

# Military Needs Spur Highways

LINCOLN—A showdown loomed closer this week on Nebraska's major road question—a toll road or a free interstate route.

Millions of tax dollars as well as private dollars ride on the answer which must come within the next few months.

Although the question is simple, the ingredients involved in arriving at a solution are complicated, as was illustrated at a recent meeting of the state turnpike authority.

The authority was appointed by Gov. Crosby, acting under a law passed by the 53 legislature to study the feasibility of building a toll road across Nebraska. These roads, where customers pay for the privilege of driving on a fast, protected route, have been highly successful in the populous eastern part of the United States.

As if it wasn't problem enough to determine whether such a road can be made to pay in Nebraska, the turnpike authority learned it had an even bigger obstacle facing it.

That is the Nebraska link in the interstate system of highways which the U.S. defense department is anxious to have built.

The conflicts are two:

1. Both a toll road and the interstate route would probably follow much the same route. The interstate route is definitely slated to run from Omaha past Lincoln to Grand Island and on past North Platte, Sidney, and Kimball to the Wyoming border.
2. To pay for itself a turnpike would have to follow much this same route, especially the Omaha to Lincoln link. But if the federal government builds a four lane superhighway across Nebraska it is doubtful that a toll road anywhere in the vicinity could pick up enough business to pay. State Engineer L. N. Ress told the authority flatly

that both wouldn't be feasible in the same area.

**Interstate Route Difficulties—**

On the face of it there might appear to be no arguments for the toll road as against a free superhighway.

But there are certain difficulties connected with the interstate route.

Under a highway aid bill passed by Congress and signed recently by President Eisenhower there will be made available to Nebraska each year, starting July, 1955, a sum of \$2.4 million a year.

The catch is that this will have to be matched with \$1.6 million in state highway department funds every year. At present the department gets about \$9 million in revenues annually from the gasoline tax and from its share of motor vehicle license fees.

To match the federal funds for this interstate route it would take almost 20 per cent of the revenues the state highway department now gets for all roads in Nebraska.

As John Cook of Scottsbluff, member of the turnpike authority, put it, the question is whether citizens in most parts of the state will be content to put 20 per cent of their highway revenue into building a "super-highway" across the state.

the interstate defense route until we know whether we can build a toll road in Nebraska.

But Ress pointed out that planning must be done now if the state is to be ready when the first big swatch of funds is available a year from now.

The engineer did say that if a toll road is built anywhere in Nebraska he is sure there would be no need to "duplicate" it with a free superhighway.

**'Bonus' Roads—**

Governor Crosby announced \$4 million in "bonus" road improvements. This will be gravel roads which will be either blacktopped or surfaced with concrete.

They are called "bonus" because they were not scheduled under the current two year highway improvement program. But the costs of the two year program have been less than anticipated, so there will be \$2 million in state funds "left over" which matched with federal funds will make possible the "upgrading" of 125 miles of road.

Construction bids below estimates and the favorable winter which has cut maintenance costs were two big items in allowing the "bonus" package. More income from gas taxes than was anticipated is another factor.

The roads were chosen from 300 miles of road previously graded and prepared for blacktopping. All had to have a traffic count on more than 300 vehicles a day and were chosen on a scientific basis, Crosby said.

The 16 projects chosen: State highway 87 from Rushville north; US 183 from Bassett north 6 miles; US 281 from Spencer south 7.8 miles; state 35 from Norfolk to Hoskins; state 9 from Allen north and south; state 91 from Leigh east; state 15 from Syracuse south; state 15 Fairbury to Kansas line; Rusk west on state 3; Elwood to Smith on state 23; Oxford to Orleans on state 3; Sargent to Taylor on US 183; and spurs from Clarkson, Howells, and Dodge to state 91.

Oil-hungry U.S. highway 281, which passes through Holt county north-and-south via O'Neill, is getting a big share of mat work—a good many moons overdue.

that if a state sales or income tax is ever voted it wouldn't be an "extra tax." It would be used first to replace a present tax, they say.

Opponents of the bill in floor debate attacked because they said it would confuse the voters, who wouldn't know whether a vote for it was a vote for the sales tax or against it. Most of the core of this opposition came from Omaha, long a foe of any sales tax.

**Tax Reform Proposals—**

But the heart of the tax program was contained in four other proposals which the legislature placed on the November ballot. Advocates of the measures said they are necessary to knock out certain restrictive clauses in the constitution which stand in the way of efforts to improve the Nebraska tax system.

