is required to furnish information and assistance as needed for his inspection.

With a carefully written set of specifications, all parts of the work being covered therein concisely and explicitly to the best of the engineer’s knowledge and ability, and with an inspector on the work who is both careful and conscientious in the performance of his duties, the contract work should go through to completion with the minimum amount of friction and discussion between the contractor, inspector, and engineer, and arrive at final inspection, acceptance, and payment with the best of feelings upon the part of all parties to the contract.

THE WORK OF THE STATE MOTOR POLICE ON HIGHWAY TRAFFIC REGULATION

By Otto G. Fifield, Secretary of State, Indianapolis

On March 7, 1917, a law was passed creating a state highway commission, providing for the construction, reconstruction, maintenance, repair, and control of public highways and providing for co-operation with the federal government in the construction of rural post roads.

On March 10, 1919, this 1917 law was repealed and a new law was passed which is the state highway law of today with but few changes. This law provided that the state highway commission should at the earliest possible moment proceed to lay out a system of state highways which should reach each and every county seat of the state and each and every city or town of over five thousand inhabitants; and connect county seats and cities of over five thousand inhabitants with improved trunk highways of adjoining states.

The highway commission has functioned well. Five thousand sixty-five miles of roads are now designated as state roads. Two thousand four hundred twenty-five miles are of hard surface, concrete, brick, or asphalt. Three hundred and two miles were constructed last year. Every foot of our roads is paid for. We are not handing down a debt to our children and grandchildren, as most other states are doing. Money for the building of these roads comes from auto license tax, from gasoline tax, and from federal aid. The license tax for this last year amounted to $6,245,838. Five million, nine hun-
dred sixty-nine thousand, two hundred eighty-three dollars was turned over to the highway commission. Sixteen million, one hundred thirty-four thousand, five hundred sixty-eight dollars and thirty-two cents was collected from the gasoline tax. Two million, three hundred sixty-eight thousand, seven hundred seventy-two dollars and fifty-six cents was received from federal aid.

I had the honor of being a member of the legislature in 1919 and was on the committee on roads. I had the duty of helping rewrite the Highway Commission Bill, and this legislature also passed the County Unit Road Bill of which I was the author. We realized at that time that the road problem was more than a township matter. This law has had rather a stormy career. Some of the amendments placed on the bill were lost between the time it passed the session and the time it reached the Governor for his signature. The bill, however, was signed by the Governor. It provided that, if a road was of public utility, it could be built upon the receipt of a petition signed by only fifty freeholders over the whole county. Petitions were rushed into the county auditors’ offices.

In the special session of 1920, the lost amendments were again placed on the bill, and the law is now one of which I am justly proud.

Townships near a city are as a rule too poor to keep up and build roads which the whole city uses. Under the county unit plan, roads which may act as feeders for the main state roads can be built of hard surface.

With the wonderful headway made in the development of road building, another problem confronted the state. More people bought automobiles, until today we have almost a million—one for about every three people in Indiana.

With so many automobile drivers, some of them good, some of them bad, some of them indifferent, some body of men had to be chosen to direct traffic, and in 1921 we have the formation of a state police department. It was originally created as an inspecting agency for the enforcement of the certificate of title law and was financed by the Auto Theft Fund, which fund was likewise created by this act, the money being raised by the sale of certificates of title and containers.

At first the chief and six men were appointed and started work July 1, 1921. Gradually the department was increased, and in February, 1922, we had fourteen men in the depart-
ment. In 1923 when we had eighteen men, the state was divided into eighteen districts and each man assigned certain counties for his territory. Each man was responsible for the conditions in his territory.

The department, realizing that sooner or later the legislature would see the need of broadened police power for these inspectors, was very economical in its expenditures so that any balance remaining in the Auto Theft Fund could be used by the department after it was given broader police powers to enforce all motor vehicle laws. A surplus of over $500,000 was built in the Auto Theft Fund.

