

Free travel for visits to his family for a workman who follows a job to another area; and

Revision of building codes to permit use of modern advances, such as pouring cement in far colder weather by the use of additives; education of the many small contractors on modern techniques; and subsidized training for workers.

EXPERIENCE OF FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

The first area of Government consideration has been its own involvement with the industry. We are a good-sized customer of the industry. The Federal Government buys about one-third of all public construction which, in turn, represents one-third of all construction.

One of the striking features of the Government's activity in the construction field is that there is now no clear directive with respect to seasonality or winter operation.

Many agencies contract for construction directly with construction firms, while others finance grants-in-aid through State, city, or county governments. Each agency contracts for a specific kind of work, in some cases with specialized contractors, although usually with substantial interchange of labor force among contractors.

The agencies try to schedule their own operations as best they can, and often use or require such systems as PERT (Program Evaluation Review Technique) and often a systematic work scheduling technique is employed. There is, however, minimal interchange among agencies, or coordination of their activities in the same local areas. There is also little knowledge on the part of one agency of what other agencies are doing, and none at all on problems of seasonality.

The problems that Federal Government contracting officials would face in any effort to diminish seasonality are compounded by the fact that they generally lack the ability to influence State and local patterns of construction activity undertaken with funds from other sources.

There are indications that present practices tend to put the Government into the construction market at the most crowded period of the year. This is the spring and summer when resources are strained and when contractors' estimating capacities are so overloaded that adequate attention cannot be paid to the possibilities that exist for sharper and more competitive bids. It is also at a time when the Nation's supply of funds for construction credit is at its worst point in seasonal terms. The opportunity to enter the market in earlier months could result in significantly lower bids because of opportunity to use the more plentiful resources then available and to elicit more competitive contractor estimating procedures.

There are, of course, many situations in which spring or summer starts can lead to the completion of outside construction on a schedule which permits inside finishing over the following winter. Different groups of workers are involved in these two types of activity, however, and the development of scheduling methods which will diminish seasonality for all is an intricate process which requires careful attention. The best methods of achieving optimum results will grow out of operating experience under a conscious effort to diminish seasonality of employment.