

Hastings Bridge Has Fallen Down

Fifty-five years ago the big "splash" in the bridge world was the new spiral-approach bridge which crossed the Mississippi River at Hastings. The fancy spiral was expected to last for all time in this thriving river community.

Built in this fashion so that traffic would be fed right into the business section of the city, the unique construction also made the bridge an international tourist curiosity because of its complete spin from street level to the main bridge span.

Going!



Employees Urged To Take Higher Exams

The advantages of applying for, taking and passing civil service tests for higher job classifications are pointed out in a current notice issued by the Personnel Section. Applying specifically to the position of Heavy Equipment Operator in the Maintenance Field, it authorizes the establishment in each of the districts of needed additional positions on an "intermittent" basis. Only such employees who have successfully passed the Heavy Equipment Operator test may be appointed to these intermittent positions. Such employees who are assigned to perform duties required by this classification can earn permanent status in the rating upon satisfactory completion of six 173-hour periods of employment on Heavy Equipment Operator tests, exclusive of overtime.

Highway Maintenance Men II appointed to these intermittent positions will be paid a flat rate of 30 cents per hour in addition to their regular salary for work done at the higher level. Employees in classes other than MM II will be paid the difference between the minimum hourly rate for Heavy Equipment Operator and the hourly rate for their positions in the lower classes. These pay scales apply not only to normal work hours but to overtime as well.

Filling of any unlimited Heavy Equipment Operator position must be in accordance with rules governing certification from eligible employees. Employees to be eligible for an assignment must be on the original civil service eligible

list, with the three highest on the list to be considered first in filling the unlimited position.

However, time, traffic and deterioration combined to make the famous landmark as obsolete as the buggy in which George Barbers and J. P. Sommers were the first persons to cross the bridge on April 19, 1895. Increased traffic and heavier loads resulted in constant hammering vibrations that loosened rivets and weakened the structure. In addition the route along T. H. 61 was designated as a military highway. Decision? The bottle-neck must go, in favor of a straight approach on Vermilion street to allow for a span high

Going!



list, with the three highest on the list to be considered first in filling the unlimited position.

Heavy Equipment Operators usually will operate the following equipment: 1000 gallon distributors, crane or drag line, snow-gro or heavy duty snow removal apparatus, 50 hp or more track type tractors, 5 ton trucks not assigned to routine maintenance, motor grader in various operations.

Two Springs

(Continued From Page 1)

posed such load and other restrictions as became necessary.

These restrictions were unwelcome it is true. However, anticipating that the 1952 spring break-up would add many miles, perhaps exceeding last spring's 8,000 miles, to the restricted list, the commissioner felt that further damage could be prevented.

What damage was done is difficult to determine at present; however, it will show up next spring. Maintenance engineers anticipate a heavy repair load then when the second spring of the 1951-52 winter will be upon us.

enough to accommodate river traffic below.

After the new bridge was opened for traffic last winter, demolition of the tired old spiral began. This was interrupted by the coming of spring. As ice left the river, army engineers in control decided that further work would be hazardous to navigation of the barge lines, so important to national defense.

As "the winter of the second spring" (1951) closed down the river to a point where barge movements were stopped, work was resumed on the removal of the remaining steel work.

Workmen of the Okes Construction Co., St. Paul, attached cables to the span at the free end on the north shore of the river's normal channel. These cables led back to winches on the shore. Then a torch cut loose the south end of the 280' span from the rest of the structure. The cables were to pull the span away from the south shore and allow it to fall safely into the river.

But before the cables could be brought taut, the heavy steel swayed away from its supports, all in the proper direction. And the big "splash" in the new bridge world was sounded when this last over-water span of the historic spiral bridge hit the river below. Now resting on the bottom of the stream, the steel will be pulled out for salvage.

Gone!



It is expected the historic approach, a Minnesota landmark for over a half-century, soon will be torn down. Efforts to retain this portion of the old bridge have been of no avail, as the necessary community funds for maintenance and insurance have not been guaranteed.

The project was designed and administered under the general supervision of O. L. Kipp, Chief Engineer of the Highway Department, with M. O. Giertsen as Bridge Engineer and Howard S. Barkholder as Resident Engineer.

