \\ .0049 \\ .0048 \\ .0048 \\ .0047 \end{array}$ | $\begin{array}{r} .00240 \\ .00238 \\ .00236 \\ .00234 \\ .00231 \end{array}$ | . 00100 <br> . 00099 <br> .00098 <br> 00097 <br> 00096 |
| $42$ | . 0362 <br> . 0359 <br> .0355 <br> .0351 <br> . 0347 | $\begin{array}{r} .0256 \\ .0254 \\ .0251 \\ .0248 \\ .0245 \end{array}$ | 0162 <br> .0162 .0160 .0159 .0157 .0155 <br> .0162 .0160 .0159 .0157 .0155 <br> .0162 .0160 .0159 .0157 .0155 | . 0094 <br> . 0093 <br> . 0092 <br> . 0091 <br> 0090 | 0066 <br> . 0066 <br> .0065 <br> .0064 <br> 0063 | .0047 <br> .0046 <br> . 0046 <br> .0045 <br> .0045 | $\begin{array}{r} .00229 \\ .00227 \\ .00224 \\ .00222 \\ .00220 \end{array}$ | . 00095 <br> .00094 <br> . 00093 <br> .00092 <br> 00091 |

${ }^{1}$ This table is for is particular hydrometer calibrated to read grams of soil per liter of suspension at $67^{\circ} \mathrm{F}$. with a soil whose specific gravity is 2.65 . The calibration for suspension at
distance of fall is given in table 4 .

Table 2.-Combined correction factors ${ }^{1}$ for temperature and specific gravity applied to Stokes' formula

| Temperature, degrees (F.) | Correction factor for soils having specific gravities of- |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | 2.2 | 2.3 | 2.4 | 2.5 | 2.6 | 2.65 | 2.7 | 2.8 | 2.9 |
| 60 | 1. 228 | 1.182 | 1. 138 | 1. 100 | 1,065 | 1. 048 | 1. 033 | 1. 004 | 0.977 |
| 65 | 1. 190 | 1.144 | 1. 102 | 1.064 | 1. 031 | 1. 015 | 1.000 | . 972 | . 946 |
| 67 | 1. 172 | 1.127 | 1.086 | 1.048 | 1. 016 | 1. 000 | . 985 | . 958 | . 932 |
| 70 | 1. 149 | 1. 104 | 1.064 | 1.027 | . 995 | . 980 | . 965 | . 939 | . 913 |
| 75 | 1. 113 | 1. 068 | 1.029 | . 995 | . 965 | . 949 | . 935 | . 909 | . 885 |
|  | 1. 077 | 1. 035 | . 998 | . 963 | . 934 | . 919 | . 905 | . 880 | . 857 |
| 85 | 1. 044 | 1. 004 | . 968 | . 934 | . 905 | . 891 | . 878 | . 853 | . 830 |
| 90 | 1.015 | . 976 | . 940 | . 908 | . 880 | . 866 | . 853 | . 829 | . 807 |

[^3]

Figure 1.-Slide Rule and Indicator With Supplementary Scales.

SLIDE RULE USED TO COMPUTE PARTICLE SIZES
Talues shown in tables 1 and 2 may be indicated graphically on a slide rule. The desirability of doing this will depend upon the operator's preference and the test method used. For example, if all tests are made at the same temperature and an average specific gravity is assumed, a tabulation such as table 1 gives the grain sizes directly. For the more general case, where both temperature and specific gravity are different for each test, the following method can be used for adapting a slide rule so as to facilitate computation of grain sizes by Stokes' formula without the use of tables or charts.

Stokes' formula may be written

$$
\begin{equation*}
d^{2}=\frac{30 \times 0.0102}{980 \times 1.65} \times \frac{n}{0.0102} \times \frac{1.65}{G-1} \times L \times \frac{1}{t^{-}} \ldots \tag{2}
\end{equation*}
$$

with the specific gravity of water taken as 1 .
Table 3 gives values of $\frac{n}{0.0102}$ for various temperatures. As shown in figure 1 , marks for these temperatures are scribed as the T scale on the indicator so as to abut the lower edge of the face of the rule with the indicator in place (see fig. 2). The positions of the

