

New York Solves Auto Traffic Problems

Builds Elevated Highways While Chicago Quibbles

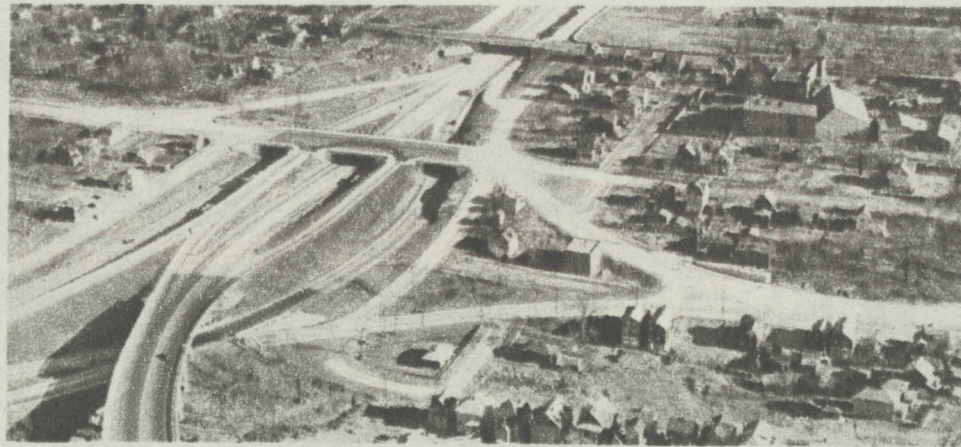
By HAL FOUST

THIS metropolitan area has overcome its geographic barriers to automobile transportation. In the opinion of Dr. Miller McClintock, head of the Harvard university traffic research bureau, New York's facilities for express motor travel now excel those of Chicago, where nature is kindly to pavement planners.

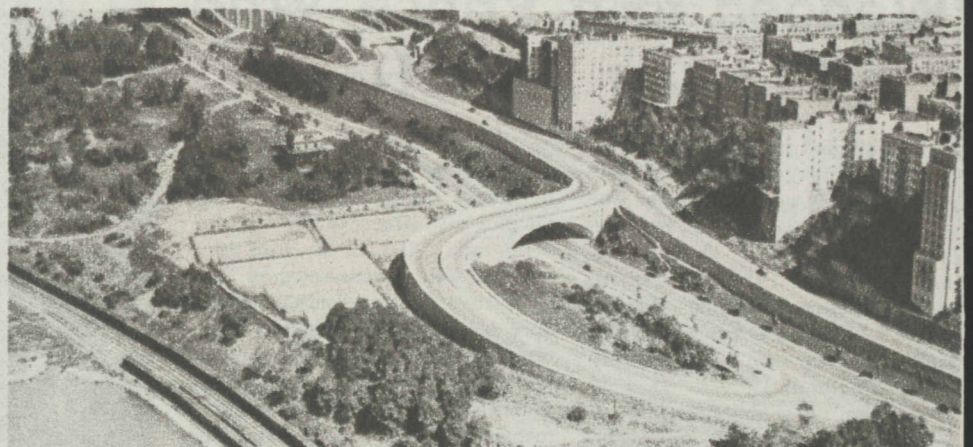
Manhattan, surrounded by water, now is more accessible to automobiles than is Chicago with prairies on three sides. This supremacy has been attained by bold engineering and financing while Chicagoans have been quibbling and

cost of initial construction units in an elevated highway system. These initial units would consist of useful sections of superhighway for the west, northwest, southwest and southeast gateways of Chicago.

Early this year Samuel Levy, president of the borough of Manhattan, petitioned the federal government for \$26,785,000 to bore a vehicular tunnel under his narrow island of skyscrapers. It would connect a \$40,000,000 automobile tube under the Hudson river with a \$58,000,000 tube under the East river. Both tunnels are under construction.