They are:

LB 1: This would allow the voters to approve an amendment to allow the establishment of a state tax commission. At present the tax board is the state board of equalization, composed of the governor, state treasurer, state auditor, secretary of state, and state tax commissioner. All but the tax commissioner are elected and critics of the present system charge that politics often makes them timid in enforcing taxes. Also, the elective officers can't give full time to taxes and aren't well acquainted with the problems. This bill had relatively little opposition and passed 37-5.

LB 2: This places on the ballot a proposal that county assessors either be elected or appointed. At present the constitution requires that they be elected. Students of the Nebraska tax system say that it is doubtful that assessors can be improved as long as assessments are made by a county assessor who must run for re-election every four years. If the voters approve this amendment, it would not mean a change necessarily. That would be up to the legislature. The state association of county assessors has advocated this proposition. The bill got steady opposition from senators who claimed it would take away more local rule. It was finally passed by a 30-11 vote.

LB 3: Under this bill Nebraska voters will have a chance to decide whether they want a partial or complete exemption of household goods from taxation. At present there is only a \$200 exemption on this item. Advocates of the bill said that Nebraska assessors have to spend 90 percent of their effort to get listings of this category which produces only about two percent of the tax. Surprisingly, this bill picked up plenty of opposition. Some said it was a "rich man's move" because it would exempt more furnishings from taxation in a wealthy home. It takes 26 votes to put a constitutional proposal on the ballot and this measure passed by a bare 26-15 vote.

LB 4: This proposal is called the "heart" of any tax reform program. It also occasioned the most vigorous scrapping in the past special session. Under this proposition voters would decide whether they want to relax the rigid "uniformity of assessments" clause in the constitution to allow new standards for assessing real estate and other tangible property. Advocates say it is necessary to take real estate out of its current "assessment straitjacket." Under the present constitutional provision, real estate must be assessed at current market value, a difficult figure to find many times. Tax experts say it would be better to be able to use long term average sales prices, income from the land or building, and other factors. Opposition was most vigorous from the railroads and other groups which apparently figured it might harm special formulas for taxation granted them through the years. The bill was killed in committee, revived 32 to 2 after days of debate, and finally passed by a 39 to 1 margin which belied the bitter struggles over it.

**Promotional Cost—**

Still to be answered was the question of who will foot the bill for carrying an educational campaign to the voters on these measures. The state's grain and seed dealers were expected to help. They had sought an amendment under LB 4 to allow a different method of taxing grain. But this was junked at the last minute as the opposing groups in the legislature sought a compromise on some bill they could get passed. It was still possible to consider that some real estate groups, or the Nebraska Education association, or the Chambers of Commerce might pick up the tab.

**Slap and Backslap—**

In the closing days of the ses-

sion Governor Crosby made two appearances before the legislature, both completely different.

One afternoon he appeared to tell the legislature it had exceeded its authority in asking the state board of equalization to appear before it to explain 1955 motor vehicle assessments. Crosby said that under the American form of government the theory of separation of powers of the legislative, executive and judicial branches of government must be upheld.

Most senators reacted well, agreeing that they had "stuck their nose in others' business." Some said that all they had asked was information, however, and didn't deserve this slap.

The next day as the session adjourned Crosby appeared and complimented the legislature on a good job. He said he knew it had been a "most difficult" session but said it was important because it got tax issues out into the open where they could be debated before the citizens of the state. He said if it hadn't acted nothing could have been done about taxes until 1957.



### Betrothal Told

Mrs. Clara Johnson announces the engagement and approaching marriage of her daughter, Miss Betty (above), to Cec Bishop, son of Mr. and Mrs. Hugh Bishop of Newton, Ia. Miss Johnson has been bookkeeper for the Consumers Public Power district of O'Neill for the past three years. Mr. Bishop has been employed by the U.S. government at Guam the past 1 1/2 years. A June wedding is planned to take place in Los Angeles, Calif.

### Scout Camporee Set for Atkinson Park

ATKINSON—Boy Scouts from the area of the north-central district will camp at Atkinson state park, two miles west of town, Friday, May 21, to Friday, May 28.

A camporee will be held Friday through Sunday. To climax the camporee, demonstrations by Scouts and a cub kite contest will be staged Sunday afternoon.

In charge of arrangements is George B. Burkland, jr., of Atkinson, district scout executive. Burkland recently located at Atkinson, coming here from Omaha.