Table 3.-Temperature factors in Stokes' formula

| Temperature | Temperature <br> factor <br> $T$ |
| :---: | :---: |
| Degrees $F$. | $\frac{n}{0.0102}$ |
| 60 |  |
| 65 | 1.10 |
| 67 | 1.03 |
| 70 | 1.000 |
| 75 | .959 |
| 80 | .899 |
| 85 | .844 |
| 90 | .794 |

marks for the temperature values correspond to the positions of the values of $\frac{n}{0.0102}$ on the A (or B) scale with the direction reversed. To mark the $T$ scale on the underside of the indicator, it is turned over in the direction of the length of the rule and the lower edge of the indicator is placed over the A scale so as to cover the interval from 0.749 to 1.10 on that scale, the range of values of table 3. The mark for $T=60^{\circ} \mathrm{F}$. is then scribed on the indicator at 1.10 on the A scale, the mark for 65 at 1.03 , the mark for 67 at 1.00 , etc.,

Similarly, the hydrometer readings given in table 4 are scribed on the indicator, giving the $H$ scale (see fig. 1). The positions of the marks on the $H$ scale correspond to the positions of the values of $L$ on the A (or B) scale, but this time with the indicator in its normal position. Thus, when the mark for zero hydrometer readings is opposite 1 (or 10) on the A scale, the mark for 50 grams per liter on the $H$ scale will be opposite the corresponding height of fall which is 6.37 .

Table 4.-Distances of fall in Stokes' formula

| Hydrometer <br> reading, H | Distance of <br> fall, $L$ |
| :---: | :---: |
| Grams per |  |
| liter |  |
| 0 | Centimeters |
| 10 | 10.00 |
| 20 | 9.25 |
| 30 | 8.47 |
| 40 | 7.78 |
| 50 | 7.07 |
|  | 6.37 |

${ }^{1}$ These values, for a particular Bouyoucos hydrometer, are taken as 0.42 times the distance from each hydrometer reading or the surface of the suspension to the bottom of the hydrometer.

The values of the specific gravity factors, as given in table 5, are scribed below the D scale of the slide rule proper (see upper diagram of fig. 1). The position of


Figure 2.-Slide Rule Set for_Stokes' Formula.
this scale in relation to the A scale is important. The value of the right-hand side of equation (2) is 0.001892 for $t=1$ minute, $G=2.65, n=0.0102$ poise ( $T=67^{\circ} \mathrm{F}$.), and $L=10$ centimeters $(H=0)$. To determine the position of the mark for $G=2.65$, the indicator is placed so that the mark for $H=0$, is directly opposite 1892 on the A scale. The mark for 2.65 on the specific gravity scale (fig. 1) is scribed directly opposite the mark for $T=67^{\circ}$ F. This corresponds to a specific gravity factor of 1.00 . The remainder of the scale ( 2.0 to 3.0 ) is scribed relative to the mark for 2.65 using the A scale in its normal direction as the measure of length.

The time, $t$, is given directly on the B scale although it may be convenient to draw lines across the longitudinal center line of the slide (as shown in fig. 1 at 1 and 5 of upper diagram) corresponding to the usual time schedule for reading the hydrometer.

The solution of the same example as given in the description of the use of tables 1 and 2 is illustrated in figure 2. The indicator is moved to bring $70^{\circ} \mathrm{F}$. on the T scale opposite 2.6 on the G scale. With the position of the indicator thus fixed, the slide is moved to bring 2 minutes on the B (or $t$ ) scale opposite 34 on the H scale. The grain size in millimeters is then read as 0.0265 on the D scale opposite 1 (or 10) on the C scale as shown in figure 2 .

Table 5.-Specific gravity factors in Stokes' formula

| Specific grav- <br> ity | Specific gravity <br> factor $\frac{1.65}{G-1}$ |
| :---: | :---: |
| 2.0 |  |
| 2.1 | 1.650 |
| 2.2 | 1.500 |
| 2.3 | 1.375 |
| 2.4 | 1.268 |
| 2.5 | 1.178 |
| 2.6 | 1.099 |
| 2.65 | 1.031 |
| 2.7 | .900 |
| 2.8 | .917 |
| 2.9 | .869 |
| 3.0 | .825 |
|  |  |

COEFFICIENT OF PERMEABILITY COMPUTED USING SLIDE RULE
If the temperature is kept practically constant during a single test, one setting of the indicator will do for all of the time readings so that only one movement of the slide is required to determine each grain size, the indicator remaining fixed in position.

