

Progress Review Of Highway Work Given for 1916-26

(This is another in a series of articles entitled "Glimpses at Highway History," prepared by Ralph Watson, highway department writer.)

"In harmony with the demand of the people for a curtailment of public expenditures, and in view of the fact that the state highway system has now reached a state of improvement which satisfies the most pressing of the demands for modern transportation facilities, there has been during the biennial period just closed, a marked slackening or slowing down in state highway operations." This is the first sentence of the 1923-24 report of the state highway engineer.

On November 30, two years later, the commission in its summary for the preceding two years, recalls that 1926 "rounds out a full decade since the inauguration of the present state highway program," and proceeds to take inventory of the progress of those 10 years. In 1916 there had been 33,917 registered motor vehicles in Oregon with license fees collected of \$146,232. Outside of Multnomah, excluding a few miles in Clatsop and Jackson counties, there was no pavement at all. Gravel roads were "narrow and rough"; there was no "continuity of improvement, with frequent impassable gaps." The "state highway system then existed only on paper; the Columbia highway had just been opened as a dirt road to Hood River and to Astoria. The Mt. Hood loop was only a vision. The Pacific highway was impassable after the first rains, as were all roads leading to the coast. The route to Pendleton was over the hills by a circuitous route involving long, steep grades."

At the close of 1926 there had been constructed 178 miles of cement and 550 miles of bituminous pavement in the 4,468 miles of the state highway system, plus 2,137 miles of crushed rock and gravel surfacing and 2,491 miles of grading. In addition were 371 miles of crushed rock and 461 miles of grading in the forest road program of the bureau of public roads. Multnomah county and cities of more than 2,000 population, without financial assistance from the state, had paved their streets over which the state highway route ran to give a grand total of 897 miles of pavement, 578 miles of oiled macadam, 1,747 miles of crushed rock and gravel, 301 miles graded and 947 unimproved and 575 bridges over 20 feet in length had been constructed.

In the 10 years the commission had expended, not including market road funds, \$99,001,922, of which \$12,575,876 was county, \$9,976,414 government, \$462,674 railroad and \$75,986,956 state funds. Bonded debt and interest had claimed \$15,940,531 of the state funds. In addition, upward of \$17 million of state, county and district funds had been expended under the market road law.

In this period the commission adopted the plan and set the first of the concrete mile posts along the major highways indicating the distance from Portland, commencing at Broadway and Washington streets.

A start was made at widening pavements from 18 to 20 feet to meet growing traffic demands. In 1923, 16 miles of road had been oiled, to lay dust, as an experiment; 55 miles more were added in 1924. In 1925 this was boosted by 160, and in 1926 another 343 miles—the birth of the oil mat and bituminous macadam surfacing which since has spread throughout the nation.

Log overloading and heavy freight trucks and excessive speed troubles plagued the commission then as now.

The report ends: "The commission strongly recommends that no new state highways be added to the state highway map until the present system is completed or, at least, further advanced. It is believed that the present system, which covers approximately 10 per cent of the public road mileage, is adequate to cover the needs of the state."

Water Sales Would Assist Financing of Proposed New Commission Expansion Plan

Income which would be derived from the sale of water under the proposed expansion of the city's water facilities was estimated today by Robert A. Duff, superintendent of the water commission, at more than \$5,830 per month.

Nearby communities would benefit from the proposed expansion, Duff said, but they would have to pay for it.

Amount Paid High

Records of the water commission show that outside users of Medford water have paid \$677,736.50 for water since 1927. Since Nov. 7, 1945, no new service out of the city has been granted except in organized water districts and municipalities which are under contract with the city.

This has created a large reserve of potential users, and it is expected that when the new water line is completed revenue from suburban users will run more than \$70,000 per year. No sales will be made to outside users except for the water that is available over and above requirements of the city.

Present plan for expansion of the system call for the total development of the Big Springs area for the use of the city. The transmission line capacity of both the old and new lines will be sufficient to carry 37 cubic feet of water per second, or 23,912,064 gallons per day, which is the expected maximum flow of these springs during the driest season. Life 60 Years

Since the expected life of the new line is 60 years, the capacity of the transmission pipe lines should be large enough to care for the needs of the city during the greater portion of its lifetime. The potential demand for water can only be estimated, Duff said, but population increases indicate that the addition of the new aqueduct, at the present rate of consumption, will meet about 50 years or until the population served approaches 54,000 people. During that time the city will have an excess of water for

sale to outside users. These water sales, together with revenue at existing rates by city users, will pay all the costs of the water development, Duff stated.

'COON BLITZED

Cleveland, O. — (U.P.) — Frank Harold Jr. used modern warfare methods to catch an animal prowler that got into his garage, put tracks on his new car and upset a can of blue paint. He started the engine on the car and shut the garage doors. An hour later he opened the doors and hauled out an asphyxiated 40-pound raccoon.



