

HOW THE PATROL SYSTEM SAVES TAXPAYERS' MONEY

By Jasper A. Slane, Tippecanoe County Commissioner

The patrol system is not a new method of caring for the roads, for the state has used this system successfully for years, and a few of the counties are now introducing it.

Our county was originally divided into 26 districts with an assistant road superintendent in each district in charge of about 25 miles of road. This was not considered a full-time job. The assistants engaged in other vocations, chiefly farming. Their time was divided between their personal interests and that of maintaining the roads. The natural result was that the roads suffered for the benefit of the farm. The freedom which these assistants were permitted to exercise and the power allotted to them were a detriment to the organization rather than a means of strengthening and improving it. Extra laborers were often employed without proper supervision, which proved very expensive to the county. Time and again when our highway superintendent would visit the different districts, he would find his assistants plowing corn or hoeing potatoes instead of working on the road. I could go into great detail and tell you many incidents that have happened and many complications that have arisen, but suffice it to say that an arrangement of this kind is not only expensive but very unsatisfactory.

Under our present plan, we have eliminated 18 assistant superintendents by dividing the county into 8 districts instead of 26. We now have an average of about 80 miles to the district. All the county roads in each district are in charge of one man whose duty it is, with the assistance of one truck and driver, to maintain every mile of road under his supervision. Perhaps you question the advisability of allotting 80 miles of county roads to one man. I admit it sounds absurd, but we find that it can be done and done well.

Our county like all other counties has a great many roads of no particular importance to the general public, serving only the school bus and the few people who live on them. These roads, while they must be kept in good condition, require very little maintenance; and if properly handled such maintenance will be at a very reasonable cost. Other more important roads that lead to the city or serve as connecting links between state highways are far more expensive to maintain. But under our present daily patrol system and our plan of furnishing new material, we are not only able to eliminate the annoying washboard effect to a great extent, but are able to satisfy the traveling public, even beyond expectations. This was impossible under our former system when the patrolman worked

to suit his own convenience. One day's work, as you know, at the proper time is equivalent to several days' work under adverse conditions; therefore, we advocate that the only proper way to maintain a public road system is to supervise the roads systematically and to use modern mechanical appliances.

Care of Equipment

The care of equipment is another important factor in our program. A daily inspection of every piece of machinery by the person in charge is required. We insist upon the men keeping their equipment clean, well oiled, greased, and properly sheltered. The man who takes pride in his equipment takes pride in his roads. Formerly, some of our maintainers were in use only half of the season and were exposed to the weather the remainder of the year. Neglect of this sort makes them less efficient, more expensive to maintain, and more liable to be neglected by the superintendent.

Today our colleges are filled with young men eagerly seeking knowledge in the line of work they hope to follow in order that they may become more competent. Business houses are employing the men best qualified for certain lines of work. Factories and workshops everywhere are asking for the men best fitted to fill the positions they have to offer. It may seem to the public in general that these qualifications are not essential for a mere road superintendent and that the idea of choosing a man skilled in the art of road construction and road maintenance is superfluous, that all that is required is a man who can drive a truck or a tractor. We had been laboring under these delusions for years. Under our old method of maintaining the roads, under which only part time was required, qualifications and efficiency were not taken into consideration. Frequently men were employed who were more interested in the pin-money they received than they were in the improvement of the highway. Our experience has taught us that this is false economy. Competent men and good equipment are essential for the success of any county highway program. Someone has said, "A competent man will succeed, though handicapped by lack of equipment; but an incompetent man will succeed only in spoiling both road and equipment."

Patrol Maintenance

Constant maintenance is another added feature to our program. The maintainers cover practically every mile of county road each week. This enables the assistants to detect all weak spots developing in the roads, by repairing them promptly, to keep the cost at a minimum. This is particularly true in the spring of the year when the frost is leaving the

ground. Great care should be exercised at this season as much damage can be done in a single day.

Each assistant is furnished with one gravel truck and driver whose duty it is to deliver gravel anywhere in the district as directed by the assistant. By this arrangement gravel is being placed continuously on the roads and especially on the places that need it most. In addition to these district trucks, we have a fleet of 6 gravel trucks directly under the control of our county highway superintendent. These trucks are available in each of the 8 districts when extra repair work is needed. They also are used in hauling or removing dirt, making fills, and widening approaches to bridges. Possibly the most important and economical use of these trucks is in road construction. Recently in the reconstruction of one of our county roads, some of these trucks delivered 60 yards of gravel each in a single day.

Another essential for economical operation of the department is competent clerical assistance in the office. A daily check on the cost of operation of all the equipment of our county has revealed to us the following astonishing facts:

(a) We have lowered the repair bills of our garage by 300 per cent.

(b) We can deliver gravel on the road at an average cost of \$1.04 per cubic yard.

(c) Our new equipment can be operated at least 50 per cent more cheaply than our old equipment.

(d) We are able to save 20 per cent on gasoline and oils.

(e) In the seven months we have been operating under our new system (June 1st to December 31, 1930) we have been able to save \$26,309.43 from what we spent in the same time under our old plan. Therefore we believe that, in order to have a good, economical road program, it is necessary to have good equipment, a daily patrol system, and an accurate, comprehensive system of records.

EFFICIENT USE OF ROAD IMPROVEMENT FUNDS

By A. F. Becker, DuBois County Commissioner

When planning your county road budget, it is important to give much time to determining the amount of traffic passing over certain of your roads so that you may make the proper allotment of funds. It would be unwise to prorate your repair money on the basis of the sum of money paid into the county road repair fund by a certain township, and spend just that much money in that township, divided equally on each mile of road therein. There are too many people