

## THE FUTURE IS TODAY'S CHALLENGE

By Wayne F. Kennedy

Most of us think of the future as some mysterious unknown. It is true that we cannot see clearly what is going to happen a year, a month, a week, or even a day ahead. However, I submit that we can, in a manner of speaking, see more of the future than we are aware that we can see. In other words, it is no longer a question of whether we change the world. Rather, it is a matter of what kind of world do we want.

Just for the record, the dictionary's definition of future is, "What is to come," or "What is to be." Challenge is defined as "A call to fight or a contest." My own definition of challenge is more like, "A difficult undertaking or task."

For a moment, let me digress. Let us forget about making comparisons between challenges and the relationships with the future.

Let me just mention the future of right-of-way from a highways perspective. What *is* our future? There is one point to keep in mind and that is no highway can be built without rights-of-way being acquired first. That being the case, I would say that there is a lot of work ahead for us. The nation's population continues to grow and that means more and larger cities and towns. More cities and towns means more roads. Perhaps there will not be another Interstate System, but that is only one type of road. Even though the Interstate Road System created a lot of right-of-way work, it is only 42,500 miles in length. There are 3,875,319 miles of other roads in the United States.

Do not forget that even road widenings often involve the need to acquire more right-of-way. Road widenings can result in some very complicated right-of-way takings. Also, more air rights appraisals will be required as land becomes more scarce and expensive.

By saying that the future is today's challenge I do not mean to infer in any way that we can predict the future by knowing or looking at what our challenges are. My objective is not to convince you that we all can become seers. What I do mean is that we can help determine the future by meeting head on and solving each day's challenges. It is very important that each of us does our part to push back our own professional frontiers as far as we can.

Routine day-to-day work can become dull and boring at times, no matter what one's profession may be, so we should look forward to each and every challenge for that change of pace we all need. Now, there are many kinds of challenges. Some challenges come in the form of needs to discover new and better or more efficient and effective ways of accomplishing our jobs. Some may be nothing more than "biting the bullet" and making those tough decisions which have significant political impacts and ramifications. Although the latter challenge is extremely important, I want to pay particular attention to the former.

It is most important now, for right-of-way people to become more effective and efficient than ever before. This is so because for many of us manpower and budgets are down and our workload is up or holding steady. To some extent, this challenge has always existed for most right-of-way people, but there is little doubt that we have an even bigger problem now, at least in the various levels of government. President Reagan has pledged to reduce the size of government's budget and its personnel. Many State, county, and city governments are also cutting back in the same manner.

Right-of-way people are used to difficult

tasks. No one ever claimed it was easy to take someone's home against his or her will. But right-of-way people must accomplish such tasks each day. What is more, right-of-way people must face a multitude of new and uniquely challenging tasks nearly everyday. That is because each property owner dealt with is different and has different personal problems, needs, and demands.

It is my considered opinion that we help make the future each day of our lives by facing and overcoming the many challenges of life and our work. It is only in retrospect that we come to realize how much we have affected the future.

Take the International Right of Way Association for example. Our founder, Frank C. Balfour, faced the challenge of organizing right-of-way people into a viable group of professionals that is presently recognized throughout this country, Canada, and even other parts of the world. To some extent the Frank Balfours of our world are visionaries who do, in a manner of speaking, look into the future and envision what can be. In the case of Frank C. Balfour, it took great organizational ability, persuasiveness, confidence, dedication, and a strong determination to do what needed to be done.

As another example, the large number of IR/WA training courses and the high caliber of content and high proficiency of instruction did not come about overnight. Not long ago, the IR/WA had only two courses. They were called Negotiations I and II. These became the Communications Course I and the Interpersonal Relations Course that Chuck Pyron organized with considerable help from members of this organization. It was fitting that the first courses taught through the auspices of