

OFFICE HELP FOR HIGHWAY SUPERINTENDENTS

By W. O. Jones, Superintendent of Highways
Wayne County, Indiana.

We county highway superintendents should singly and collectively work towards getting our next legislature to pass a law authorizing office help for highway superintendents of Indiana. By office help I mean both the personnel and the equipment necessary to efficiently operate the county highway superintendent's office. This would not be the same for each county.

The day when a good equipment salesman could sell a county a "white elephant" is past. By this I am speaking of the proverbial useless equipment so often sold our commissioners in the past, but thanks to the advent of the county highway superintendent and his education through the agencies of this University, that day is past. But what one of you, for instance, has a system for ordering spare parts for your equipment which is much better than the "white elephant" of old. This is just one of the many ways in which office help can assist you.

In order that we may have the same things in mind when we are talking for a law to authorize office help, I am going to enumerate the items which I think are necessary in any county highway office. These may not meet with your ideas on this subject and I will be glad to receive any suggestions. These items are:

Person to remain in office entire day.

Office separate from county auditor.

Two desks.

Typewriter.

Adding machine.

Telephone.

Filing cabinets.

Simple set of books.

Other personnel and equipment depending on the amount of work done by the county highway superintendents.

The thing which is going to be difficult for us to put across with the legislature in this day of tax reduction, is the creation of another clerk in each county of the state. However, the whole system depends upon the securing of this clerk. The office need not be elaborate but it must be separate and should be near the commissioners' court and the auditor's office. Above all else it must be readily accessible to the taxpayer, as he is the one whom you are really serving and he should be made to feel that any information which he may

carry to you regarding the roads is appreciated and will be given due consideration.

The office equipment is about the standard equipment of any up-to-date office and therefore depends more or less on the volume of business which passes through your hands.

Data which was furnished by the U. S. Government at the National Road Show last week shows that there were only 44 yards of improved roads in the United States for each automobile and truck registered during 1927 and that this distance is rapidly diminishing each year. This proves that the burden is going to fall more and more on the county highway superintendents in the future. Therefore we must find means for making our dollars go farther as I believe that none of us, with the exception of an isolated case here and there, can see any more than a normal steady increase in the money which is to be given to us to expend. I challenge any one to get the full value out of these funds without efficient office help and equipment to produce accurate cost records.

In closing I might enumerate several things which office help will do for the county highway superintendents (any one of these items could very easily be the subject for a talk longer than the one I am now trying to make). They are as follows:

Free his mind of minute details.

Give taxpayer more confidence in the office.

Keep him advised regarding amount of his budget expended and unexpended.

Permit him to have "complete spare parts lists" properly catalogued and filed, for all of his equipment.

Allow him to know his costs exactly at the time that they are incurred, not after the tax board examines his expenses in the auditor's office.

Present his bills to the auditor promptly.

Answer his correspondence quickly.

Prompt reports to auditor, commissioners, etc.

Complaints will cease to annoy him so much if they can be made to his office at any time and when action is necessary it can be taken immediately.

ROAD PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS

By E. L. Alexander,
Laporte County Engineer.

Before the Panama Canal became a reality it was dreamed of and planned in the mind of the engineer. The Wright brothers conceived the idea of the aeroplane. Elwood Haynes