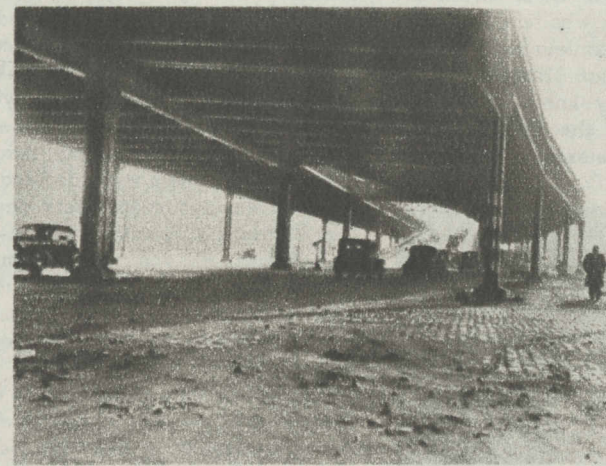


GEORGE WASHINGTON BRIDGE (West Approach)
This elaborate system of pavements removes delays and risks from Jersey approach to bridge.

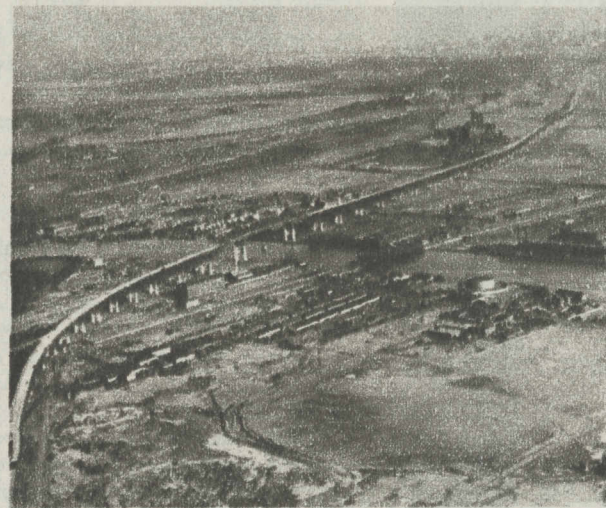


GEORGE WASHINGTON BRIDGE (East Approach)
Another bit of difficult engineering. Riverside drive connection with George Washington bridge.

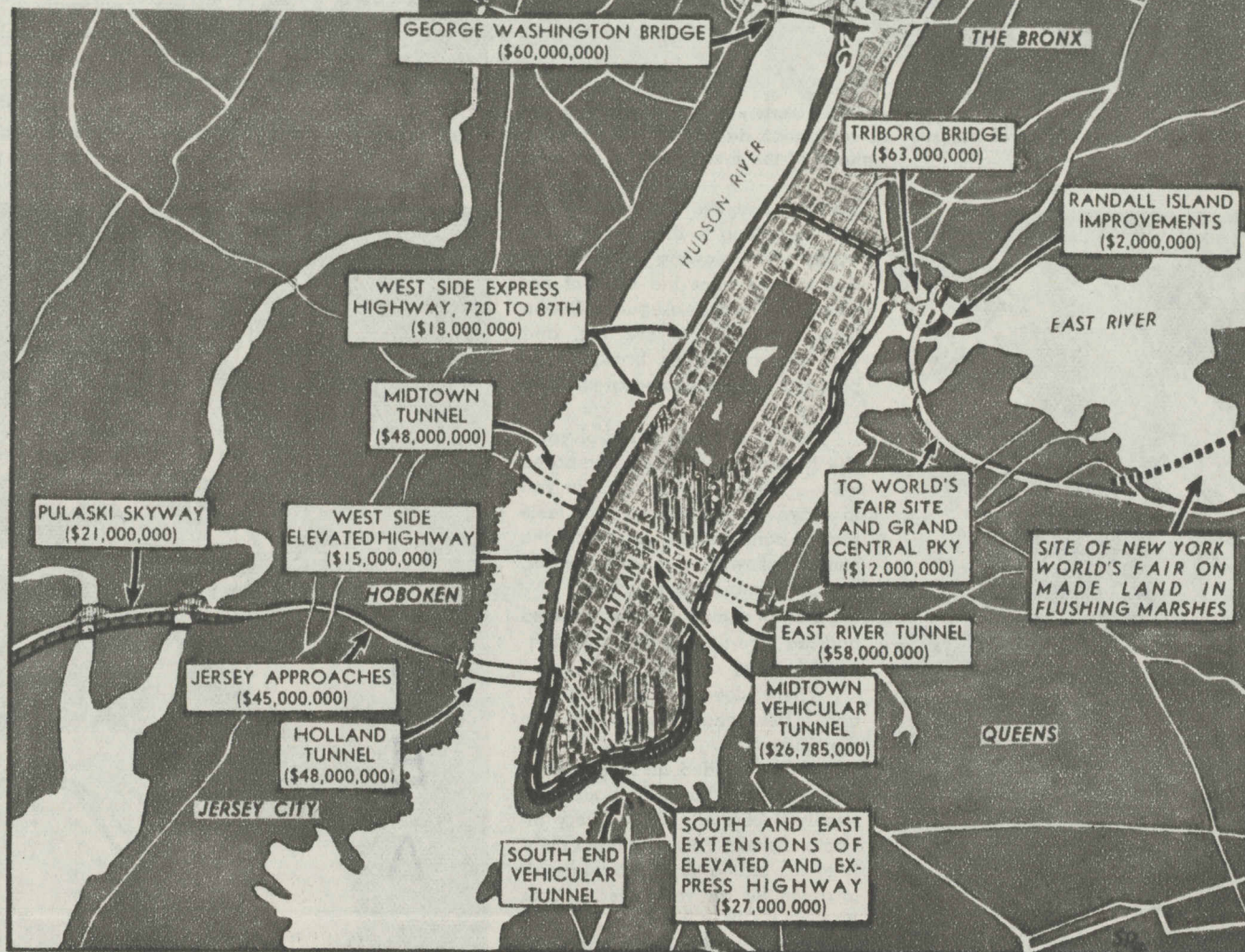
GEORGE WASHINGTON BRIDGE
At left: Looking down from a bridge tower far above this busy traffic artery.



