

Every Man Expert on Highway Doings

By PAUL W. HARVEY JR.
SALEM, Ore.—Did you ever get sore at the state highway commission? If you haven't, you're an unusual person.

It seems like all citizens have better ideas about how and where to build roads than the highway commission does. They don't hesitate to tell the commission about it, either.

Investigating the complaints of citizens takes a lot of time, but the commission does investigate each one thoroughly. Some of the complaints lead to improvements, but many of them are a little silly.

The commission gets about 25 complaints a week, not counting the many kicks about prices the commission is willing to pay for right of way.

Many of the complaints are about poor county roads. The commission answers these by saying the county courts control the county roads.

W. W. Stuffer, assistant state highway engineer, handles most of the complaints. Those aren't his only headaches, though, because he also handles enforcement of truck overloading laws, and deals with matters pertaining to the commission's Columbia river ferries between Astoria and Megler, Wash.

Quite a few people try to collect claims for damages to their cars, but the commission only pays

about one of these a month.

These claims are hard to run down. Perhaps a car is splattered by painters working on a highway bridge, or a car is hit by falling tree limbs on a state highway. Most of these claims are filed four or five months after the incidents, and the commission can't even locate the workmen involved, or find anyone who witnessed the alleged incidents.

The commission got a petition from 43 persons, asking that the highway be straightened and widened at Fred Ray's corner and in Gellally canyon. Not knowing Fred Ray personally, the commission worked several days to find out where that road is.

There's usually a lot of trouble when the commission wants to build a new route by-passing a city. The chamber of commerce and leading citizens usually battle hard to keep the road running down main street, fearing loss of business.

But in some cities, where there

is severe traffic congestion, the merchants are happy to get the highway moved outside of town.

The commission recently announced plans to build a cut-off to by-pass Dallas on the route from Salem to the coast. The cut-off would be 4.43 miles of straight road, replacing 7.1 miles of dangerous, narrow, curvy road.

That stirred up a hornet's nest of opposition in Dallas and among the farmers whose land would be crossed by the new route. But the commission whose slogan is "to do the greatest good for the greatest number," is going ahead.

Stuffer has the Astoria fishermen on his neck, too. They claim the Astoria ferries are tearing up their nets, which the commission admits.

The fishermen want the number of ferry trips reduced, and want one ferry redesigned so it might pass over the nets. Stuffer doesn't know what he'll be able to do about it, but the commission wishes the fishermen would keep

their nets out of the way.

A tourist recently wrote the governor that between Aurora and Estacada, there is a nice viewpoint across the road from a tavern. The viewpoint is on top of a cliff. There is danger of falling off, because there isn't any guard rail.

The commission found the tourist knew what he was talking about, and the commission got the Clackamas county court to put up a railing.

Now the tavern customers can cross the road and gaze with safety.

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BIG JOB
PANMUNJOM, Korea, (AP)—Allied and Communist staff officers today finished the eye-straining job of mapping the exact boundaries of a 2½ mile wide buffer zone across Korea. The job took 11 days. The work will be meaningless unless Truce negotiators agree on armistice terms by Dec. 27. If they fail, the line will be redrawn later. Lt. Col. Norman H. Edwards of Diamond, W. Va., said between 800 and 900 different map points were spelled out in six long typewritten pages.



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