GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

In recording the accomplishments of the WRECA since its inception up to this time of the publication of the Association's first Year Book, it is impossible to confine the General Manager's report to the customary factual data usually found in such a report. So much personal effort and strict adherence to the cooperative philosophy have been intertwined with STATEWIDE's economies that it is imperative these factors be mentioned as influences in our business organization.

The farsighted conception for the WRECA, now familiarly known as STATEWIDE, by the charter members in launching their own service organization to supply technical services on a cooperative basis for themselves and the other electric cooperatives yet to be conceived, evidenced courage and vision not frequently found. They endowed their STATEWIDE with a spirit and purpose that has continued to motivate the organization in all its activities, and probably much of the success of the year just past is attributable to this viewpoint and aim, which may be concisely termed, cooperating to serve.

The STATEWIDE Board of Directors composed of representatives from each of the member cooperatives has assuredly exemplified the philosophy of cooperation by its selfless interest in gratuitously guiding the policies of STATEWIDE. The example of the Directors has been observed and followed by the individual directors and members of the local cooperatives to a degree that can only be described as remarkable by those of us who know of the amount of voluntary self sacrificing services that have been rendered. The additional burden cheerfully assumed by that part of the STATEWIDE board that comprises the Executive Committee, is a further noteworthy record of unselfishness.

Employees of the organization, unlike the Officers and Directors, have received payment for their services but no salaries could compensate for the type of service so cheerfully given by STATEWIDE employees. The long hours, often twice the number prescribed by the typical office of today, together with the intensive drive to bring the lines into the construction period, under what was at the beginning, the poorest office facilities; and in the case of the field force, heavy individual responsibility, has been a remarkable tribute to the inspiration incorporated within the organization by the charter members.

With such a spirit established within the organization, cooperation with the Rural Electrification Administration in advancing the REA program in Wisconsin was a natural sequence. The REA Administrator and staff have given Wisconsin all the assistance and courtesy that a human machine could supply, and at a time when they were overly crowded with demands from almost every State. The assistance rendered by the State of Wisconsin through the medium of the Rural Electrification Coordination, in helping to establish the WRECA was invaluable and it was this initial aid that made it possible for STATEWIDE to so rapidly find its place. Another State department, The Highway Commission, also contributed in a large measure through its wholehearted cooperation and consideration particularly with problems in the field. The Public Service Commission has from time to time extended helpful advice and courteous service, particularly through its engineering and rate departments. It would be only fair to state that STATEWIDE has received impartial treatment from all of
its business contacts. While perhaps nothing succeeds like success, STATEWIDE was in need of, and received, every consideration during the period of its establishment.

It was soon found that the type of service required was both of a highly technical and highly skilled nature. The providing of Administrative, managerial, and engineering services included as part of the contract between STATEWIDE and its members, proved to mean the supplying of service by executive direction, specialized engineering, expert accounting, experienced stenographers and general supervision. That STATEWIDE has successfully met these demands, is now well known within and out of the State. Since the beginning of 1937, new employees notwithstanding their past experience have received a specialized training and are given a trial period before being permitted to assume any responsibility. This procedure has enabled the organization to develop a staff of over 100 trained specialists, performing, probably for the first time in Wisconsin's history, professional services on a cooperative basis. The following pertinent-statistics indicate the proportions to which STATEWIDE business has grown:

Mileage in construction ......................... 5,111.05
Allotments for projects in construction .......... $5,764,600.00
Direct Employment .............................. 114 employees
Consumer Members .............................. 16,084

The policies followed by STATEWIDE up to this time conform to the purposes set forth in the Association's Articles of Incorporation. A study of the purposes disclosed a wide possibility of ramifications resting nevertheless, on the definite philosophy of cooperation. A review of the activities of STATEWIDE up to this time, would properly lead to the conclusion that the policies being followed were clearly in harmonious accord with the intent of the purposes.

Future policies are never easy to forecast but STATEWIDE's viewpoint will assuredly be tempered by its record already established in this new uncharted field for cooperation. Although rural electric cooperatives have rapidly found a place in Wisconsin the effort required and energy spent to found them means too much to too many to permit their owners ever to lose them. It is to be expected that while STATEWIDE continues to be the spearhead for Wisconsin's rural electric cooperatives, the experience it is accumulating will constantly influence its ability to provide sound leadership and guidance.

Cooperation is as old as yesterday and as new as tomorrow. As demands grow for rural electrical service needs, so probably will STATEWIDE grow, for those of us who have been associated in this work know that our efforts have been crowned with success through that electrical spark—Cooperative Contact.

J. MORGAN WILSON,
General Manager.