### O'Neill Girl with Touring College Unit

Miss Barbara Bennett of Minnesota Bible college of Minneapolis, Minn., returned Monday, May 10, from a 10-day spring tour sponsored by the college. She traveled with a girls' cappella quartet, "God's Grace Notes," Richard Hayes of Minneapolis, a violinist, and also a member of the University of Minnesota symphony orchestra, and Prof. Don L. Riffin, faculty advisor and speaker.

They traveled through eight states, going as far east as Pennsylvania, presenting programs in the Churches of Christ. Miss Bennett also presented pictures in chalk art, accompanied by Miss Betty King, soloist.

This group was one of nine groups which altogether traveled as far south as Louisiana, north to Canada, east to Pennsylvania and west to the Dakotas, promoting the college. This is Miss Bennett's second year to travel on the tour.

The group of girls known as "God's Grace Notes," has done much traveling presenting programs of sacred music. They

have journeyed weekends to Wisconsin, Illinois and many cities in Minnesota.

WD—Bernard S Mullen to M Genevieve Harty 4-8-54 \$1-NW 1/4 28-29-11

### MILLER THEATER

Atkinson

Fri.-Sat. May 21-22



Sun.-Mon.-Tues. May 23-24-25



Wed.-Thurs. May 26-27



### McCartis Honored on Recent Anniversary

John and Bill Cook entertained a group of friends at their home recently honoring Mr. and Mrs. Fred McCart on their sixth wedding anniversary. The evening was spent playing cards. Those present were Mr. and Mrs. Fred McCart and family, Mr. and Mrs. Joe Soukup and Joann, Mr. and Mrs. Frank Soukup and Gene, Mr. and Mrs. Donald Marcellus and girls, Mr. and Mrs. Anton Jirak, Mr. and Mrs. James Fleming and sons, Frank and Joe, Mr. and Mrs. Joe Peter, Mr. and Mrs. Stanley Peter and family, Mr. and Mrs. Joe Wagman and son, Raymond, and Henry Cook.

Lunch was served.

### COURSES ANNOUNCED

The adult education department of Norfolk Junior college has announced a current history course will run May 21-June 4, 8 a.m., to 12 noon daily. A modern science course will be offered June 11-25; speech for teachers, July 2-16; practical arts, August 6-20.

Tune in "Voice of The Frontier", thrice weekly!

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# PUBLIC SALE

HAVING SOLD my place and given possession of same, I will offer the following described personal property at public auction on the premises, located 6 miles south and 1/2 mile west of Chamber, OR 2 miles north and 5 1/2 miles west of Hoerle's Station, on —

## Friday, May 28th

— Sale Will Start at 1 P.M. —

- 46 - Head of CATTLE - 46**
- Hereford Bull, 2-yrs.-old
  - 4—Cows, 3-yrs.-old, to calve in fall
  - 15—Cows with Calves at Side
  - 3—Springers
  - Heifer, 2-yrs.-old, to freshen
  - 7—Heifers, 2-yrs.-old, to calve in fall

## Machinery & Equipment, Etc.

- IHC F-12 Tractor
- IHC Power Mower, 7-ft.
- Hay Stacker
- Hay Sweep for Tractor
- 12-Ft. Hay Rake
- Deering Mower, 6-ft.
- Single-Row Cultivator
- Wagon & Hayrack
- Stock Chute
- Registered Brand
- 1939 Chevrolet 1/2-Ton Pickup
- Some Fence Posts

## Household Goods

China Closet — Power Washing Machine with Briggs & Stratton Motor  
NUMEROUS OTHER ARTICLES — TERMS: CASH

## Lawrence Wolken Owner

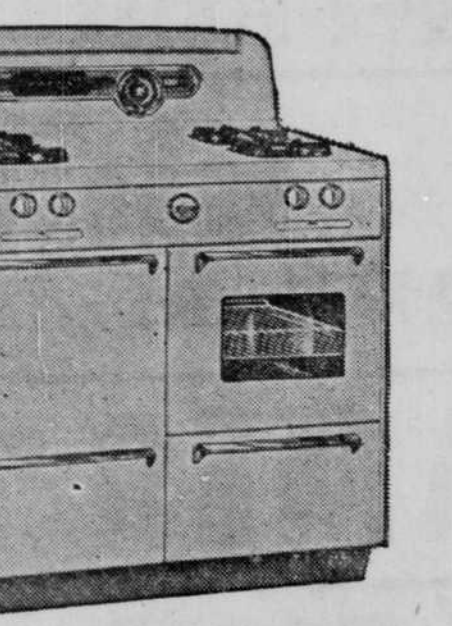
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