The slide rule may also be used conveniently for the reverse procedure of determining the time interval corresponding to a specific grain size for any temperature and specific gravity.

A slide rule method very similar to the one just
described is now being used in computing the coefficient of permeability from test data in which the principle of the falling-head permeameter is used.

The formula used for determining the percentage of initially dispersed soil remaining in suspension ${ }^{4}$ when the hydrometer method of mechanical analysis is used may be conveniently computed on a slide rule. This formula is

$$
\begin{equation*}
P=\frac{(H+\Delta H) f}{W_{0}} \times 100 \tag{3}
\end{equation*}
$$

in which
$P=$ percentage of initially dispersed soil remaining in suspension at the time a hydrometer reading is taken.
$W_{0}=$ weight in grams of soil per liter of suspension initially dispersed.
$H=$ hydrometer reading, grams of soil per liter of suspension.
$\Delta H=$ temperature correction for density of water (see values of table 6).
$f=$ correction factor for $G$, the specific gravity of the soil (see table 7).
that is

$$
f=\frac{2.65-1}{2.65} \times \frac{G}{G-1}
$$

Table 6.-Temperature corrections in formula for percentage of soil in suspension

| Temperature $T$ | Temperature correction, ${ }^{1} \Delta H$ |
| :---: | :---: |
| Deqrees F . 60 61 62 63 64 65 66 67 68 69 70 71 72 73 74 75 76 77 78 79 80 81 82 83 84 85 90 | Grams per liter <br> $-0.8$ <br> $-.7$ <br> $-.6$ <br> $-.5$ <br> $-.4$ <br> $-.3$ <br> $-.1$ <br> .0 .1 .2 .4 .5 .7 .8 1.0 <br> 1. 2 <br> 1.4 <br> 1.6 <br> 1. 8 <br> 2. 2 <br> 2.4 <br> 2.6 <br> 2.8 <br> 3.0 <br> 3. 2 <br> 4. 3 |

${ }^{1}$ Experimental values.
${ }^{4}$ Procedures for Testing Soils for the Determination of the Subgrade Soil Constants, by A. M. Wintermyer, E. A. Willis, and R. C. Thoreen. Public Roads, Stants, by A. M.
vol. 12, No. 8, October 1931.


Figure 3.-Slide Rule Set for Percentage of Soil in Suspension.

Table 7.-Specific gravity correction factors in formula for percentage of soil in suspension

| Specific | Specific <br> gravity <br> grarrection <br> factor |
| :---: | :---: |
| $G$ | $f=\frac{2.65-1}{2.65}$ |
|  | $\times \frac{G}{G-1}$ |
|  |  |
| 2.0 | 1.242 |
| 2.1 | 1.187 |
| 2.2 | 1.141 |
| 2.3 | 1.067 |
| 2.4 | 1.038 |
| 2.5 | 1.000 |
| 2.6 | .989 |
| 2.65 | .969 |
| 2.7 | .951 |
| 2.8 | .934 |
| 2.9 |  |
| 3.0 |  |

Values of $f$ are given in table 7. Marks for values of $G$ are scribed above and opposite corresponding values of $f$ on the A scale to make the $\mathrm{G}_{\mathrm{p}}$ scale shown in figure 1. Thus, the mark for $G=3.0$ on the $\mathrm{G}_{\mathrm{p}}$ scale is opposite a value of $f$ of 0.934 on the A scale, $G=2.0$ is opposite 1.242 on the A scale, etc. The temperature correction is to be applied by mental arithmetic and to aid in this a table of values such as table 6 is fixed on the back of the slide rule or in any other convenient place. This completes the equipment.

## (Continued from page 12)

percent of the total aggregate passed the No. 10 sieve. The same should be true of plastic sand-clays that would be satisfactory as base-course materials without coarse aggregate.

The nonplastic materials raveled somewhat before the bituminous surface was applied and thorough compaction was difficult to obtain unless the material was kept very wet either by frequent sprinkling or by maintaining the ground water at a high elevation.

In general the materials having a plasticity index of 5 (section 2 of series 1 of the sand-clays and section 2 of series 1 of the sand-clay-gravels) were superior to either the nonplastic materials or the more plastic ones, both as to ease of compaction and resistance to displacement in the traffic tests.

