

# The News

## in PUBLIC ROADS



No. 1

June 1954

### FROM THE COMMISSIONER

I wish to make a brief statement to the people of Public Roads in the first issue of our employee publication. Any organization, to be efficient and productive, must have employees who know their jobs and are capable, loyal, and have high regard for the work and objectives of the organization. The employee who knows only what goes on in his own room may not think well, or otherwise, of the operations of the organization because he does not know what they are. His own work at times may not fulfill its need simply for lack of understanding of the facts and policies that influence the thinking of his superiors. Knowledge of the Bureau's operations, and why and how it is performing them, should not be confined to top-level administrators. We want all of our people to know.

Official memoranda, statements, and technical reports are necessary and informative as to our work but often, because they are technical, they make dull to those not concerned with the subject. Many do not see them. There are events and news

items not covered by official statements that we want to tell our people about. We believe that they will be interested in such things as highway legislation, retirement benefits, leave privileges, personal items concerning people they know, and new activities of the Bureau. For these reasons it has been decided to issue a bimonthly publication for distribution to employees.

Our purpose is a serious one--to enable our employees to know our organization better and convince them that it is doing a work of great public benefit. However, we do not want to make the publication so serious that it will not be read. The editor is being instructed to select items on the basis of news value to employees of all grades.

Employees of Public Roads are widely dispersed throughout the United States and its territories, and in a number of foreign countries. If the publication succeeds in some degree in bringing us closer together with a common understanding and purpose, it will be worth the effort in producing it.

### The Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1954

The largest Federal-aid program in history for improvement of the Nation's highways has been authorized in the recently enacted Federal-aid Highway Act of 1954.

President Eisenhower signed the record-breaking measure on May 6 at a White House ceremony attended by congressional and other key officials, including Commissioner du Pont. In affixing his signature he used seven different pens which were distributed among those present.

The President hailed the new act as a major step to relieve the large scale deficiencies of our highways. He expressed the view that continued efforts to modernize our highway systems are mandatory.

The new act authorizes \$875 million for each of the fiscal years 1956 and 1957. This represents an increase of \$300 million over the annual amounts authorized by the 1952 act for each of the fiscal years 1954 and 1955.

The legislation lays particular stress on the National System of Interstate Highways, \$175 million being provided for that system by the 1954 act for each of two fiscal years, as compared to \$25 million authorized by the 1952 act. The remaining \$700 million are assigned as follows: \$315 million for projects on the Federal-aid primary highway system, \$210 million for projects on the Federal-aid secondary system, and \$175 million for projects on the Federal-aid primary highway system within urban areas and on approved extensions of the Federal-aid secondary system within urban areas. The division of funds

### Former Commissioner Honored

Syracuse University honored Thomas H. MacDonald, former Commissioner of Public Roads, for his contributions to the field of transportation by featuring him as its 1954 Salzberg Lecturer, and by awarding him the annual Salzberg medal on April 28th. Mr. MacDonald spoke on the subject: "The Engineer's Relation to Highway Transportation."

He participated in a two-day program on transportation which is supported by an endowment fund to bring transportation experts to the university each year. The purpose of the lectures is to encourage interest in transportation engineering education.

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## Award of Merit

E. F. Kelley, Chief of the Physical Research Branch, was honored with the 1954 Award of Merit during the 57th annual meeting of the American Society for Testing Materials in Chicago on June 14, along with 10 other technical leaders in the field of engineering materials. Mr. Kelley's citation was for distinguished service in the field of highway materials, and for sustained support of many other activities of the ASTM.

Friends of Jas. J. (Jimmie) Hanagan, Washington, D. C., were shocked by the sudden death of his wife, Bertha, on April 23. Mrs. Hanagan's death occurred from allergy shock induced by medication during a routine physical examination. We in Public Roads offer Jim and the three surviving children, Patricia, Kathy, and James Jr., our deepest and most sincere sympathy.

## Employees' Liability

In a decision rendered on May 17, 1954, the United States Supreme Court (U.S. v. Mead Gilman, Jr.) held that the United States may not require one of its employees to reimburse it for sums paid out when it has been held liable under the Federal Tort Claims Act for the negligence of the employee. The Court held that the case presented questions of policy on which Congress has not spoken. The selection of the policy, which is most advantageous as a whole, involves a host of considerations that must be weighed and appraised, and that function is more appropriately for those who write the laws, rather than for those who interpret them.

