

THE WASHINGTON DECLARATIONS

From the organization of the work in 1915 to the year 1922 not much construction progress was accomplished. The project was not recognized as a transcontinental road or highway. Vital links were denied recognition by the State highway departments and denied Federal-aid by national officials. Federal road chiefs at Washington frankly declared there was no present need for the highway. The national trunk line system of that period ignored this route.

In June and July 1922 the Managing Director was stationed in Washington to correct these conditions. Mobile paid most of the costs. The following declarations were issued and the Old Spanish Trail became a nationally recognized project. Since then Federal, State and local cooperation have been so effective the primitive roads and tedious ferries of a few years ago are replaced with over \$70,000,000 of completed roads and bridges. Now the highway is being rapidly paved. There is no parallel in the United States on any highway its length for such a rapid and costly transformation.

THE CONGRESSIONAL DECLARATION

Declarations signed at Washington, June 1922, by a majority of the senators and congressmen of the States and districts along the Old Spanish Trail.

"This highway is one of the basic trunk lines of the United States system and anything that can be done to hasten its completion will be a service of national importance. * * * Justice to the important construction in progress, or financed and soon to be started, calls for immediate effort in sections still inactive that the service of an opened national trunk line may not be denied because of barrier sections still unimproved.

"* * * Because of its winter sunshine, its gulf pleasures in summer and its background of ancient and romantic history, its development will make it the natural resort of the North American people. When the numerous highways from the North, now building, are completed this southern trunk line must absorb and care for the mass of travel that will seek these southern borderlands.

"The primary military importance of this highway is evidenced by the fact that it embraces all the extensive military, naval and air defenses and depots of the Gulf Coast and of the Mexican border, and that it connects these with the de-

fenses of the South Atlantic and the South Pacific seaboard. There is a larger concentration of national defenses and supplies on this highway than any other in the land. The War Department asks for the construction of this highway and its border connections.

"Therefore, in the public interest and for the sake of the all-the-year service this highway will render to the travelers of the nation, and for its value to the military arms of the government, general cooperation and effort are urged to complete it from sea to sea in type and character equal to the service it will be called upon to render."

THE WAR DEPARTMENT STATEMENT

The following, dated July 7, 1922, was signed by J. M. Wainright, Acting Secretary of War, Washington, D. C.

"The highway from Pensacola through Mobile to New Orleans is considered by the War Department of first importance, and its early completion in accordance with federal standards, including necessary bridges, is urged in the interest of national defense. A standard federal highway between Pensacola and Jacksonville is also considered important."

(Here the statement recites various connections between San Antonio and border points—these are not Old Spanish Trail connections.)

"Standard federal highways from San Antonio to Houston, Galveston and Orange are also regarded as important.

"A standard highway running along the Mexican border through New Mexico, Arizona and California is also rated of first importance by the War Department.

"Considered as a whole, the proposed transcontinental trunk highway from Jacksonville to San Diego, with its connections to border points, is an essential element in the plans being formulated by the War Department for national defense and should be completed without delay according to the best federal standards for road construction."

OTHER WASHINGTON STATEMENTS

The American Automobile Association issued a signed statement July 1922 that the construction of the Old Spanish Trail was needed for winter travel.

The U. S. Bureau of Education included the Old Spanish Trail and its work in its bulletin to the public schools for the study of national development. Thousands of inquiries are received for OST literature and maps. We have been advised this is one of the most extensively used bulletins issued by the Bureau of Printing at Washington.