

The same day your letter was written I received a letter from the secretary of one of the best known transcontinental trail associations in which he says;

"We are being bombarded from all directions with requests that we send letters and telegrams, etc., to Congressmen and Senators protesting against the removal of trail markers from U. S. highways. Our attitude has always been that the question of whether markers of highway and trail associations shall be allowed to stand, rests with the individual States. Our impression has been that the Bureau of Public Roads would not attempt to take any definite stand and that the matter was one that could not properly come before the national law makers."

This is an exact statement of the fact. Not only was the matter of perpetuation of the names of highways left to the individual States, but it was informally agreed by the members of the Board that should the States desire to carry the names of the highways on the same standards carrying the numbers adopted for interstate highways as recommended by the Board, that the Board would make no objection. This in fact is the practice in some States now, i.e., to carry the State number and on the same standard a neat sign giving the name of the highway.

Whatever representations have been made to you are either by misinformed persons who honestly think that some injustice will be done to the old established named trails or through a wilful attempt for purely selfish purposes to misrepresent the situation to the Senators and Congressmen.

We found that there were in existence more than 250 so called trail organizations. Of these a very few had earned the right to a continuing existence. These few had kept faith with the public. They had succeeded in obtaining recognition for certain highways and worked with a definite purpose to put up markers, secure the interest of the people along the way in the improvement of their particular routes, and had built up pride in the communities in the improvement and care of the routes.

You have adequately described the situation in your reference to the Lincoln Highway, Jefferson Highway and others, and you also refer to the pride in the name which the towns along these routes have. The members of the Joint Board are all very familiar with these facts. There has been no act of the Board to interfere with the continuance of these names, and representation to the contrary is false. On the other hand the Association of State Highway Officials is determined if possible to wipe out the promoter of trails whose numbers and activities in collecting funds from the public have been increasing rapidly.

You know how urgent is the demand for improved roads, and how great the desire to hasten their actual accomplishment. It is this fact that has encouraged promoters to go into the field with representation that by contributing to some new trail association, Federal or State Funds or both would become available and the improvement desired hastened. Needless to say, these promoters have not been in the position to control the application of one dollar of public funds. I do not criticize the civic organizations and individuals who have supported such individuals because they have been driven by the very laudable motive of doing anything possible to secure the improvement needed.

The plan to use numbers for uniform marking of important interstate roads is not an activity of the Federal Government but a cooperation activity between the States, and all work is proceeding under the supervision of the Executive Committee of the American Association of State Highway Officials, an organization made up of the directing officials of the State Highway departments.

I have gone into this matter rather fully because there have been a number of letters received here from members of Congress and others who apparently have had representations made to them similar to those made to you. This statement should be helpful in doing away with such misinformation and misrepresentation.

Very truly yours,

Signed--Thos. H. Mac Donald,
Chief of Bureau.

FLORIDA ASKS OLD SPANISH TRAIL NAME BE OFFICIALLY PLACED

At a North Florida Meeting in March the people passed resolutions requesting the immediate marking of this highway as the Old Spanish Trail and the removal of all other names. The chairman and other members of the Florida Road Department present concurred in this and offered cooperation. This is all in accordance with the Federal Road Bureau statement as above the States shall fix and determine the name.

PLANNING BEST MARKING THAT CAN BE DEVISED

The Old Spanish Trail Association and the Florida leaders are ready to cooperate with the Florida Road Department to plan and put into effect the most intelligent marking that can be devised combining the United States Highway shield and number and the Old Spanish Trail name. The Ohio State marker combining the Lincoln Highway name as shown in the Lincoln Forum Article herein, is the best suggestion seen so far for the route designation, but corner, city streets and confusing situations would require special direction marking. The State highway departments now place direction signs as a part of their service. By including the Old Spanish Trail colored route symbol on the posts carrying these signs the traveler will be led along clearly, for the colored symbol if carefully applied is the best lead night or day; the eye soon learns to catch the colors, the driver can watch his driving and make the turns or work through traffic without confusion.

MARKING CITY STREETS

The color symbols through city streets are specially important. If applied freely they are a clear guide through busy city streets. Some special signing will also be necessary through cities. "No Left Turns," numerous corners, picking up the route in cities, night visibility of signs, and other situations troublesome to strangers should be carefully covered. In some of the OST States this highway legally includes the route through the cities and towns; in other states the highway department controls only to the municipal limits.