Under this decision if a driver of a Government vehicle negligently or wrongfully causes damages to private persons or property for which the Government is held liable, the Government cannot require the negligent employee to reimburse it for the amount paid to the private party. The decision would be equally applicable to damages resulting from any other negligent or wrongful act of an employee.

## Foreign Visitors

Jorge Bengoechea of the Puerto Rico Department of Public Works has been in training since April in the Urban Highway Branch of the Bureau. His particular interest is in the design of major interchanges. He will report soon to Division 3 in Atlanta for further study. Mr. Bengoechea is one of a group of 11 Puerto Rican engineers who are now or recently have been with various Bureau offices for variable training periods up to 3 months.

Juan O. Arceo, engineer from the Philippine Bureau of Public Works, has been in the Washington Office since March studying highway administration and right-of-way procedures. After spending 3 months reviewing planning, programing, and organizational techniques in the Washington Office, he will continue his studies in our District Office at Jefferson City, Mo.

## Foreign Assignments

A number of changes in foreign assignments of our personnel have occurred which will be of interest to many of our people.

The following highway engineers have been transferred to the Philippines: Joe L. Campbell from Ecuador, Robert J. Greisiger from Alaska, Prentice Julian from the Washington Office, and Paul C. Thompson from Ethiopia.

Joe C. Barker and Rulon S. Scoville, engineering aids, were transferred from the Washington area to Liberia.

Holman L. Starbird, equipment specialist, was transferred from Turkey to Nicaragua.

Several new appointments have been made for assignment to our foreign offices. Roy Kendall, William D. Rhea, and Frank W. Wear, Jr., equipment specialists, and Emery V. Reagin and Delmar M. Watring, construction superintendents, have been assigned to Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Merl B. Lefler, engineering aid, was assigned to Quito, Ecuador.

M. L. Harshberger, resident engineer on the Inter-American Highway, arrived in Washington on May 25 for consultation. Other arrivals expected in Washington in June are A. C. Taylor, division engineer for the Philippines, Frederick W. Cron and Osborn Anderson, highway engineers, from the Philippines. L. S. Hedgpeth, engineer, and equipment specialists Clifford V. Alvis, James H. Patram, and Joseph Windley arrived recently in Washington from Turkey.

Six of our people have completed assignments in various parts of the world. George H. Allen, engineering aid, completed his work in Costa Rico and returned to the United States. Alvin M. Kennady, construction superintendent, returned from the Philippines and is now at our Division Office in California. Robert A. Lippard, equipment specialist, and Hardy H. Swayze, highway engineer, have returned from Liberia. Mr. Lippard is presently located in Denver, and Mr. Swayze is with the New Mexico State Highway Department. Evans K. Newton, Jr., highway engineer, has returned from Panama, and Kenyon C. Vail, highway engineer, has returned from Turkey. Mr. Vail is now located in Denver.

## Incentive Awards Program

As a result of the announcement of the Department of Commerce employee sug-

gestion contest in the Circular Memorandum of April 20, 1954, the number of suggestions by Bureau employees has increased considerably. All suggestions received are given full consideration as rapidly as possible with a view to their prompt adoption in the Bureau as well as their entrance in the contest if they so qualify. The contest for this quarter closes June 30, 1954.

Miss Evelyn Waggoner, clerk-stenographer in the District Office in Sacramento, was granted a cash award recently for her suggestion which provided a table for use in determining effective dates following the 90-calendar day period from date of entrance on duty (EOD) required by the Leave Act for qualifying for annual leave. This table was made available to Bureau offices by the Circular Memorandum of May 19, 1954. Also, a salary step increase for superior accomplishment was awarded recently to Miss Aurelia Buser, secretary in the Division Office in Hagerstown, Md. Congratulations to Miss Waggoner and Miss Buser.

## First-Aid Courses

The Civil Defense organization for the General Services Administration building in Washington requested that the Bureau supply first-aid personnel for the first full scale defense exercise scheduled for June 14. An advanced first-aid course was offered to employees who had completed the standard course given in the Bureau in 1951.