During this embryo stage the men confined their duties to the enforcement of the certificate of title law and the automobile registration law of 1913. In 1925 the legislature realized the need of a codified motor vehicle law and passed the present motor vehicle law, which gives the state police department full police powers for the enforcement of the motor vehicle laws, including traffic regulations. However, the same legislature abolished all special funds and diverted all moneys in all funds to the state General Fund, and naturally the Auto Theft Fund was transferred to the General Fund, and the state police department was placed under the appropriation act. Since that time, the state police department has been at the mercy of the budget committee. The legislature allows only such money as the appropriation provides, regardless of the amount collected from the motorists of this state for that purpose.

Accomplishments

Just how valuable the department has been to the state both from a financial and traffic standpoint cannot be overestimated. It is too horrifying to think what the traffic condition would be without the patrolling officer on the highway. The good they have done in collecting revenue can best be shown by the following facts:

During the six months of 1921 the department was in operation, 2,589 motorists were stopped for license law violations and 185 arrests were made for motorists operating without any license. People often said they did not know they had to have licenses. One man in one of the small counties of the state remarked that he often wondered what those painted signs and numbers were on the cars for. In the last six months of 1920, 27,450 passenger car licenses were issued; but
during the same period in 1921, after the police were on the job, 47,574 licenses were issued, showing an increase of approximately 80 per cent. During the year of 1920 approximately $11,000 was collected for transferring licenses. During the first six months the state police department was in existence, $33,000 was collected, three times as much being collected in those six months as during the entire previous year. Before the department was created, it was quite a common thing for a motorist with two or three automobiles to use the one set of licenses for all of his cars. Since he has found out that some one is checking his cars and that he is liable for arrest, he obtains licenses for each of his cars.

In reality the department was created as an anti-theft organization for the purpose of recovering stolen automobiles and protecting the innocent purchaser from the possibility of buying a stolen car. In order to give the best service to the public, a stolen car file was created in the department and every police officer over the state was mandated to report all stolen and recovered automobiles, the police department acting as a clearing house for them. For instance, if the Chief of Police at South Bend reported an automobile stolen, gave a full description of the car, and the car was found by the Chief of Police at Richmond, the license, card, and container and all other marks of identification having been removed, the police at Richmond were lost inasmuch as they had no idea where the car was stolen. The state police department was called and they referred to the stolen car file by engine number. Immediately the Chief of Police at South Bend was notified the owner’s name, where the car was stolen, and all other information regarding the stolen car, and also that the car was being held by the police department at Richmond. In this way the stolen automobile was returned to the owner within a few hours, whereas if it had been necessary to trace the car from the factory, it might have taken weeks.

During the first year the state police recovered 171 stolen automobiles and arrested and convicted 99 automobile thieves. In 1923 they recovered 300 cars and arrested and convicted 165 automobile thieves. In 1924, 2,593 cars were reported stolen and 2,023, or 78 per cent, were recovered. In 1925, 2,611 were reported stolen and all of them were recovered except 532. In 1926, 4,650 were reported stolen and all were recovered except 950. In 1927, 7,616 were reported stolen and
6,700, or 87 per cent, were recovered. In 1928, 6,625 were reported stolen and 5,284, or 79 per cent, were recovered. During the past year 4,620 were reported stolen and 3,431, or 72 per cent, were recovered. You will notice that there has been a constant increase in the theft of cars, but also a constant increase in the recoveries. The loss of cars is due, no doubt, to the fact that they are more available and the owners are more careless in their protection. The increase in recoveries is no doubt due to the increased activities of the police department. Eighty out of every 100 cars are recovered. The percentage for the auto bandit is bad.

Although the state police department was created as an anti-theft organization, because of the passage of the law giving us increased police powers and the constant growth of traffic on our highways, the handling of traffic has superseded the work on stolen and recovered automobiles. All patrolmen are now equipped with motorcycles and are assigned certain patrols which they cover daily. The state is divided into ten districts with a lieutenant in charge of each district. The lieutenants are equipped with automobiles so as to enable them to cover roads over which motorcycles cannot go. The lieutenants are responsible for their districts and for the men under them.

In order that we may have a check on the patrolmen, through the courtesy of the post office department we have arranged for patrolmen to report to the post office and have their reports stamped showing the day of month and the time of day they report. These reports are sent in daily to headquarters.