The results of some of the early tests in this investigation were made available to the Committee on Materials of the American Association of State Highway Officials at the time it was considering requirements for soil and gravel base courses and were utilized in connec-

To illustrate the method of computation, assume the specific gravity of the soil $=2.75$, the temperature $=$ $75^{\circ} \mathrm{F} ., W_{0}=48$ grams, and $H=26.8,24.3,23.0$, etc. As shown in figure 3, the indicator is moved to bring its index line to 2.75 on the $\mathrm{G}_{\mathrm{p}}$ scale. The slide is moved to bring 48 on the B scale under the index line. The position of the slide remains thus set for the series of hydrometer readings. Referring to table 6 for values of $T$ and $\Delta H$, it is found that for $T=75^{\circ} \mathrm{F}$., $\Delta H=1.2$. Opposite $H+\Delta H=26.8+1.2=28.0$ on the B scale, $P=57.1$ percent is read on the A scale as shown in figure 3. Similarly, opposite $24.3+1.2=25.5$ on the B scale, 52.0 percent is read on the A scale as the value of $P$; opposite $24.2, P=49.3$ percent, etc.
The slide rule method of computing the percentage of soil in suspension is further simplified when used in conjunction with the calculating board ${ }^{3}$ devised by the Bureau for computing, correcting, and interpolating values for specific grain sizes. In this case, the temperature correction in grams per liter is taken care of by moving vertically the transparent paper on which the uncorrected hydrometer readings in grams per liter are plotted on a vertical scale. In this way, both the temperature correction table and mental arithmetic are eliminated.

[^4]tion with the drafting of the specifications given in table 10 .

Table 10.-Specifications for soil and gravel base courses


Final analysis of the test data after completion of the entire test program indicated that the limits established are well drawn to insure that highly satisfactory basecourse materials will be obtained. It was realized at the time the specifications were written that some fully satisfactory materials would be excluded.

Complete analysis of the test data indicates that if the amount of soil mortar in a well-graded sand-claygravel is low, the quality of the material depends largely on the grading of the coarse fraction and that the grading and plasticity of the soil mortar is of relatively less vital importance. Thus, for example, if a material fails to meet specification B-1 because less than 25 percent passes the No. 10 sieve, it is doubtful whether it should be classified as a sand-clay-gravel at all even though the plasticity index of the small amount of soil present might be quite high. It is believed that numerous materials of this type are likely to be encountered and that, provided they are well graded from the No. 10 sieve to the maximum size and that the aggregate particles are somewhat angular, they can be used successfully without applying such rigorous requirements to the character of the soil fraction as are set for the sand-clay-gravels. A special specification may be desirable to cover such materials.

Compaction and surface interlocking of such materials would be slow and somewhat difficult to obtain and the temptation would be great to add clay or other soil binder to hasten surface bonding. However, once compacted to a degree producing interlocking of the aggregate, and bonded at the top with a mixed or drag type of prime treatment, rolled to set the surface, they could be expected to provide a more satisfactory base structure than would be obtained by the addition of plastic soil binder in an attempt to bring these granular materials into conformity with the specifications for sand-clay-gravel base-course materials.

