

In 1956 when the National Defense Highway System, or Interstate System, was created, some serious omissions were made. Particularly, Interstate 35-W was programmed to terminate at Salina, Kansas, which left Nebraska without a north-south interstate highway. It is approximately four hundred and fifty miles from the Missouri River at Omaha to the western frontier of the state and from this frontier to Interstate 25, and the first north-south interstate connection west of Omaha, is another fifty miles.

The area between Omaha on the east and Interstate 25 is primarily agricultural. For all practical purposes there are no rail connections between it and the rapidly growing markets at Kansas City, Houston, Dallas-Fort Worth, Oklahoma City-Tulsa, and Wichita. Consequently, heavy traffic in fertilizer and farm equipment from the petrochemical and manufacturing industries in Texas, Oklahoma, and Kansas must move north by truck to this area while grain and livestock flow south, principally in the Hiway #81 traffic corridor. Approximately thirty-five percent of the traffic on the highway is commercial trucks. Twenty-five percent is considered normal by the Nebraska Department of Roads.

Also, two state capitols, Pierre in South Dakota and Bismarck in North Dakota, were left without north-south interstate connections by the failure to extend Interstate 35 W. north from Salina, Kansas. Our association strongly urges the construction of Interstate 35-W north from Salina, Kansas, to Yankton, South Dakota, and thence northerly in the great natural highway of the Missouri River bottom to Pierre and Bismarck.

Turning to the ABC program, Congressman Denney has very kindly furnished me with abstracts of the testimony of Robert S. Holmes of the American Road Builders Association and Ross G. Stapp of the American Association of State Highway Officials. I concur completely when these gentlemen contend that the heavy emphasis placed on completing the Interstate system since 1956 has resulted in the neglect of our ABC roads. This neglect assumes considerable importance for highways like Nebraska U.S. Highway No. 81 should the Congress determine against additions to the National Defense Highway System because that system will funnel enormous traffic flows onto wholly inadequate ABC roads at interstate terminal points such as Salina.

My principal experience and concern is with Nebraska U.S. Highway No. 81, of course, but examples like No. 81 must be legion throughout the ABC system.

Permit me to use Nebraska U.S. Highway No. 81 to illustrate then. The road is two hundred and thirteen miles long from Chester at Nebraska's southern border to Yankton, South Dakota, on the Missouri River on the north. Nebraska uses a sufficiency rating system to grade the adequacy of its highways based upon a scale of one hundred. According to the *Fifth Biennial Report, 1965-1966* of the Nebraska Department of Roads:

"Needs are considered urgent for all roads which have a sufficiency rating below 70. . . ."

The sufficiency ratings contained in the Department of Roads' *1967-1969 Program For Highway Improvement* reveal that one hundred twelve miles of Nebraska U.S. Highway No. 81 is in the "urgent" needs category. An additional thirty-seven miles needs improvement, according to the sufficiency ratings, although these miles do not fall into the area of "urgent" needs.

These needs will continue to become more acute. According to traffic flow surveys produced by the Nebraska Department of Roads, traffic increased on Nebraska U.S. Highway No. 81 by an average of four hundred forty vehicles per day in the period from January 1, 1962, to December 31, 1966. Since these surveys are updated every two years by the Department, these are the most recent figures available.

Parenthetically, I might add that our association disagrees frequently with the Nebraska Department of Roads on sufficiency ratings. We feel that as much as one hundred seventy-five miles of Nebraska U.S. Highway No. 81 falls into the urgent needs category.

The effect of this generally poor condition of the road coupled with rising traffic volume upon safety is profound. According to the most recent figures published by the Accident Records Bureau of the Nebraska Department of Roads, there was one personal injury or property damage traffic accident for every forty-one thousand passenger miles traveled on the highway last year. This is the highest accident frequency rate per passenger miles traveled of any ABC highway in Nebraska.

And the safety problem will be magnified in the future. Donald Coffey, in charge of design engineering for the Nebraska Department of Roads, recently