

REPORT OF SUBCOMMITTEE ON PUBLICATIONS

Olive E. Potter, Chairman

AT THE ANNUAL meeting of the Highway Research Board in January, 1951, the Committee on Roadside Development appointed a Subcommittee on Publications: Olive E. Potter, Contractors and Engineers Monthly, Chairman; Wesley L. Hottenstein, Pennsylvania Department of Highways, and George Albrecht, State University of New York, members. This committee was given three tasks: (1) preparation of the material for the annual committee report; (2) preparation of a series of circulars, to be issued through the Highway Research Correlation Service, to summarize and make immediately available at least some of the committee's accumulated material; and (3) preparation of an outline and suggestions for form and scope of a manual.

The annual report was prepared for publication in due course. The committee then turned its attention to the other two tasks: circulars and manual. It was felt necessary to consider these two projects in relation to each other and to determine how one might contribute to the accomplishment of the other and how, from a practical point of view, anything could be accomplished towards either one.

Therefore, the committee went to work on an outline for a manual, feeling that once it was decided upon, such an outline should serve as a subject guide for all publications. Two suggested outlines were reviewed: one by P. H. Elwood, which was presented to the Committee on Roadside Development in 1943, and one submitted this past year by Chairman Harold J. Neale. The committee's conclusions were:

1. That both of these outlines, while thorough and commendable in themselves, were too ambitious and pretentious for the purposes of a manual; that they were more suitable for a comprehensive textbook on roadside development.
2. That it is not the function of this committee to prepare a textbook.
3. And that even if it were, it would be a full-time job for a professional writer or editor who also knew something about roadside development, or who could spend the time to familiarize himself with the subject.
4. Accordingly, that a much simplified outline be adopted, based on the divisions and activities of the committee, so that reports from the various project committees would fall naturally into place.
5. That the committee concentrate on getting out in circular form such material as is now available, using the manual outline as a guide for subjects, and let the manual grow from the accumulated circulars.

In September, 1951, Chairman Neale called a special meeting of the executive committee and the publications subcommittee at Hershey, Pennsylvania. There the subcommittee presented its recommendations, and it was decided to: (1) adopt the simplified outline, as revised and amended at that meeting; (2) concentrate on the preparation of circulars, to be issued in mimeograph form through the Research Correlation Service; and (3) when a series of circulars on all phases of one subject had been issued, put these together, with any revisions necessitated by comments or criticisms, and with illustrations, diagrams, and tables as desirable, for issuance in printed form as bulletin on that specific subject.

It was decided that, while the material in these publications is for the use of roadside-development engineers, the language should be simple and nontechnical to

interest and benefit highway administrators and engineers as well. It was also agreed that the opening paragraph of each circular should summarize the particular problem or subject to be discussed, indicating the reasons for it, sound policy procedure, and the economic, safety, or other values of that particular phase of roadside development.

Some definite assignments for the preparation of summaries of available material, already reported on and accepted by the Committee on Roadside Development, were made at that time.

On October 25, copy for the first three circulars was sent to the committee secretary to be started on its way through the proper channels for distribution through the Research Correlation Service. These circulars include: (1) introductory statement, explaining the purpose of this project, and a copy of the outline of subjects; (2) summary on erosion control—trends and techniques, based on Frank Brant's report at the 1951 annual meeting; and (3) an answer to the question "Is Topsoil Necessary?"

Two other circulars are nearing completion: one summarizing the findings of Harry Iurka's Project Committee on Stabilized Turf Shoulders; the other, the report on Ground Covers made by Mark Astrup at the 1951 HRB meeting.

The publications subcommittee does not view with any great pride its accomplishments during the year, as they fall far short of the goal set. But at least a start has been made, an outline has been agreed upon, and the machinery — rather cumbersome, perhaps, but in some kind of working order — has been set up for future activity.

The subcommittee is merely an instrument of the Committee on Roadside Development. Unless each member of the committee regards this publications project as his project, and assumes his share and responsibility for its success, the Subcommittee on Publications can accomplish nothing.