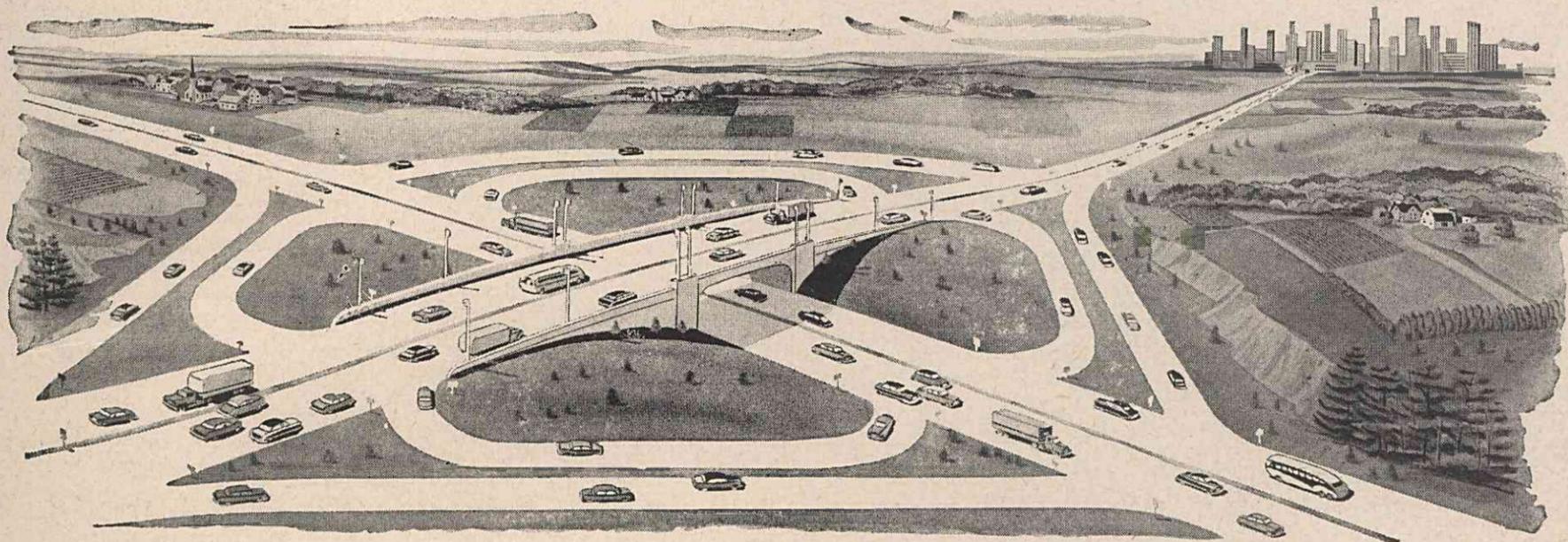


America's Future Progress Depends on More and Safer HIGHWAYS



FOR many years, we Americans were proud of our system of streets and highways. But today, many of them are so out-of-date that they have become liabilities rather than assets. Last year, 37,500 men, women and children lost their lives in automobile accidents, and a large percentage of them would still be alive if our streets and highways were adequate to meet our traffic needs.

The United States has two and a half times as many motor vehicles as all the other countries of the world combined. No other nation on earth relies so heavily on automotive transportation for the mass movement of people and products. More than 40,000 communities are completely dependent on cars, trucks and buses for all of their transportation needs. Three-fourths of all passenger travel between cities, towns and farms goes by car or bus. Two-thirds of all freight is shipped by truck during some part of its journey. Therefore, it is vital that the automotive vehicles, on which we so largely depend, be kept moving quickly, economically and safely.

Accidents Cost \$3,500,000,000 in 1951

With automobile registrations increasing every year, this situation will get worse as time goes on unless steps are taken immediately by towns, cities, counties, states and the federal government, individually and collectively, to modernize our obsolete street and highway systems. Americans are beginning to realize that installing more stop signs, re-routing trucks, reducing car speeds and other restrictive measures taken in the interest of safety provide no permanent solution to the problem. Last year, the economic loss from traffic accidents totaled three and a half billion dollars. This is more than was spent on the entire system of highways, roads and streets.

Shortly after the turn of the century, my father became a leader in the Good Roads movement. Later, in 1918, he pioneered the Ship-by-Truck movement which gave impetus to the development of the trucking industry. These two movements were instrumental in arousing the American people to the full possibilities of

automotive vehicles and to the necessity for providing an adequate system of streets and highways over which these vehicles could operate swiftly, comfortably and safely. As a result, shortly after the first World War, the United States began building a nationwide system of hard-surfaced roads.

Most Present Highways Are Obsolete

Most of our present highways were designed and built during those years, when car speeds were low, when truck loads were light and when the volume of motor travel was small. Twenty-five years ago, there were only twenty million motor vehicles. Today, there are nearly fifty-two million. Yet, during the past quarter of a century little has been done to expand our highway system to keep pace with the growth in traffic volume.

In an effort to prevent accidents, so many stop signs and traffic lights have been installed that driving has become irritating, laborious and slow. In many of our large cities traffic is so heavy that it is sometimes faster to walk than to ride. The answer seems to lie in the construction of wider streets and express freeways rather than in trying to make horse-and-buggy streets serve hundred-horsepower needs.

Parking is another serious problem. Street parking narrows down the available lanes for traffic flow and parked cars are a hazard which frequently cause accidents. In many communities, parking facilities are so inadequate that a disproportionate amount of time must be spent trying to find a place to park or else the car must be parked so far from the destination that public transportation facilities must be used. Many believe that skyscraper parking buildings, with a narrow taxable frontage on the street, and underground parking garages will be the ultimate answer.

The basic principles of safety which are learned by young people during their formative years are likely to remain with them throughout their lives. Every high school should provide a course in driver training. Statistics show that school-trained drivers have twice as good a safety

record as untrained drivers of the same age. Yet, today, only about one out of every five eligible high school students receives this instruction.

Another step essential to the reduction of accidents is the adoption of uniform signals, markings and traffic laws. Today, for example, the various states have sixteen different methods of marking center lines and three different rules for making left turns. This situation creates endless confusion in long distance travel.

Another cause of many accidents is unsafe vehicles. But America's great nationwide network of automobile, gasoline and tire dealers, with their unmatched repair and replacement facilities, makes it easy to keep automobiles in safe driving condition at all times.

According to competent authorities, it will take five to seven billion dollars a year for the next fifteen years to build essential roads, to modernize existing highways and to maintain our present system in a satisfactory condition. This gives us some comprehension of the magnitude of the task that lies ahead.

P. A. R. Is New Good Roads Movement

Recently, some forty national organizations, representing highway users, industry, business, agriculture and other interested parties, have united in an effort to promote an adequate nationwide highway program. This new Good Roads movement is called P. A. R., which stands for Project Adequate Roads, and its purpose is to bring the nation's highway system up to par with our country's needs. If this movement is to succeed, it must have the support of every American.

Our streets and highways are vitally important to the future of our country. It is imperative that we concentrate our attention on the chaotic conditions into which our traffic system has fallen as a result of long neglect and the tremendous increase in motor vehicle travel. To delay any longer is to invite disaster which may cost thousands of lives and billions of dollars. America's future progress depends on more and safer highways.

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