

The highway links Jacksonville, Pensacola, Mobile, New Orleans, Lake Charles, Beaumont, Houston, San Antonio, El Paso, Douglas, Tucson, Yuma and San Diego. It must cross the great waterways and drainage basins along the Gulf, and build through the sparsely settled range country of Texas, and conquer the deserts and mountains of the West. It has the greatest array of serious constructional problems of any national highway in the United States. Today tens of millions of dollars are available for its construction. It was conceived in Mobile in 1915, but the problems have been so formidable building activity for years would only crop out in widely scattered sections. A unity of interest was lacking because of barriers that prevented inter-communication.

Now that this highway assumes national interest its magnitude as an engineering feat invites attention. It will cost \$150,000,000 before it is completed as a federal standard road equal to the traffic it must carry. Unfortunately there is no provision yet for building highways as a national enterprise; instead operations proceed under the federal laws whereby states and counties are assisted in the financing by federal aid, with the state and federal engineers directing all federal aid work.

The states, however, are now beginning to adopt state highway laws and provide state funds and to take over from counties and road districts the construction and maintenance of highways like this. National leaders now believe there will be rapid readjustments whereby the federal road bureau and the various state highway commissions and engineers will succeed in bringing to this highway the necessary concentration of funds and engineering attention to hasten completion. Traffic, it is expected, will flow freely from sea to sea in a year for forces everywhere are at work building over the barrier sections or the engineers are busy with their patient labors hunting solutions to baffling problems, but the completed project is a matter of years of progressive work.

Senators
congressmen
of

and

and

all helped to bring about this national recognition and their work materially hastened decisions in the several departments of the government.

In 1919 San Antonio was asked to assume leadership in efforts to weld the project into a national and unbroken highway. Under the direction of Harral B. Ayres, as Managing Director, this work has at last reached a status of national distinction. Mr. Ayres has been in Washington for six weeks. Senators, Congressmen, national organizations, government department, cabinet officers and others have cooperated to effect national and state coordination of purpose. Prior to reaching Washington, Mr. Ayres, spent three years throughout the territory paving the way for this work at the national capital.

The Old Spanish Trail system embraces now 4000 miles of trunklines. It not only reaches across the continent but it includes trunklines to border points both for military and for tourist use. All this mileage, Mr. Ayres reports, is now rated as of primary importance on the maps being prepared for the federal highway system except possibly a hundred miles which without doubt will also be made primary by the states involved now that the national interest is made clear. The War Department statement is really a culmination of a general and unanimous agreement among national leaders of the necessity for invoking every influence to now promptly carry on construction and to conform all plans to the important character of the project. The skill ~~XXXXXXXX~~ with which men have worked all these years to make possible such a highway is well proven by this national acceptance of the correctness of the trunk-line plans.

The full statements of the War Department and of the congressional leaders follow.