

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

Because of the scope of its activities, and because it provides more essential services directly to the individual citizen than any other department, the Department of Public Works has the only full-time salaried Board of Commissioners in the City government. Regular public sessions are held by the five members three times each week, and special meetings and hearings when necessary.

Under the supervision of the Board, the Department has the responsibility of designing and supervising construction of all public works improvements, including city-owned buildings, bridges and viaducts, sewer lines and structures, street paving, storm drains and street lighting.

Also under its jurisdiction are garbage and refuse disposal, street cleaning and maintenance, inspection of building materials for city use, acquisition of property for public use, collection of special assessments, maintenance of city owned buildings, and operation of the City Hall Garage and City Hall Telephone Exchange.

In addition the Board advertises for and opens bids and awards contracts. During the last year it awarded 272 public work improvement contracts with a valuation of \$30,031,210.

BUREAU OF STREET MAINTENANCE

Certainly one of the most interesting of the Department's 12 divisions is this huge one. The street system required to serve the residents of this large

municipality exceeds in mileage the entire highway system of many eastern and midwestern states, and the annual budget, personnel employed and equipment and materials required to maintain the 5,680 miles of streets and public ways within the city exceeds that of many states. This street mileage is equivalent to a highway extending from Los Angeles to New York and back across the nation as far as Spokane, Washington.

RESURFACING: During the past year, this Bureau surfaced or resurfaced almost 100 miles of the City street system. Probably the outstanding accomplishment in the Resurfacing Section, and probably in the entire Bureau of Street Maintenance, involved the resurfacing of Fifth and Sixth Streets through the Central Traffic District, in the center of the densest concentration of traffic in this entire area.

This project involved removal of paving over abandoned car tracks, construction and reconstruction of concrete gutters, curb returns and bus stops. In order that private and public utilities and city departments affected might be fully informed, a preliminary meeting of 41 representatives of 27 different private and public utilities and other organizations was held and the tentative work schedule presented for discussion. Changes made in it paid large dividends in the form of full cooperation by all those involved and reduced complaints and delays to a minimum.

STREET CLEANING: Four different methods of street cleaning are used within the city to meet varying conditions, and the total curb miles cleaned during the year totaled 378,187, or the equivalent of cleaning a gutter which circles the earth 15 times at the equator.

Outstanding accomplishments in the Street Cleaning Section included the adoption of enclosed load-compacting truck bodies, replacing open dump trucks previously used in hauling street cleanings and debris.

TRENCH REPLACING: The rapid growth of Los Angeles is reflected directly in the number of excavations made in the street system by the various public and private companies to provide utility services for the incoming population. It is interesting to note that the Annual Report of the Highway Department of an eastern state reported a total of 387 similar excavations in its entire system for the year 1946, whereas during 1948, a total of 39,718 excavations were made in the street system of the City of Los Angeles. The revenue from the permits for these excavations amounted to \$1,152,417.

DISTRICT MAINTENANCE: Unusual functions handled by District Maintenance Crews include the maintenance of a municipally owned and operated cemetery in the San Pedro area; the maintenance of an abandoned oil field in the Wilshire LaBrea district and the operation of an amphibious street (canal) cleaning crew in the Venice area.

The cemetery is maintained as the result of the Ordinance whereby San Pedro was annexed to Los Angeles. The abandoned oil wells along Wilshire Boulevard and intersecting streets between La Brea Avenue and Fairfax Avenue were never properly plugged and have caused heavy crude oil to flow over the curbs into the streets. The canals in Venice are dedicated as "public ways", and as such are the responsibility of the city. Two barges operated by outboard motor are used to clean them periodically.

LOT CLEANING DIVISION: The Lot Cleaning Division operated for its first full year of continuous work during last year. The Division was equipped with the necessary dump trucks and other equipment to enable it to remove a total of 3,511 loads of non-combustible rubbish from the vacant lots throughout the city. This totaled approximately 14,000 cubic yards of refuse removed to disposal pits.

BUREAU OF SANITATION

This is another of the Public Works Department's major bureaus, having charge of refuse collection, sewer maintenance and the City's incinerator system.

In the last year the volume of garbage collected showed an appreciable decline. The Bureau attributes this to more thrifty living and perhaps also to the more extensive use of waste-free frozen foods. The increasing use of household garbage grinders is regarded as a minor factor. The Sewer Division is keeping an anxious eye on the use of such grinders, however, for fear they may overload a sewage disposal system not designed to handle mass disposal of garbage via the kitchen sink.

Among the chores of the latter Division are maintaining, operating and repairing 3,154 miles of main line sewers and 732 miles of storm drains, together with the 26 sewage and storm drain pumping plants, four sewer ventilating plants, Hyperion Sewage Screening Plant, Hyperion Chlorination Plant, and the Terminal Island Treatment Plant.

Extensive tests have been made of sewage at the Hyperion Screening Plant and the sewage field in the ocean in order to evaluate what results to expect when

the new submarine outfall is placed in operation. The State Board of Public Health by a recent order has required that the sewage be chlorinated until the outfall is put in service and thereafter until a period of time has demonstrated that chlorination is no longer necessary for protection of public health.

The incineration division has had its problems. Everybody seems agreed that the City must have large-scale public incinerators in various areas of the City, but no neighborhood wants one close by. This feeling was heightened by initial faulty operation of the one erected at Lacy Street and Avenue 21. Corrections in its construction have caused it to function properly. Meanwhile the division has proceeded with the selection of other sites in other sections of the City.