WEST SIDE ELEVATED HIGHWAY
A street level scene showing how light and air are ample under Manhattan's elevated highway system.



PULASKI SKYWAY
This \$21,000,000 improvement expedites motor travel between New York and its main airport at Newark, N. J.



This map shows New York's various improvements to aid traffic and the cost of each, while the black lines dashed with white indicate proposed extensions.

hesitating over their elevated highway plans designed to abolish dangerous and congested streets.

Dr. McClintock is qualified to make the comparison. His professional rating as a traffic engineer is high, and he is familiar with both cities. His home is in New York, while in 1931 and 1932 he surveyed Chicago's motor transportation problems as a consultant employed by the city council. His conclusion was a recommendation for an elevated highway system, a development of similar elevated highway plans advanced by the Chicago plan commission in 1927.

For a decade Chicago has debated its elevated plans, but no dirt has been turned. Expensive construction to accommodate large volumes of traffic has been confined mainly to the lake front, leaving most of the city without modern traffic facilities. Other fairly large sums have been spent for rural grade separations. Many of these, including a number in Du Page county, have cross traffic too light to justify the expense of the structures. Little has been done to segregate cross traffic where most needed, in the congested areas of the city away from the lake.

By contrast, New York has accomplished much. It has built large and expensive structures in the heart of its metropolitan area, where the demand for convenient and safe motor transportation was most acute. The results have justified the expense. More mammoth projects are under way and still more are being planned for future work.

Six of the major improvements opened to New York traffic in the last ten years cost a total of \$219,000,000. This can be compared with the \$100,000,000 estimated by Dr. McClintock as the cost of building 160 miles of elevated highway in Chicago.

Or the New York figure of \$219,000,000 can be cited to dwarf by contrast the \$8,212,000 which intimidated Chicago as the estimated

Also in the New York program for the future is the extension of the express motorway around Manhattan. One section, around the southern tip of the island, is definitely projected at an estimated cost of \$27,000,000. The public is well satisfied with the \$15,000,000 spent for the four and a half miles of west side elevated highway now in service.

New York is willingly paying \$3,000,000 a mile for elevated highway, in contrast to Chicago's reluctance to pay \$500,000 a mile for such facilities. The two-level streets in New York are of a heavier design than proposed for Chicago.

Also studied for future construction is a proposal for a vehicular tube under the southern tip of Manhattan and under the East river to Brooklyn on Long Island. In Manhattan it would connect with the Holland tunnel under the Hudson river to Jersey City.