Arched Crossing Replaces Old Spiral

A new 1,825 foot tied-arch steel and concrete structure replaced the old spiral bridge when it was opened for traffic last February. The straight approaches and 82-foot roadway eliminated many of the bottle-necks and hazards of the former narrow curved road.

Construction began in the fall of 1947 when the contract was let for the grading of the north approach. The second contract for substructure units was let in June, 1948. Since then the bridge site had been a busy place until February, 1951, when formal ribbon-cutting ceremonies opened the new bridge for traffic.

The main span consists of a continuous tied steel arch with 514' center span and 225' side spans. Ten other spans varying in length from 51' to 113' complete the structure.

Costs for the total project including right-of-way, will approximate \$2,800,000 when all the bills are paid. At present some of the last construction work in grading and surfacing has been estimated at about 95% completed.

The largest share of construction costs were for the super-structure and the steel work. Construction costs were \$931,374, while plans and engineering costs brought this portion to \$964,307.

Total costs for the sub-structure were listed at \$579,945.

When the spiral bridge was built, its original financing was done with a \$50,000 bond issue. By the time it was completed its costs soared to the then high figure of \$85,000. Land for the south approach and spiral was deeded for this purpose by John Melloy,

New Bridge



whose transfer provided that upon termination of its use for bridge purposes the land would revert to his heirs.

An Unusual Photo of an Unusual Bridge



This unusual MHD photo, taken early in 1951, shows the old Hastings spiral bridge in the foreground, shortly before its demolition, and the bridge which replaced it, beyond.



This landscaped embankment at the approach to the present Mississippi River bridge at Hastings is the site for a proposed memorial to the famous, but now vanished, spiral bridges. The Hastings city council and Greater Hastings Association are interested in the project, for which tentative plans are being prepared by the MHD Roadside Development Unit. A memorial plaque would be erected bearing in relief a picture of the spiral bridge and a suitable legend.

It is now something of a distinction to have driven, or even to have ridden over the famous spiral bridge which used to span the Mississippi River at Hastings. It is even more of a distinction to possess a single photo showing both the old bridge, with its corkscrew construction at the Hastings end and the modern bridge which replaced the old one in 1950. The spiral bridge was razed soon after the new bridge was opened.

The spiral bridge was reputed to be the only one of its tight circular design in the United States, perhaps in the world.

The accompanying picture of the two bridges is the prized possession of the MHD Photo Lab.

Only the daring driver attempted to negotiate the spiral at more than 15 miles per hour. Perhaps the obvious hazard of the tight circle, guarded only by a wood railing, was its best safety factor, for very few accidents are reported to have occurred on the structure during its nearly 60 years of use.

The bridge was built in 1894, 1,708 feet long and costing a mere \$85,000, according to records kept by George Flynn, Sr., veteran MHD bridge maintenance engineer. It was of steel construction with wood flooring on the 18-foot roadway and built by the Wisconsin Bridge and Iron Co.

The spiral construction was incorporated at the Hastings end of the bridge to permit immediate access to

Hastings' main street running well below the bridge level and close to the river.

The lower end of the spiral ran into Malloy Park, a tract of land donated by the Malloy family.

With the organization of the Highway Department in 1921 under the Babcock amendment, the department took over the bridge because it carried T. H. 61.

The steel and concrete bridge which replaced the spiral bridge in 1950 is 1,825 feet long, has a 32 foot roadway and cost \$1,799,000, not including grading and similar items.

When the old bridge was razed, there was a strong movement to preserve the spiral section for its historic sentiment, but the plan was defeated, largely because of the cost which would have been involved in its upkeep.

Now the old spiral bridge lives only in the memories of the people who once dared its narrow, rough planked roadways and in photographs like the one on this page.

A psychiatrist received a card from a vacationing patient: "Having a wonderful time? Why?"

Duluth Bridge Ceremony

A ribbon cutting ceremony for the new \$21 million Duluth-Superior interstate bridge has been scheduled for December 2. A civic committee is planning the event. Indications now are the bridge will open for traffic in November.