Through the efforts of our able instructors, Dudley Babcock, J. T. Matthews, and Gordon Webner, the Bureau now has nearly 70 first-aiders qualified to administer emergency treatment.

## Aerial Photography School

William T. Pryor, Aerial Surveys Section Chief, is visiting several of the Western States for the purpose of discussing use of aerial photographs and maps. The plan is to establish training classes to be conducted by Mr. Pryor in Division 8 for personnel of the Bureau's division and district offices, the State highway departments, and collaborating agencies. The school at Olympia is tentatively scheduled for the first two weeks in August, with additional time to be given if needed.

The proposed program is directed to making utmost use of all available aerial photographs and maps, the taking of new aerial photographs where needed, exchanging information, and obtaining large-scale topographic maps.

## In-Service Training Program

A well-rounded program of in-service training and educational opportunities for Bureau employees is getting into shape. The program is planned to cover a wide

range of technical and administrative activities, and in some way or other to reach all employees.

Under the guidance of Robley Winfrey, Chief of Training and Education, an active program for the current fiscal year is nearing completion.

Since last October a total of 96 engineers, 51 from division offices and 45 from district field offices, attended conferences and schools at the Washington headquarters. The subjects covered were geometric and urban design, highway right-of-way, planning and programing, construction and maintenance, bridge engineering, and highway materials.

The division offices followed up the work given at the Washington schools by a series of conferences and schools of 1 to 3 days in length given for the benefit of division and district men who did not attend the Washington schools. Engineers from the State highway departments attended some of the division conferences.

David Solomon, Highway Transport Research Branch, is attending the traffic school at Yale University and will complete his 9 months of residence work in

William D. Potter, engineer of the Hydraulic Research Branch, has been approved to attend Cornell University for the school year starting in September for the purpose of doing graduate work in the field of mathematical statistics as applied to the science of hydrology.

Francis C. Turner, assistant to the Commissioner, and Norman B. Wood, of the Inter-American Office, are attending classes in Spanish given by the Foreign Service Institute of the State Department.

The fiscal side of the training program for the coming year is under development. Consideration is being given to additional technical schools both at the Washington Office and in the field, and to special work in the training of supervisors and a long range program in executive development. Other considerations include orientation and indoctrination courses for new as well as older employees, and perhaps specialized work in correspondence, public relations, and administrative practices.

## Highway Engineer Trainee Recruitment

The recruitment of highway engineer trainees for this year has been successfully completed. The examination was officially announced by the Civil Service Commission November 10, 1953, the closing date for the receipt of applications was February 9, 1954, and the written test was given throughout the country on March 8 and 9, 1954.

In the GS-5 grade (for civil engineering graduates) there were 63 eligibles from 37 colleges across the Nation. Our field reports indicated that 10 of these

men were not suitable for trainee positions. Of the remaining 53, all of whom were offered appointment, 32 accepted, 19 declined, and 2 failed to reply. In addition to the 32 new appointments, 4 men are returning to duty from leave without pay. These men were appointed last year as GS-4 trainees for summer work and were placed on leave without pay to complete the requirements for graduation. This makes a total of 36 GS-5 trainees for this year. The first training assignment is on forest and park work and extends for a period of about 16 months.

In the GS-4 grade, 15 appointments were made. These men will be placed on leave without pay to return to college in September if their summer's work is satisfactory. Two of these men will assist on the WASHO road test and the others will be assigned to forest and park work.

## Retirements

Mr. and Mrs. Frank V. Gingell (Washington, D. C.) will retire June 30 after 77 years of combined Government service. Mrs. Gingell will complete 36 years of employment and her husband, 41 years.

Mrs. Gingell first entered the Federal service in the Office of the Quartermaster General in 1918. She was employed by the War Department until 1922, when she transferred to the Bureau of Public Roads to aid in the task of disposing of surplus war materials. Mrs. Gingell has served the Bureau in several capacities in the 32 years that she has been with us. For the past 10 years, she has been secretary for the Chief of the Bridge Branch.

Frank Gingell's Government career began in 1913, when he reported to the Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Plant Industry. Except for an interruption for military service in the National Guard of the District of Columbia, the U. S. Army, and the U. S. Navy during the period 1916-19, his employment with the Federal Government has been continuous.