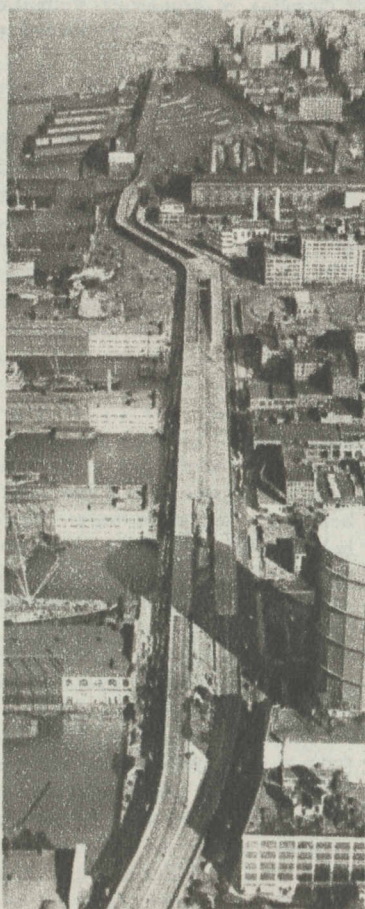
The Holland tunnel might be described as New York's first gigantic effort toward overcoming its insular geographic handicaps in handling modern motor traffic.

Chief Engineer Holland started digging under the Hudson river in 1920. It was finished in 1927 at a cost of \$48,000,000.

In New Jersey \$45,000,000 was spent for approaches to the tunnel. The driver today passes through Jersey City on a depressed pavement free of cross traffic and pedestrians and thence mounts Pulaski Skyway.

Pulaski Skyway, a \$21,000,000 improvement finished in 1932, consists of three and a half miles of elevated roadway and high fixed bridges over the navigable Hackensack and Passaic rivers. It completes the connection between the Holland tunnel and New York's main airport at Newark, N. J.

On the Manhattan end of the tunnel, New York began its first elevated highway construction in 1929. This initial section, one and



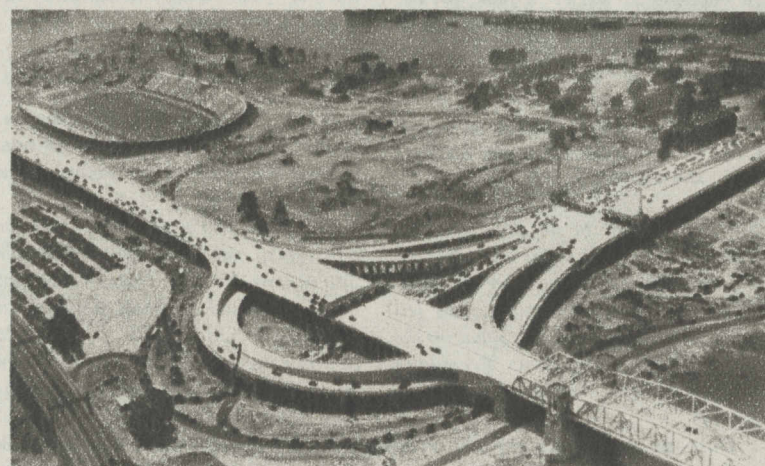
WEST SIDE ELEVATED HIGHWAY
Air view of Manhattan's express highway. The structure has proved the safety value of this particular design.

a half miles, costing \$6,500,000, was described in newspapers of the time as the beginning of a \$175,000,000 system.

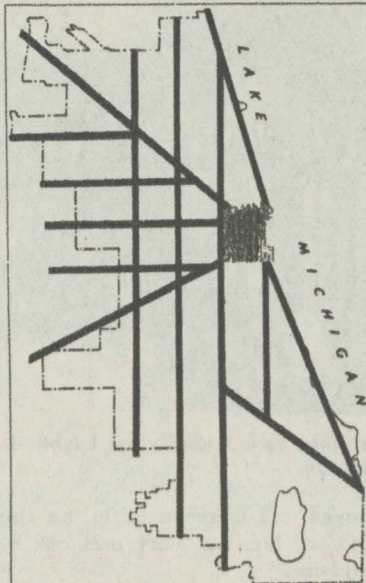
New York finished this section of its elevated roadway system in November of 1930. Other sections were opened to traffic in '32, '33, '34, '36, and '37, a steady advance that is being continued.