Great advancement has been made in our patrol system during the past year and it is the hope of the department that it will be second to none this year.

I am of the opinion that the police force should be substantially increased, for the crime problem has become, with good roads, more than a county problem. It is only a question of minutes from the time a bank is robbed or a crime perpetrated until the bandits are in another county. We are working in a cycle—more roads, more taxes, more automobiles, more police.

This last year has been an important year in the history of the Indiana State Police. We purchased a truck scales and assigned one man the important duty of checking and weighing the loads on trucks driving over our highways. Heavily loaded trucks were tearing our roads to pieces. Before we
purchased scales, I heard of instances where overloaded trucks would drive through Indiana and when they reached the Michigan line, they would be met by another truck and would remove one-half of their load, Michigan having had scales in use there for some time.

Our police have accomplished some fine work in uncovering several rings of organized robbers, high-jackers, bank robbers, and criminal law violators. Our officers have had a varied experience, ranging from the arrest of a traffic violator to the shooting and killing of the criminal on the state house steps.

We have used during the year every available means and exerted every effort to correct the traffic situation on our highways. Our state police have arrested 3,202 persons.

In cases where the officers did not think an arrest was necessary to obtain correct results, motorists were stopped and only warned against repetition of the traffic violation. There was a total of 25,678 stopped.

It is impossible to estimate how much money has been paid into the state treasury by this department from the enforcement of the automobile registration and title law; however, the department has collected in fines the sum of $13,760. This money has been turned into the school fund.

Considerable work has been done in the installation of Junior Traffic Patrols in the rural schools. These patrols have been established in 65 schools, and 915 pupils are acting as officers under the supervision of the school superintendent and the state police officer in their district. These boys have been equipped with Junior Traffic Officer badges and white web Sam Brown belts, and the good they are doing in protecting the lives of school children cannot be overestimated.

Crime News by Radio

The police department of the City of Indianapolis now has in operation a low-wave length radio broadcasting station to be used for the purpose of disseminating crime news to their cruising squads by means of receivers and loud speakers installed in squad automobiles. This station has enough power to reach all of Indiana and to some extent neighboring states. I think arrangements could be made whereby this station would also broadcast for our department, and it could be made very useful if all state policemen had these receiving sets installed in their cars and in their offices. It could be made still
more useful if the same kind of sets were installed in the offices of all police departments and sheriffs of the various counties. By that means practically all law-enforcing agencies of the state could be made promptly aware of the commission of any crime of major importance, and if the sheriffs of the counties had their automobiles similarly equipped, contact could be kept with squads when they were cruising in search of criminals.

Other states are adopting this means of better crime detection, and it certainly is not amiss for Indiana to be at least considering it. The State of Pennsylvania, at an expense of about $750,000.00, has also installed a tele-type system whereby all of their police barracks and sheriffs are kept in touch with the department at Harrisburg by these typed reports of crime occurrences which come in during the entire twenty-four hours without the necessity of an operator being present at the receiving end. Indiana probably cannot now afford such an elaborate arrangement. The state could, however, undoubtedly secure the services of this Indianapolis station at no great expense, and these receiving sets with loud speakers can be installed at a cost of not more than $50.00, which would make it practical for most law enforcement officials to be so equipped.

In some other jurisdictions, a great deal of attention is being paid to the marks of automobile tires used by escaping criminals. The method is to lay a try-square alongside the suspected marks and then take a photograph thereof. The use of the try-squares makes it possible to determine the measurement of all marks on the tire, and then to compare the photograph with a book containing pictures which show the treads of practically all standard tires.

All the scientific facilities of the state universities and of the Board of Health should be made available to assist in the detection of crime in this state as they now are in the other progressive states. Purdue and Indiana Universities have large and well-equipped laboratories for investigation in physiology, biology, chemistry, and physics. The services of these scientific means and those of the staffs of our medical schools should be made available to the Crime Bureau for the detection of crime. And I believe that an arrangement could be effected with them whereby they could be called upon to act in cases that would warrant such investigations as they might make.