After his military service he returned to the Department of Agriculture. In the following year he transferred to the Bureau of Public Roads and was placed in charge of the property and supply room which was then under the Division of Control. Mr. Gingell held various positions relating to equipment and supply in the years that followed. In 1945 he became the Procurement Officer in the Equipment and Procurement Section of the Division of Finance and Business Management, where he has served until the present time.

Adolph D. Turnau, a Public Roads employee since September 1945, retired on April 30. He was assigned to the law library of the Federal Works Agency until it was reorganized and part of its collection transferred to other Departments. On June 29, 1951, Mr. Turnau was placed in charge of the legal section

of the Bureau of Public Roads library. He reviewed the Reporter System and carried out valuable reference service for the attorneys of the Bureau and the General Services Administration.

W. T. (Tom) Hughes, an authority on construction equipment, retired effective February 28, 1954, after 20 years of service with the Bureau. Mr. Hughes was responsible for the preparation of the publication "New Development in Use of Equipment and Methods of Construction." He was formerly Division Engineer for the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad.

## Illnesses

Arthur C. Clark, Deputy Commissioner for Engineering, is showing steady improvement after having suffered a heart attack on March 30. We hope that he will be back at his desk in the near future.

F. Thayer Stoddard, highway engineer in the Bureau for nearly 30 years on assignments in Fort Worth and Austin, Tex., Albany, N. Y., the Philippines, and recently in Liberia, returned to this country by plane April 16 due to ill health. A lung condition has made it necessary for him to undergo treatment at the Naval Hospital in Bethesda, Md. His condition has shown some improvement and he is gaining weight. Mrs. Stoddard is living for the present at 4504 Middleton Lane in Bethesda.

Miss Janet W. L. Grieve, clerk-typist in the Highway Program Section (Washington, D. C.), is in Emergency Hospital as a result of a heart attack suffered May 2. It is expected that she will leave the hospital around June 1.

Mrs. Anne M. Mills of the Federal Projects Branch (Washington, D. C.) is now at home following a two-week stay in the Providence Hospital. The Federal Projects Branch is the new name for the former Forest and Park Branch.

## New Assignment

E. (Eddie) J. Martin, Jr., former administrative officer in Division 9, transferred to the Washington Office on April 26 to fill the position of Budget Officer. Mr. Martin became an employee of the Bureau in 1935 and, except for a 3-year tour of duty on the Alaska Highway during World War II, has been with our Division Office in Denver.

## Status of Federal-Aid

The Federal-aid program as a whole is currently proceeding at approximately the \$575 million authorization rate for the fiscal year 1954. During the 12-month period ended May 1, 1954, the Federal funds involved in the project actions of programs approved, plans approved, and contracts awarded exceeded the \$575 million authorization rate. Construction put in place and payments to States during the 12 months corresponded to a \$550-million authorization rate.



## Organizational Change

In April of this year the routine engineering review of final vouchers by the Construction Branch of the Division of Engineering came to an end. The responsibility was transferred to the field. It was one of the oldest continuous functions of the Washington Office, begun in 1916 as a duty of the Chief Engineer's Office, with Rodney D. Brown in charge. When it became a function of the former Division of Construction, Wm. T. Perkins carried the responsibility until 1935 when he was succeeded by Richard B. Jordan.

## Alaska Highway News

A Fort St. John newspaper on May 20 reported the Alaska Highway as open and in fair traveling condition from Dawson Creek to Whitehorse. Heavy runoff from spring thaw was in progress in some sections. From Whitehorse to the border the road was in good condition, but motorists were warned to use caution because of dust. Bridges were being replaced as follows: Lower Rancheria, Upper Rancheria, Nisutlin Bay, and Slim River. The Haines road was closed.

## Load-Condition Studies

Ray B. Dame of our motion picture laboratory is working on the possibility of using a standard 35-mm. motion-picture camera mounted on a truck to photograph road surface deterioration. The problem of recording surface condition on road sections selected for observation in the series of load-condition studies is tedious when plotted by hand and dangerous in areas where traffic moves at high speed and in large volumes.

Preliminary tests indicate that satisfactory pictures of pavement cracks can be obtained for one lane when the camera is mounted atop a boom on a truck, about 13 feet above the pavement, and the vehicle is driven at a speed not exceeding 15 miles per hour.

