

Hearing on San Diego Freeway Scheduled by State Committee

By CHARLES E. CHAPPEL, Assemblyman

At my request, the Joint Interim Committee on Highway Problems will hold public hearings in the Los Angeles area on Sept. 24, 25 and 26. One of these days will be devoted to the San Diego Freeway at a hearing to be held in Inglewood. Citizens and public officials of Inglewood, Westchester, Playa del Rey, El Segundo, Manhattan Beach, Hermosa Beach, Redondo Beach, Torrance, Palms Verdes Estates, Rolling Hills, Rolling Hills Estates, and Portuguese Bend will be asked to testify and any questions they have will be answered by experts from the State Division of Highways who will be present.

The Joint Interim Committee on Highway Problems, of which I have been a member for several years, is composed of seven senators and seven members of the Assembly. In addition, the speaker of the Assembly and the president of the Senate are ex officio members.

But of the 14 regular members, Los Angeles County has three: Senator Richard Rich, Assemblyman William F. Marsh, and me. We have been attending hearings all up and down the state for the very simple reason that if we do not attend the hearings in other counties, the other commissioners will not listen to our problems. If you want to attend the hearing on the San Diego Freeway in Inglewood, please write to me at P.O. Box 777, Inglewood 5, and I shall send you a postal card giving the exact time and place.

California state highway financing was put on a pay-as-you-go basis in 1923. The first major change in highway legislation thereafter was the Collier-Burns Act of 1947. Incidentally, the Collier in the name of this law is Senator Randolph Collier, chairman of the Joint Interim Committee on Highway Problems, and also chairman, Senate Transportation Committee. He is often called "Mr. Highway," because he is the most powerful man in the California Legislature because of his experience, seniority, and native ability.

The Collier-Burns Act of 1947 increased the gasoline tax from 3 to 4 cents a gallon, raised registration and truck weight fees, instituted an operator's license charge and provided that proceeds of the transportation taxes would be used for highway purposes only. In addition, the Collier-Burns Act made the State Division of Highways almost entirely self-governing with an automatic appropriation, simply because all expenses of the Division of Highways come directly from highway-user taxes and not from the general fund of the state.

The people of California prior to 1947 had said that they wanted to "take highways out of politics" and they succeeded so well that the State Legislature finds it extremely difficult to get the State Division of Highways to do anything it does not want to do unless we present a united front of cities and counties working together.

For example, if the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, and the councils of the several cities interested in the San Diego Freeway, do not present a mutual agreement, then the State Division of Highways uses that failure to agree as an excuse to postpone work on that part of the state's highway and freeway program.

In 1953, the Legislature increased the gasoline tax to 6 cents a gallon and raised certain other highway user levies. In addition to state funds, the federal government is contributing funds administered by the U. S. Bureau of Public Roads, although the planning and actual construction supervision is a California State Division of Highways responsibility.

The Legislature designates the general routes which comprise the State Highway System. The Legislature has delegated to the California Highway Commission the authority to adopt the specific routings along that system, to allocate available highway funds to develop certain highways to be freeways, and to approve county systems of primary roads. Six commissioners are appointed by the Governor to four-year terms set by law. The Director of Public Works is a member of the Highway Commission and ex officio chairman.

Under him, the State Division of Highways, as well as other public works activities,

but the point I am making is people going through the Legislature of Highways. Sometimes people tell me they wish we could go back to Commission but simply set up. With my seniority and

the days when the Legislature down and traded votes until a highway program was patched together. I think the present method of highway program was patched together. I think the present method of highway program was patched together. I think the present method of highway program was patched together.

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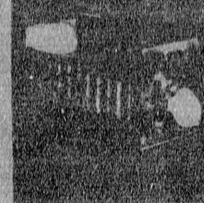
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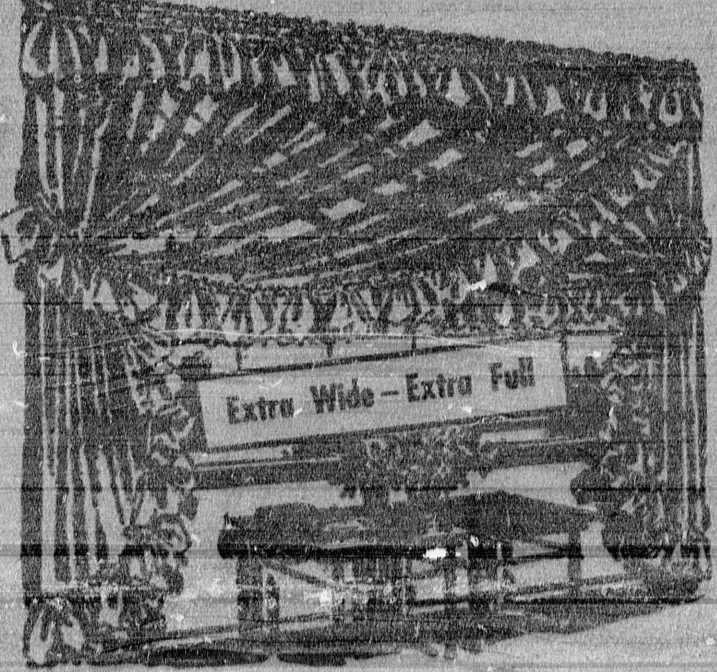
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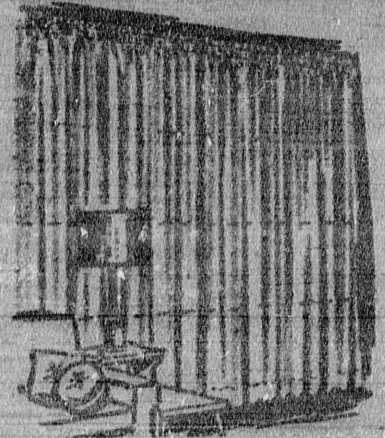
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