

New Ideas and Improved Methods

By FLOYD QUERY

PATCHING COSTS: During the war years as everyone knows, the labor shortage was acute. This shortage affected state departments as well as industry, and, as in industry, forced the adoption of new methods.

The State operates several paving crews whose function it is to patch highway surfaces. Prior to the war the rock used by these crews had been moved from the stock pile to the plant by wheelbarrow. However, with most of the young men in the armed forces, competent labor to do this type of work became unavailable. Tractor loaders were secured to move the material, but to use the loaders it was necessary to make changes in the plants.

Several of the paving foremen experimented with various devices with varying success. Their ideas and others were put together with the result that hoppers and power skips were installed on the older plants. John Harnsberger and his crew in the blacksmith shop contributed a great deal in the construction of the attachments and in working out the "bugs." These plants have now been in operation two years and the cost figures demonstrate the value of the various ideas submitted by State employees.

Mixing cost in 1943 with the old methods was \$1.64 per ton, in 1944, using loaders and skips it was reduced to \$1.56, and again in 1945, using the same equipment, was further reduced to \$1.51. This trend it should be noted is downward during a period when most other costs were increasing. The plants with the new equipment laid over 100,000 tons in the two years.

MAGNET OPERATION: The State Highway Department operates a truck equipped with a power operated magnet to pick up nails and other metal objects on highways which might puncture

tires. During the war when tire conservation was an item of major importance, it was necessary that the magnet be operated as continuously as possible. Difficulty was experienced, however, in securing two men who had the proper qualifications who could work together, and who would stay on the job for any length of time.

Late in 1944, at the instigation of the Maintenance Engineer, E. A. Collier, and using suggestions offered by I. A. DeFrance, Office Engineer; Leo Ordway, Magnet Operator; E. F. Halik, Master Mechanic; and others whose names are unknown, revisions were made to the magnet operating mechanism so that one man could operate both the truck and the magnet. The revised set up proved to be successful in operation and after being in use a year, it is possible to determine the savings in dollars and cents.

In 1943 the cost of operation over 6000 miles of state highways was \$1.18 per mile with the old arrangement. In 1945 the cost was reduced, by use of the suggestions offered, to \$0.86 per mile. This means an actual saving of \$0.32 per mile, or approximately \$1920 in a year.

NEW OFFICE HOURS FOR STATE EMPLOYEES CREDIT UNION

For the convenience of state employees, the State Employees Credit Union announces that until further notice office hours will be from the 4th to 10th day of each month, exclusive of Saturdays, Sundays and holidays, from 12 to 1 at room 518 and from 5 to 5:45 at room 206, State Office Building.

Any state employee desiring appointments may call W. J. P. Farrell, Treasurer, at 4171, ext. 303.