In 1931 New York completed another gargantuan traffic structure, the \$60,000,000 George Washington bridge across the Hudson river at the upper end of Manhattan.

Capturing publicity last year was the opening of the Triboro bridge, a \$63,000,000 project that



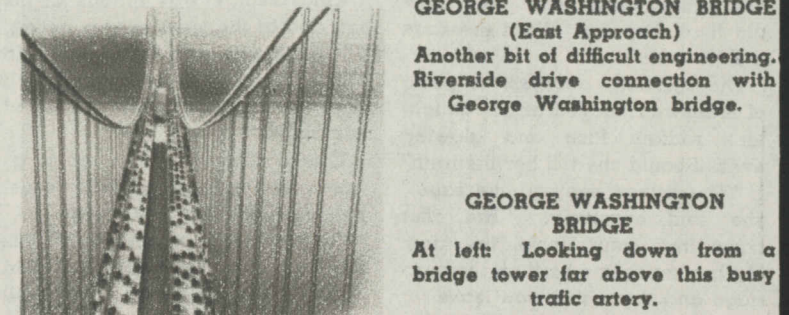
RANDALL ISLAND SEPARATION
Ramps at three levels eliminate cross traffic at this junction point in the Triboro bridge system.



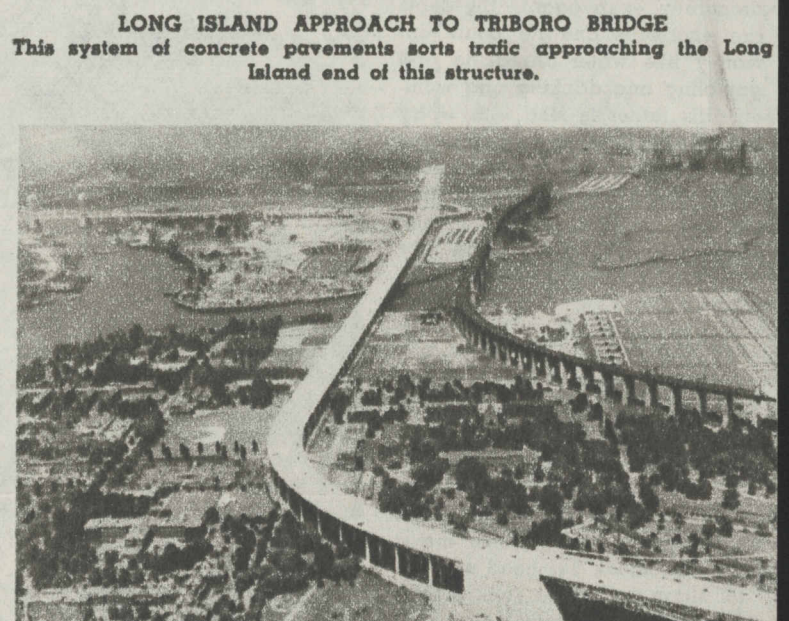
A diagrammatic map showing how 160 miles of elevated highways would serve all sections of Chicago.

links Manhattan with Queens on Long Island. An arm of the span extends to the Bronx on the mainland. It passes over two small islands in the East river, so it is really a combination of four bridges and seventeen miles of roadways, ramps, and approaches.

On Randall Island, where the three arms of the bridge join, there is a three-deck spiral of ramps to sort traffic without cross currents and with a minimum of friction. This one feature of the Triboro bridge cost \$2,000,000.



LONG ISLAND APPROACH TO TRIBORO BRIDGE
This system of concrete pavements sorts traffic approaching the Long Island end of this structure.

