

Maintenance Personnel

From a Report by the National Research Council,
Maintenance Personnel Committee

A shortage of trained personnel in highway field maintenance work has emphasized and brought into bold relief the highly important part played by trained and experienced field personnel in the proper maintenance of highways.

It has always been known by those in a position to know that properly trained personnel filled a highly important place in the maintenance of highways, but in the past three years it has been realized more than ever just how vital a part that such skilled maintenance personnel does play in this work.

Adequate highway maintenance has three principal ingredients; which are trained men, machinery, and materials. There are substitutes that can be made for machinery and materials, but there is no substitute that can be made for the knowledge and ability of a trained highway maintenance man.

Granting, then, that trained and experienced men are a requirement for adequate maintenance, it naturally follows that some thought should be given to keeping the good man on the job.

The critical shortage of trained personnel in maintenance organizations prompted the appointment of a committee of the Maintenance Department of the Highway Research Board for the purpose of making a study of highway maintenance personnel.

Civil Service

It has been found that sixteen state highway departments have a civil service plan, and all but one of these departments consider that the civil service plan in effect is advantageous to the operation of its department.

Of the 32 states that do not have a plan, 23 states think that their depart-

ment would be strengthened by the establishment of a civil service system for maintenance employees. Six states that do not have a plan believe that their department would not be strengthened by the establishment of a civil service plan.

Eighteen states have a remunerative retirement plan and all 18 think that a retirement plan is advantageous to the operation of their department. Of the remaining 30 states, 27 report favorable on a retirement plan and two say "No."

Sick Leave

All but three of the states indicate that an annual sick leave is granted to maintenance employees, varying in length from 11 to 30 days. Twenty-seven states follow the policy of allowing sick leave to accumulate, with a top limit for the accumulation. It is noted that sick leave is available only to monthly or salaried employees and not to hourly employees in 28 states. Seventeen of the remaining 20 states say that sick leave is available to all employees.

Wage and Hours

The length of working hours for field employees varies from eight to ten hours per day and from 39 to 60 hours per week. Thirty-eight states pay regular employees on a straight time basis, and 21 states make an allowance or adjustment in the pay for full time employees for overtime work.

Pay as little attention to discouragement as possible. Plough ahead as a steamer does, rough or smooth—rain or shine. To carry your cargo and make your port is the point.

—Maltbie Babcock