The Commission is proud of its part in this concerted movement. Every advance has been made by applying scientific principles. Our transportation system is too great and affects too many people to be managed by snap judgment or haphazard guesses. Our greatest need now is for our people to realize that traffic control is a science just as much as disease control, and that such control requires uniformity and planning, rather than special concessions to pressure groups.

The Commission has “gone to town.” It has found and solved new problems, and it faces the future confident of its ability to provide greater safety and convenience of movement in Hoosier cities and towns.

A PROPOSAL FOR MORE UNIFORM SPECIFICATIONS COVERING COUNTY ENGINEERING WORK

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Uniform specifications should be adopted by engineers for county work. I wonder, however, if a uniform plan could be adopted that engineers would adhere to. Generally, specifications are drawn up by an engineer on his own initiative, or he follows the general ideas of a former engineer. But when the state highway specifications are used, you may be assured that the work will be high class, and the bidder need not fear that he cannot compete with others because he knows that these plans and specifications are standard and dependable.

A standard and uniform specification could not be made for all types of work in the various counties of Indiana as there is such great difference in material and in conditions between northern and southern counties. In one section of our county, one may obtain a good grade of gravel, and in other sections, gravel of a desired quality cannot be secured. A flexible specification, however, may be drawn up so that different types of gravel can be used in the road plans. I suppose similar conditions exist in other counties of the state.

In our county, there has been a great change in the work of the surveyors during the past ten years. A decade ago, we were building many miles of gravel, some concrete and blacktop roads, and bridges and drains. Our county was very busy in this work and all was let under contract. Today, the county surveyors have no roads and very few bridges to construct, and the ditch work consists, primarily, of clean-outs and tile drain repairs. The road improvement is done by the county road supervisor without specifications. The only road work the county engineer has now is on WPA projects and, of course, they have their forms to follow and the work is uniform.
The work of the county surveyor in dredge and allotment ditch clean-outs, under the new law, could follow a standard plan that would apply to the different counties. I suppose that some of the wide differences in dredge clean-out specifications are due to the views of various attorneys on these ditch petitions. I have found that attorneys take quite opposite views of the law relating to clean-outs. For example, if I should follow the advice of one attorney, my procedure may be quite different from what it would be if I had followed that of another attorney on the same type of work; whereas, if a standard plan were used, this would not happen. In the allotment clean-out, by hand, if a uniform specification could be adopted, the surveyor would find his duties much more simple and easy.

Contract proposals by the county for material to be used in county work should be expressed clearly in order that the prospective bidder may have a clear understanding of materials needed. Those best qualified to draw up these specifications are the county engineers. In attempting to interpret the intent of the specification in some counties in their advertisements for bids on material and machinery, the bidder is at a loss to know just what to put on his bid as the specifications are not clear as to what is desired. One county may advertise for 10,000 cubic yards of gravel and not specify any control tests. One may advertise for a 1½-ton truck with no mention made as to the size of tire, the horse-power, or the extra equipment to be furnished. It seems to me the county should have a definite specification for the kind of material and equipment it desires to receive bids upon. This would give the bidder a knowledge of what the county desires and also save the commissioners a great deal of time and worry in awarding the contracts.

In summing up, the county engineer should adopt standard and uniform specifications that would be flexible enough to be used in the various counties, with very little change, to suit all types of work and material. So doing would save time for the engineer, money for the county, and inconvenience to the bidders.

SELLING THE PUBLIC ON HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT

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No phase of highway operation today receives more attention from those interested in the promotion of the highway industry than that of selling the public on highway improvement.