

Some Road Program Phases Could Stand Good Airing

By BEM PRICE

WASHINGTON (AP) — Sooner or later Congress will lift the lid on the nation's greatest highway program in history, probably after the November election.

And there's no doubt that some phases of the \$41-billion program could stand a thorough airing.

Generally, progress is being made on a broad front, and good roads are being built at reasonable cost. But there have been setbacks and delays in some sectors — occasionally spectacular ones.

Where difficulties exist, an on-the-spot investigation of several months indicates, they often revolve around land acquisition and sometimes around contract awards and contract performance. There have been instances of complete road failures and, to use a highway engineer's term, "distressed" roads that need repair shortly after completion.

For weeks House investigators have had reports from West Virginia, Florida, and Massachusetts which point toward land speculation and fraud.

In West Virginia, certain contractors reportedly charged the state for road building materials that did not actually go into the roads.

The Florida report deals with conflict of interest cases and around Miami there are reports of speculation in land for rights-of-way.

But this is not all. A special Florida legislative committee heard accusations at a public hearing that at least eight state highway department employees had been taking under-the-table payments from a Tampa road building firm, Cone Brothers.

Upon learning of the Florida hearing, the federal Bureau of Public Roads announced Oct. 21 it had suspended federal highway aid payments on all projects in which the Cone Brothers are involved. The bureau said it did not yet know how much money was involved but had launched a full-scale investigation of the entire Cone Brothers operations.

The Department of Justice now has the 200-page report of a consulting firm hired by the U.S. Bureau of Public Roads to investigate Massachusetts.

A covering letter on the still-secret report indicates strong pressures were exerted to have land appraisers place unjustified values on selected properties.

These properties were on rights-of-way acquired by Massachusetts for the nation's super-highway program.

Standard procedure in right-of-way acquisition for the interstate program is for the states to pay for the land, then submit a claim for reimbursement to the federal government for 90 per cent of the cost.

No Massachusetts claim for right-of-way reimbursement has been honored by the federal government since last January.

In Indiana, site of the now well-known 1957 scandal, rumors still circulate of secret "deals" among politicians, businessmen and contractors.

Any effort to check these hidden relationships leads ultimately to the Indiana Department of Securities, which keeps a record of major stockholders in Indiana firms. There the check ends, the department's records are secret.

A staff member of the House subcommittee on the federal aid program was asked why the Indiana rumors had been investigated. "There have been so many and they are so complicated," he replied, "that we just haven't had the manpower to do it."

The original Indiana scandals resulted in the indictment of two top aides to former Gov. George Craig on charges of conspiring to bribe Virgil W. Smith, highway commission chairman, in connection with the purchase of highway equipment.

Smith began serving a prison sentence of 2 to 14 years last month after conviction on a charge of soliciting and accepting bribes. Three others connected with this case and another involving charges of conspiracy to embezzle \$28,000 in state funds to speculate in rights-of-way have been convicted but are free on appeal bonds.

There were also indictments against three Carpenters' Union officials and Harry Doggett, former state right-of-way official, for conspiring to sell land to the state at a \$81,000 profit. Their trial now is under way after almost three years delay. One of the officials is Maurice Hutcherson, Carpenters' Union president.

A state investigation of land purchases uncovered five property owners along Indianapolis' Madison Avenue Expressway who were paid \$117,350 for land not needed for the road.

Land is still a problem in Indiana.

State Atty. Gen. Edwin K. Steers has over 500 land condemnation cases pending in court. Steers estimated in an interview

that it costs Indiana \$2,500 to try a land case, mostly because the state pays independent fee appraisers \$50 to \$150 a day each for a court appearance. The cases rarely last less than two days, and three appraisers usually have to testify.

Juries in Indiana have had an almost unbroken record of granting large awards since 1957.

Here are three cases picked at random from court files:

Case 21135, Boone County, Lincoln Memorial Gardens, plaintiff. The state offered \$750 for a piece of property. Court appraisers fixed the value at \$14,620. The jury awarded \$22,600.

Case 9036, Jackson County, Elmo J. Briner, plaintiff. The state offered Briner \$12,714. Court appraisers set the property's value at \$21,673. The jury awarded \$28,475.

Case 31963, Clark County, James E. Hawes, plaintiff. The state offered \$2,887. Court appraisers fixed the value at \$5,539. The jury awarded \$10,750.

Why? Steers asked Judge John M. Lewis of the Jackson Circuit Court for his opinion.