BAD HEADACHE—Lorraine Workman (left), 27, of Los Angeles, decided she wanted to die. After she wrote farewell notes and played a torch song on a phonograph, Miss Workman put a gun to her temple and pulled the trigger. But she didn't die. The .35-caliber bullet flattened against her skull, turned in its trajectory, coursing upwards under her scalp until it lodged at a point directly opposite point of entrance (X-ray, right). Physicians said she will have a bad headache, but will live.

Federal Excise Taxes On Cigars Reduced

Washington, May 10 — (U.P.) — House tax writers tentatively agreed today to cut federal excise taxes on cigars by one-third — about \$15 million a year.

The 33 per cent reduction voted by the house ways and means committee would affect all cigars retailing at less than 30 cents each. The present rates range from \$2.50 to \$20 a thousand.

Tallahassee, Fla. — (U.P.) — The Florida road department has named the state road from Jasper to Suwannee the Stephen Foster highway in honor of the composer of "Old Folks at Home."

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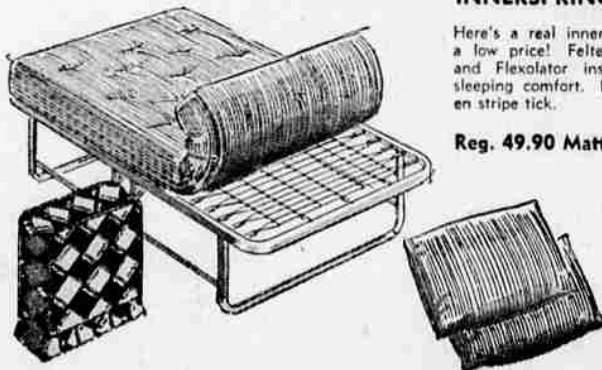
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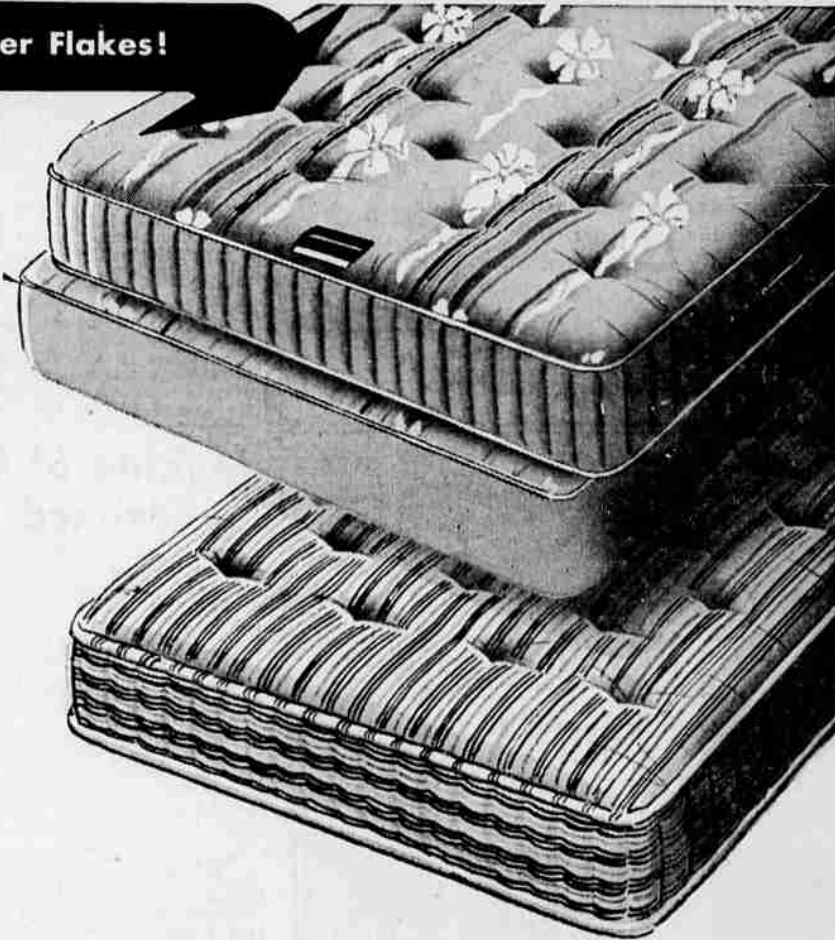
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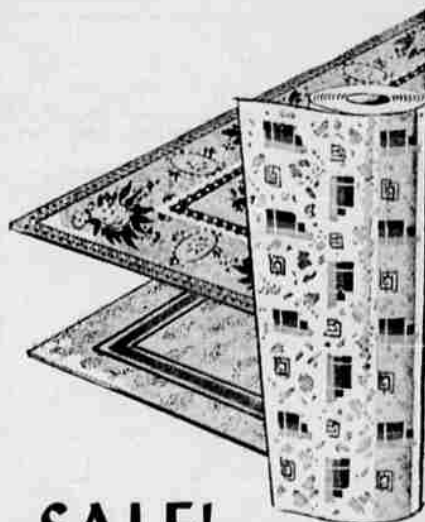
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