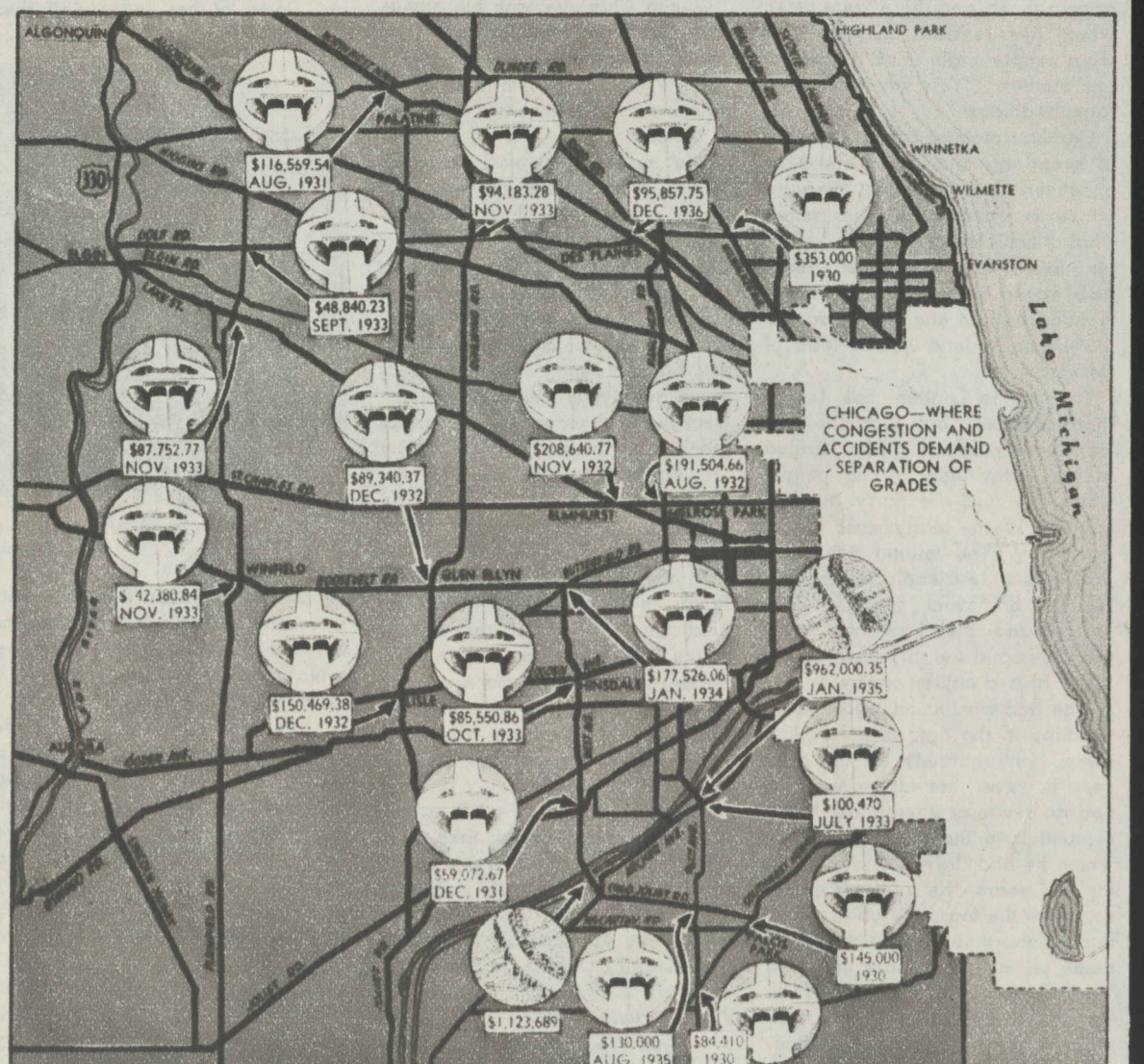


TRIBORO BRIDGE
An air view of the bridge, the size of the automobiles, mere dots in the picture, indicating its gigantic proportions.

Where does New York get the money? Manhattan is paying for the progressive construction of the west side elevated. The Holland tunnel and the George Washington bridge were built with bonds being retired by a toll of 50 cents for passenger cars and graduated higher rates for trucks. The New Jersey highway department, built Pulaski Skyway. Federal loans fin-

ished the Triboro bridge and started the new Hudson and East river tunnels. The loans are to be retired by tolls. The tariff on the Triboro is 25 cents.

It's true that local traffic in Manhattan remains slow and congested. But for through traffic—for driving into and out of the city—New York has advanced far ahead of Chicago.



Chicago has talked about superhighways more than New York, but with the exception of the shore development little has been done. This diagram shows how funds which might better have been spent to ease congestion and hazards in the city have been scattered around the countryside for grade separations, some of which were entirely unnecessary.