## Concrete Pipe Culverts

Work has finally started on the development of a new criteria for the bedding and installation of concrete pipe culverts. A number of complaints have come to the Washington Office to the effect that the memorandum to District Engineers, dated June 5, 1935 (still in force) is entirely too conservative. On the other hand, there have been cases where serious cracking has occurred even where the fill height has been limited to the amount permitted by the 1935 memorandum. As a result, the American Concrete Pipe Association is investigating the possibility of placing on the market a stronger type of pipe. At the same time the Bureau, together with other agencies, is working on new rules for bedding and installation.

## Prestressed Concrete Design

In 1952, the Bureau prepared and distributed "a Design Criteria for Prestressed Concrete Bridges." It was quite evident at that time that a guide for the design of prestressed concrete structures was urgently needed. The first criteria was very limited in scope and only intended as a temporary expedient until a more comprehensive criteria could be prepared.

For the last 12 months the Bridge Branch has been at work preparing a revised and greatly expanded criteria for the design of prestressed concrete bridges. The revised criteria will include information on construction, design, and materials for pretensioned and post-tensioned systems for bonded as well as unbonded construction.

The Bridge Branch has sought the cooperation and advice of the leading authorities on prestressed concrete design both in this country and abroad so that all the latest developments in the field may be included. The preparation of the criteria has now reached the final stages and it will be ready for publication in the latter part of June.

## Structural Steel for Welding

During recent years the Bureau has spear-headed the task of writing a specification for steel for welded bridges to replace ASTM A7 steel which has no carbon limitation. A new steel specification has been approved by the governmental agencies as Interim Federal Specification QQ-S-00741, Type II, and by the American Welding Society Conference Committee on Welded Bridges. On March 31, the new steel was approved by the American Society for Testing Materials and has been published under Serial Designation A-373-54T. The steel companies will now furnish this new weldable steel under the ASTM designation at a cost slightly above that for the A7 steel.

## Highway Act--Cont. from p. 1

percentagewise, among the three systems is the same as heretofore.

For continuation of Federal road programs covering forest highways, forest development roads, park roads and parkways, Indian roads, and public lands highways, the 1954 act authorizes a total of \$81 million for each of two fiscal years, as compared to \$77.5 million authorized by the 1952 act. The components of the \$81 million authorization are as follows: forest roads \$22.5 million, forest development roads and trails \$24 million, National park and monument roads \$12.5 million, National parkways \$11 million, Indian reservation roads \$10 million, and for roads through un-

appropriated and public lands, nontaxable Indian lands, and other Federal reservations.

Authorization of appropriations totaling \$10 million for completion of work on the Inter-American Highway and the Rama Road in Nicaragua is also provided. Eight million dollars are authorized to be appropriated for the Inter-American Highway for fiscal year 1955 and a like sum for each fiscal year up to and including the fiscal year 1959, and \$2 million for the Rama Road for each of the fiscal years 1955 and 1956.

The act contains several new features which are designed to improve administration. With respect to the interstate funds, the new act places added weight on the population factor in the apportionment. Apportionments are to be made as follows: one-half in the ratio which the population of each State bears to the total population of all States, and one-half in the manner now provided by law for apportionment of funds for the Federal-aid primary system. The Federal share payable on any project on the interstate system may be increased to 60 percent. By permitting the transfer up to 10 percent of primary, secondary and secondary funds, greater flexibility is provided for the use of those funds. Another new provision relating to secondary roads will result in simplification and economies of administration, placing greater responsibility in the States. This provision authorizes the Secretary of Commerce, upon request of any State, to discharge certain of his responsibilities relative to secondary projects by accepting the State's certification that the work has been done to standards previously approved.

The act provides broadened authority for research programs relating to matters as design, construction, financing, and use of highways. That various types of highway research studies be made. Among these is a comprehensive study of all phases of highway financing, including the feasibility of toll roads with particular attention to the possible effects of such toll roads upon the Federal-aid highway programs, and a study of utility relocation problems brought about by Federal-aid projects. The Secretary of Commerce is directed to draft a bill for a Federal Highway Act which will include such provisions of existing law and such changes as he may deem advisable.

This being the initial issue of THE NEWS in Public Roads, it was necessary to rely solely on news of the Washington area. In subsequent issues, it is intended that news from our field offices be made a major part of the publication.