

REPORT of COMMITTEE on ROADSIDE DEVELOPMENT

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● FOLLOWING the premise that the work of the Committee on Roadside Development should be based largely on current needs and specific problems encountered in the field, three special studies were undertaken during 1954. A special study committee on erosion control on extremely sandy soils was set up; and the study of mowing and herbicides was continued, as was the study of roadside design to reduce traffic noise, dust, and fumes.

The program of the annual meeting included papers supplementing the main study topics. For many years this committee has had before it the problem of roadside erosion prevention and control, but this subject never becomes static. As highway design progresses, erosion-control techniques must also progress to meet changing roadside conditions, and of course there is always that challenge to prevent and control erosion more quickly, more cheaply, and more effectively. Papers on slope stabilization of the West Virginia Turnpike, on the establishment of crown vetch and birdsfoot trefoil on highway slopes with various comparison grasses and rates of seeding, and on fertilizing and seeding with compressed air are valuable contributions to the continuing study of erosion control.

A paper on chemical weed control along the New Jersey Turnpike supplemented the committee's special study of herbicides, and a joint session on design included the subject of photogrammetry and a report on motor-vehicle-noise studies conducted separately from this committee's special study of roadside design to reduce traffic noise, dust, and fumes. With the groundwork well laid on this problem of highway noise, and with increasing interest in it, we feel that there is a good opportunity for continued joint study by several Highway Research Board committees.

In addition to the special studies just described, another phase of the committee's 1954 program resulted from requests from the field, combined with what might be termed a basic philosophy that it is a duty of the committee to issue authentic information where it will do the most good and in a form that is understandable and usable by those people who are in a position directly to apply the information. Along with the Annual Report, the committee has issued a circular on Correlating Roadside Development with Highway Design and two Special Reports, one dealing with Stabilized Turf Shoulders and one reporting a Symposium on Road-sides; Their Use and Protection. Of great potential value has been the ground-work done during 1954 toward the compilation, during 1955, of a bibliography on roadside development.

During the past year the committee has made a special effort to distribute selected circulars, special reports, and reprints of roadside-development papers and reports to highway department personnel handling roadside-development work at the division or district level and to schools of landscape architecture. This material has been prepared in a form for loose-leaf notebook assembly which can be kept current by deletion of obsolete sheets and addition of new or revised publications in the future.

Throughout this report there has been mention of highway design affecting erosion control; joint study of design in regard to highway noise; correlating roadside development with highway design; furnishing roadside-development infor-

mation to schools of landscape architecture. It may be well to restate the question, where does the landscape architect or landscape engineer "fit" into the highway picture? It may be well to repeat a statement in the committee report of last year. It described the scope of work of the committee as dealing not only with the technical landscape phases but also with "the application of sound landscape principles to highway location, design, and construction." To our way of thinking, that means application from the beginning of a highway—not after the contractor is finished and the project turned over to maintenance.

In years past there have been statements which in effect said "highways were being built successfully before any landscape man became interested in the highway field." It is realized that there have been times when such a rebuke was justified. On the other hand, Mother Nature was shaping land forms and covering them with vegetation before any highways were built. Qualified landscape personnel, by training and experience in emulating natural land forms and natural vegetation as the best mere man can do, can be a part of the modern highway team and help to reach the goal of the "Complete Highway" wherein are combined safety, beauty, utility, and economy.