BUREAU OF ENGINEERING

Problems of this Bureau are both difficult and fascinating—difficult because of the velocity of production of new improvements needed in the City and fascinating because of their sheer physical magnitude.

During the year contracts awarded for public improvements amounted to \$25,968,967. On January 1, 1949, the value of such improvements under construction was \$39,273,268.

Among the major improvements currently under way is the \$41,000,000 sewage treatment plant at Hyperion. This plant, when completed, will be one of the largest of its kind in the entire world, and incorporates the latest technical developments in the field of sewage treatment. The design, which is now practically completed, was made by Bureau of Engineer-

ing personnel and in conformity with the recommendations of Metcalf & Eddy, a nationally recognized firm of consulting engineers.

Construction has proceeded by a series of plant units, the contracts for which have been awarded according to a progressive schedule of operations. At the close of the 1948 calendar year the total value of such contracts awarded for various units of the treatment plant amounted to \$27,406,436, of which \$18,742,773 was awarded during 1948.

Located on a 76-acre tract of City-owned property on ocean front, this plant is now a beehive of construction activity. Hydraulic "giants," reminiscent of the gold-rush days of the 1850's, have torn into the sand dunes of the plant site, and have excavated some 14,000,000 cubic yards of sand to make room for treatment units. This sand was placed along the beach frontage adjacent to and northerly of the plant site, and has created new beach areas for a distance of about six miles. These new areas average approximately 600 feet in width and furnish a total of about 340 acres of additional beaches.

Contracts have been awarded for about one-half of the improvements proposed under the \$10,000,000 Relief Sewer Bond issue approved on May 27, 1947. Construction is proceeding on these badly needed projects, and it is estimated that this bond issue program will be completed about June, 1950.

The comprehensive parkway program, jointly handled by the City of Los Angeles and the State of California, is well under way, and is progressing according to pre-arranged plans. Approximately 11.4 miles of modern traffic facilities have been opened to traffic

within the Los Angeles City limits. Some fifty million dollars has been spent on parkway construction within this area up to the present.

BUREAU OF STREET LIGHTING

The most outstanding achievement of the year has been in the reduction in night pedestrian fatalities by the improved lighting at principal intersections. It is estimated there are approximately 800 intersections where hazardous conditions could be corrected by proper illumination. The splendid record established in 1947, when this type of fatality was reduced by 78 over 1946, with approximately 100 intersections improved, has been exceeded in 1948, by a further reduction of 67 less than in 1947, with 199 intersections now improved.

Statistics show that even though the streets and intersections where lighting was improved had the worst pedestrian fatality records, only three persons were killed at locations where improvements have been made during the last three years. This record is unsurpassed by any city in the nation.

The following tabulation shows the extent of reduction in the number of pedestrians killed by motor vehicles after dark:

Year	No. of Fatalities
1945	246
1946	237
1947	159
1948	92

An analysis of investigations made by the Police Department indicates that insufficient lighting was the cause of most of these fatalities.

OTHER PUBLIC WORKS BUREAUS

THE BUREAU OF INSPECTION is a watchdog on all contracts awarded by the Department. It is, for example, responsible for the quality of construction work produced at the Hyperion Sewer Plant, which has been nationally recognized as excellent.

THE BUREAU OF STANDARDS is essentially an elaborate testing laboratory which tests all the materials that go into public improvements. Its tests during the year—physical, chemical and biological—numbered 39,300, and included tests on more than 150 miles of sewer pipe, materials for 351 paving jobs and foundations for \$5,324,522 worth of buildings.

THE BUREAU OF CONSTRUCTION AND BUILDING MAINTENANCE maintained and repaired approximately 500 public buildings during the year. It is also charged with design and construction of buildings occupied by Council-controlled City departments. Under the 1947 bond issue building program, it has 19 Fire Department buildings and sizable additions to the Lincoln Heights Jail in advanced stages of design and construction. Generally, it engages private contractors for new buildings, and performs alterations to existing structures with its own personnel.

THE BUREAU OF RIGHT OF WAY AND LAND, which appraises and negotiates for land for public use, has been engaged in acquiring several million dollars worth of real property for the various bond fund projects authorized by popular vote in 1947. They include sites for playgrounds, fire stations, health centers, police facilities, incinerators and rights of way for interceptor sewers.

The job of keeping track of the many millions of dollars that pass through the Department is assigned to a BUREAU OF ACCOUNTING. The scope of its activity involves keeping costs and statistical information, preparing budgets and maintaining budgetary controls and reporting revenues and credits for all Bureaus. For the last fiscal year receipts totaled \$11,252,460 and expenditures \$31,654,563.

A BUREAU OF ASSESSMENTS is responsible for levying assessments against real property for improvements. Local residential streets are improved, sanitary sewers are installed and street lighting systems maintained by special assessment levies against abutting properties. During the year approximately 100 projects were assessed, involving 5400 parcels of property, amounting to \$1,350,000. Lighting maintenance assessments were levied against 120,000 parcels of property in an amount of \$900,000. Collections average 99 per cent, due to special efforts in locating and notifying property owners.

Also under the Board of Public Works, is a PERSONNEL BUREAU which handles personnel matters for this large department, and the CITY HALL TELEPHONE EXCHANGE, the CITY HALL GARAGE, and the CUSTODIAL BUREAU.

Total Employees—5810.