## conclusions

1. Control of grading is essential to insure satisfactory stability.
2. Control of plasticity index is essential, particularly when the aggregate contains as much as 40 percent of soil mortar.
3. As the amount of soil mortar decreases below 40 percent, the importance of the grading of the coarse material becomes relatively more important and the grading and plasticity index of the soil mortar becomes of relatively less vital importance.
4. Although there may be many instances where carefully mixed and placed aggregates having relatively low mortar contents would give satisfactory service even though the plasticity index of the soil mortar might be in excess of 6 , the possibility of segregation and collection of the fine aggregate into rich spots or layers must not be overlooked and makes the limit of 6 for the plasticity index a desirable if not vitally necessary requirement.
5. A well-graded sand-clay-gravel material having a plasticity index of about 5 is to be preferred to absolutely nonplastic materials of comparable grading and is decidedly superior to those having appreciably higher plasticity indexes.
6. Thorough compaction of even the best plastic base-course materials to essentially the maximum density obtainable in the laboratory by the vibratory method of compaction is absolutely essential to prevent
softening and loss of stability where water may reach the material after construction.
7. Thorough compaction of the plastic materials was obtained in the circular track tests by starting compaction operations with an excess of moisture of about 1.5 to 2 percent over the optimum as determined by the Proctor test on the portion of the aggregate passing the No. 10 sieve or, for the total sand-clay-gravel aggregate, sufficient moisture to fill the aggregate voids when compacted to the maximum obtainable density by vibration.
8. It is most important that compaction operations be continued during the drying out of the above-mentioned excess water since the combined action of compaction and drying is necessary to produce the required densities.
9. Some additional moisture may be required in handling plastic materials to provide for drying losses during mixing and leveling operations, but care should be taken not to surpass actual needs since any great excess of moisture will delay final compaction.
10. In connection with nonplastic materials, the term "optimum moisture content" has little or no significance. It is therefore not necessary to limit the amount of water used in mixing and compacting such materials since water drains out rapidly, making it difficult to maintain them in a wet enough condition to aid materially in obtaining compaction. The only precaution necessary is that softening of the subgrade shall not be caused by the excessive use of water.
11. Compaction should be as complete at the bottom of the base course as at the top, particularly with plastic materials, since even minor deficiencies in the compaction of plastic materials make them susceptible to softening and loss of stability when wet.
12. The tests on the materials of series 1 , which contained from 47 to 53.5 percent of soil mortar, indicated that freezing and thawing would be likely to cause failure of the borderline material of section 4, the plasticity index of which was 11, and that serious damage might be done to section 3, with a plasticity index of 9 , since the one cycle of freezing and thawing caused a marked increase in the rate of displacement under traffic in this section (see fig. 4). This is a further argument for placing a maximum limit on the plasticity index for base-course materials.
13. It might be desirable to promulgate a separate specification to cover essentially stone or gravel basecourse materials having satisfactory gradings but very low soil-mortar contents to allow the use of such materials without too rigorous limitation of plasticity index. The design of such base courses would necessitate provision for a mixed type of prime using somewhat more viscous bituminous materials than are commonly used for the ordinary penetration prime treatment.

## THE COVER PICTURE

Rounding cut slopes encourages vegetative growth and accomplishes the dual purpose of improving roadside appearance and preventing erosion along the Connecticut highway shown in the cover picture. Further flattening and rounding would have been desirable, but in this instance were prevented by limitations imposed by the right-of-way width. Establishing growth of native plants on cut slopes serves to reduce erosion and consequent clogging of drainage ditches, thereby reducing highway maintenance costs.
STATUS OF FEDERAL-AID HIGHWAY PROJECTS




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[^0]:    ${ }^{1}$ Introduction of water and application of a small amount of test traffic on the sections of series 1 later proved that thorough compaction had not been obtained.

[^1]:    1 No water in sub-base.
    ${ }^{2}$ Raveling was caused by a deficiency of moisture.
    ${ }^{8}$ The early instability of sec. 5 indicated that its initial moisture content of 6.5 percent was sufficient to permit proper compaction.
    indicated a draffic when water was admitted indicated a deficiency of moisture during compaction.
    admitted indicaty admitted indicated a lack of compaction resulting from an initial deficiency of mois-

[^2]:    ${ }^{1}$ Tentative Method of Mechanical Analysis of Soils. Proceedings of the American Society for Testing Materials, vol. 35, pt. I, 1935, p. 953.
    ${ }^{2}$ Standard Method of Mechanical Analysis of Soils, Method T-88-38 Standard Specifications for Highway Materials and Methods of Sampling and Testing, 10.38, p. 291. Published by the American Association of State Bighway Officials.
    ${ }_{3}$ Oraphical Solution of the Data Furnished by the Hydrometer Method of Analysis, by E. A. Willis, F. A. Robeson, and C. M. Johnston. Public Roads, Vol. 12, No. 8, October 1931.

[^3]:    ${ }^{1}$ A grain size under standard conditions as given in table 1 is multiplied by a correction factor from this table to correct for values of temperature and specific gravity other than $67^{\circ}$ F. and 2.65, respectively.

    - Procedures for Testing Soils for the Determination of the Subgrade Soil Constants, by A. M. Wintermyer, E. A. Willis, and R. C. Thoreen. Public Roans, vol. 12, No. 8, October 1931.

[^4]:    ${ }^{3}$ Graphical Solution of the Data Furnished by the Hydrometer Method of Analysis, by E.A. Willis, F. A. Robeson, and C. M. Johnston. Public Roads, vol. 12, No. 8, October 1931.

