

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON ROADSIDE DEVELOPMENT

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THIS is the Twenty-First Annual Meeting of the Committee on Roadside Development of the Highway Research Board. As Chairman of the Committee for 17 years, and now ready to retire, I want to take this opportunity to recognize the loyal and outstanding work that has been done by members of the Committee during that time. This meeting also concludes the five-year review of the previous fifteen years of intensive research on roadside operations.

The personnel of the Committee has not changed as much as one would expect during such a long time. We have several members whose total years of service represent what I believe must be some kind of record for the Highway Research Board and of which all of the members of the Committee are proud. For example, Professor P. H. Elwood, who should be known as the "Father" of this Committee; Wilbur Simonson, our Secretary; and your Chairman have served on the Committee continuously for twenty-one years. John L. Wright, Chairman of the Committee on Roadside Development of the American Association of State Highway Officials, has served for sixteen years; Frank H. Brant and George B. Gordon for fourteen years; Dr. John Monteith, Jr. has been active for thirteen years; and Dr. David Levin for ten years. An attempt is being made to compile a complete list of all who have participated actively in the work of the Committee during the twenty-one years of its existence.

It seems appropriate at this time also to review some of the accomplishments of the Committee in these two decades. At first, emphasis was placed on the roadside eyesores---billboards, auto graveyards, dumps---in a program of roadside beautification. That "roadside beautification" of 1930 has been translated into a functioning part of modern highway engineering. The work of the Committee has made a major contribution to practical economical techniques for roadside grading and drainage, erosion control, and stabilized turf shoulders; to lowered maintenance costs; to reduction of driver fatigue caused by the monotony of unattractive roadsides and headlight glare; and to the protection of the vast investment in our highway system.

The Committee's continuing studies over the past twenty years have contributed to the development of the modern streamlined highway. The need for adequate right-of-way has always been stressed, and several years ago the Committee, in coining the expression "The Complete Highway," showed that the basic elements of utility, safety, beauty, and economy require full consideration in the development of the roadsides. As a result, most states are acquiring much wider rights-of-way, and are establishing turnouts for historical markers and picnic tables. The waysides or roadside parks are growing in popularity with the motoring public. They not only serve to beautify the roadsides but also offer opportunities for rest and relaxation and, as such, help to build safety into our highways.

Another indication of the increasing importance of roadside development is the fact that in 1930 there were fewer than ten states with landscape divisions in their state highway departments while in 1953 twenty-eight states have well-organized divisions under landscape engineers.

Five years ago, the Committee started a five-year program to summarize the findings of its previous fifteen years of work. The first year (1948) was devoted

to stabilized turf shoulders; the second (1949), to roadside grading and drainage; the third year (1950) to the roadside area---principally to erosion-control techniques, ground-cover plantings, and turf culture. Roadside trees, roadside clean-up and maintenance, and adaptation of certain herbaceous material for highway slope control were given special emphasis. The latest developments in chemicals for weed control, turf inhibition, and insect control were also included, and last, but by no means least, the mechanization of roadside operations and the planning and management of roadside vegetation were ably covered.

The following year (1951), the Committee devoted the principal part of its program to "Parking Turnouts and Rest Areas," and the subsequent special report on that subject.

This year (1952) a summer meeting was held in Princeton, N. J., to discuss program and publications. A good share of it was devoted to the subject on which our 1952 study was focussed---roadside services and border control. A separate report on the symposium on this subject will be published later.

Thus we have completed five years of review, to bring up to date the latest and most economical techniques in handling the roadside problems involved in both construction and maintenance operations.

It is hoped that in the future we shall be able to continue the issuance of circulars and bulletins on all these subjects which are so important to roadside development and which have been the subject of discussion and research during the many years of activity of the Committee. These will be published as fast as they can be prepared and properly edited by our Committee on Publications. The end result will be a series of summaries on all phases of roadside activities in accordance with the publications outline which was adopted at the midsummer meeting in 1951 and published in the 1952 report. The publications to date include:

- Circular No. 154---Progress in Roadside Development
- Circular No. 165---Erosion Control Trends and Techniques
- Circular No. 189---Mulching on Roadsides
- Circular No. 166---Ground-Cover Plants for Erosion Control
- Circular No. 164---Turfig Stabilized Shoulders
- Special Report No. 7---Parking Turnouts and Rest Areas

I want personally to thank the members of the Committee, the coordinators, the members of special committees, the Director of the Highway Research Board, the Chairman of the Department of Design, and all others who have so loyally and faithfully cooperated with the Committee. It has been a privilege and distinct honor to have served as Chairman of this Committee. I am proud of its achievements.