"It is not mentioned in any case," Lewis wrote, "but due to the great publicity given the Madison Avenue affair, 75 per cent of the people in this country feel that since some people are going to make a fortune out of land acquisition, then the local people whose land has been appropriated should receive a higher fee than they are entitled to receive."

One of the major planks in the platform of Gov. Harold W. Handley, Craig's successor, was creation of a sound highway program.

The GOP platform for the November gubernatorial contest between Republican Crawford F. Parker and Democrat Matthew F. Welsh doesn't mention highways.

Gov. Handley observed, "All that could have been said was that the program would be continued and expanded. Why emphasize the obvious?"

In the election campaign, one of Welsh's main talking points has been the need to move faster and more efficiently on highway construction.

Early in the campaign the Republicans dumped the present highway commission chairman, John Peters.

Odd Plant Is Deceiver; Causes Woe

By DELOS SMITH
UPI Science Editor

NEW YORK (UPI) — The plant which yells three New Jersey children with "screaming hallucinations" was the one Cleopatra used in bringing Caesar to heel with results that still are remembered.

This baleful historic parallel was drawn by Dr. Solomon Weintraub in warning against the blandishments of the Jimson weed. It now is in full bloom in many parts of the country.

It's a botanical artful deceiver. The flower is white, with five lobes and is trumpet-shaped. No one disputes it is beautiful to look at, and some call it "angel tulip."

Chemically there is nothing angelic about it.

Weintraub is a pathologist, employed at St. Francis Hospital, Trenton, N.J. The children were taken there with alarming symptoms which seemed as much mental as physical. For a while no one knew what had happened to them.

The eldest was four. Two were brothers and the third was their cousin. It turned out they had been playing together in a backyard and had chewed deeply into a Jimson flower.

Weintraub was so impressed by what beauty had wrought, he checked up on Jimson weed chemically and historically and reported his findings at a recent scientific meeting. Many suppose it is native American because it flourishes here.

But 18th Century Indians called it "the white man's plant." Characters in the "Odyssey" had an encounter with a plant which certainly was similar. Homer said "the flower was like to milk." It is again described in "Romeo and Juliet."

According to a 19th Century scientific observer, Russians spiked their beer with Jimson weed, and very ancient Persian assassins spiked the food of their victims in large enough amounts to kill.

Its principal chemical is stramonium which medicinally behaves much like belladonna. Jimson weed leaves, when rolled and smoked as cigarettes, are said to relieve the symptoms of asthma in some asthmatics.

"Yankee Doodle" was written at Fort Craio, located at what now is Rensselaer, New York.

LEGAL NOTICE

S. R. E. W. M., \$100.00.
Tax Lot 2, Map 3014, Lot 3, Block 1, Opportunity Addition to Klamath Falls, 1960.

Tax Lot 200X, Map 30, P. 50, S. 1/2, Sec. 23, and P. 50, S. 1/2, Sec. 27, 1/2, 2/3, 3/4, 5/6, 7/8, 9/10, 11/12, 13/14, 15/16, 17/18, 19/20, 21/22, 23/24, 25/26, 27/28, 29/30, 31/32, 33/34, 35/36, 37/38, 39/40, 41/42, 43/44, 45/46, 47/48, 49/50, 51/52, 53/54, 55/56, 57/58, 59/60, 61/62, 63/64, 65/66, 67/68, 69/70, 71/72, 73/74, 75/76, 77/78, 79/80, 81/82, 83/84, 85/86, 87/88, 89/90, 91/92, 93/94, 95/96, 97/98, 99/100, 101/102, 103/104, 105/106, 107/108, 109/110, 111/112, 113/114, 115/116, 117/118, 119/120, 121/122, 123/124, 125/126, 127/128, 129/130, 131/132, 133/134, 135/136, 137/138, 139/140, 141/142, 143/144, 145/146, 147/148, 149/150, 151/152, 153/154, 155/156, 157/158, 159/160, 161/162, 163/164, 165/166, 167/168, 169/170, 171/172, 173/174, 175/176, 177/178, 179/180, 181/182, 183/184, 185/186, 187/188, 189/190, 191/192, 193/194, 195/196, 197/198, 199/200, 201/202, 203/204, 205/206, 207/208, 209/210, 211/212, 213/214, 215/216, 217/218, 219/220, 221/222, 223/224, 225/226, 227/228, 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