

HEARING OF CHEROKEE, CRAWFORD AND LABETTE COUNTIES
DELEGATION BEFORE THE HIGHWAY COMMISSION, FEBRUARY
11th, 1931.

Mr. Joe Gateskill of Girard: This delegation is from Labette, Cherokee and Crawford Counties. We are here after information and to divulge some information. As I am told, Number 7 Highway where it goes south from Fort Scott has been on the minutes of the Commission changed from its original routing to a road that goes directly south from Fort Scott to Pittsburg. Is that correct?

Mr. Moore: That is correct.

Mr. Gateskill: And the contract let?

Mr. Moore: The contract has been let and the contractors are working on the hard surfacing on that road.

Mr. Gateskill: We would like to know under what authority the Commission is permitted to move 7 from its original routing?

Mr. Moore: We think we have the authority under the law, and have been taking that attitude in other cases, and have made minor changes over the state.

Mr. Gateskill: Where the highway has been changed there are five railroad crossings over the road, and where it was there is only one railroad crossing over the original road. Is that correct?

Mr. Moore: I don't know. I would have to check that up. The contract is let for five miles south from Fort Scott.

Mr. Gateskill: The next information we desire is in regard to the link between Crestline and Riverton on 96. The people of Cherokee County want to know whether that road which has recently been graveled is now to be concreted?

Mr. Moore: Yes, it is now to be concreted.

Mr. Gateskill: How soon will the contract be let?

Mr. Moore: I don't know when the contract will be let.

Mr. Gateskill: Soon?

Mr. Moore: I think tolerably soon.

Delegate: How about the mile back from the south end of the new road back to Number 7?

Mr. Moore: That is not in the contract for paving, but it is surfaced with gravel and will be maintained.

Delegate: Is it the Commission's idea to change 73 as well as 7?

Mr. Moore: 73 E is a benefit district road in Bourbon and Crawford Counties. They are drawing refunds and we do not intend to take the refunds away, and the road is not changed. That is true in Bourbon County and in Crawford County as well.

Mr. Gateskill: If this contract is completed for the five miles south of there which is now under construction, will 7 be placed back on its original routing?

Mr. Moore: No. It will be placed on the concrete slab. The old five miles will go back to the county as county road.

Dr. Brookhart: We feel that the road south of Crestline and the paving going south into Oklahoma carries three times the amount of travel and should have the pavement.

Mr. Moore: The traffic maps show the road under construction and therefore not carrying its usual amount of traffic because it was not in condition. On the road west of Baxter Springs there is heavy traffic and it is hard to maintain the road.

Mr. Gateskill: In the notes that the stenographer is taking, is she taking Doc Moore's answers?

Stenographer: Yes.

Mr. Gateskill: May we have a copy of this record?

Mr. Moore: I have no objection to your having a copy if the secretary has time to transcribe it. You can see my copy.

Mr. C. J. York of Girard: (Mr. York shows a map to the Commission and refers to this map showing the roads about which he is talking) We had this map made by the engineer showing 73 and 7 from Fort Scott. This contract is let for $6\frac{1}{2}$ miles?

Mr. Moore: Five miles, I think.

Mr. York: This $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles is 73 E. What we are objecting to is that at the time this bill went through the Legislature it was understood that the county commissioners and the Highway Commission was to lay out the state highways and this was designated as 7. We have not got any objection to this five miles of concrete, but we are objecting to this Number 7 being taken off the original routing and placed over here. We have had a survey made on this road. The grade will show that there is an elevation of about seventy feet. This road is not graded. It is merely a country road throwed up with a little bit of chats on it, and it connects with a concrete slab here. Is that treating the towns fair? You are going to route Number 7 on this. This is macadam at the present time, and that's what we are objecting to.

Mr. Moore: The one mile will be fixed up to be in good shape. It will be graded and graveled and in the past has been a detour for 73E. The fact is, that is old asphalt put on top of a cheap rock road and it is in bad condition and in a dangerous condition.

Mr. York: I took an engineer up there from Baxter Springs, and without saying a word to him about it, he said "Well, what's the matter with this road?" when we got into Bourbon County. If you will take this road you won't need to spend your money. You are carrying this road down here five miles. The main idea is to carry it down to Arma, Kansas.

Mr. Moore: That is not the intention. 73 E may go over there, but 7 won't. We have more miles of state road than we are going to be able to take care of. The state system will be, in my opinion, to an extent re-routed by some Legislature.

Mr. York: You cross five railroad tracks to get over here. I have checked it myself. You only cross one track on this road.

Delegate: You cross the Frisco as well on that road. That makes two tracks as against five on the other route.

Mr. York: I will say further from an engineering standpoint, you will find out you will have to put water ways on all your pavement from Fort Scott to Arma.

Mr. Moore: That is not in consideration. It is only five miles.

Mr. York: When it comes up here on 73 and 7 - I will show you on the map which we have - Here is 73 at the south edge of Fort Scott, and Number 7, and you have to follow 7 on a new brick pavement, and from there on in Bourbon County it is macadam clear to the Crawford County line, and in good shape. Now if you would bring it down here, see. This road here connects the Bourbon County seat with Girard, the Crawford County seat, and with Columbus, the Cherokee County seat, and all we are asking of you is to leave Number 7 on its original routing. That's all we are asking.

Delegate: I would like to put this into the record too. There is a mile from the concrete slab which is being built at the present time, across to Number 7 - I guess it is not quite a mile - but you are elevating the grade on that from the starting of the concrete slab it goes to about 68 feet. It is 68 feet lower at the proposed slab. This road is no state road or county road in any shape at all today. And then the turn coming off of this concrete there is a big gully that will have to be filled.

Mr. M. G. Slawson: Where this Number 7 is proposed to turn it back from the south end of the slab to the original Number 7, where it leaves the south end of the slab within two hundred feet it crosses two tracks of the Missouri Pacific at an elevation of from ten to twelve feet. At the north end of this proposed mile connecting the south end of the slab with the original Number 7, is a deep depression, a slough. I don't know that any plan is contemplated for taking that over a turn at that corner. It is a bad place, a high grade and you can't see the road farther than two hundred feet because of the railroad grade. We are not objecting to the paving if you want to pave that five miles, but we do believe that a road that has been established for four years, a state road connecting county seats, two of which towns will be avoided because there will be no Number 7, and we think there will be that gap from information that has come to us that we think is being contemplated. We do want Number 7 left where it was originally located and has been for years.

Delegate: I would like to inquire about the paving of 96 from Riverton north to the Crestline corner. I understood you to say the concreting of that had been authorized and the letting had not been done?

Mr. Moore: Yes.

Delegate: How soon will it be let?

Mr. Moore: I could not tell you how soon that will be let. Soon. But I couldn't say how soon.

Delegate: Within the next sixty days?

Mr. Moore: Yes, I should say so.

Delegate: Are you going to leave it with its present number 96?

Mr. Moore: Yes, we have no expectation of changing 96 or 73 E. There is no intention of that. There is a lot of talk about that but it is not true. The road at one place is marked 73-7. That is the section number and is the way the roads are divided into sections for the convenience of the department.

Delegate: Is the proposition of concreting 96 from Riverton to Crestline an outworking of the Commission itself or a demand from that part of the country?

Mr. Moore: Some of the people wanted it.

Delegate: If we could prove to you that seventy-five per cent of the people wanted the other road, would that have an effect?

Mr. Moore: How could you do that?

Delegate: We could see them individually.

Mr. Moore: You couldn't see that many people. I know that Baxter Springs, Galena and Crestline want this road.

Delegate: A very small percentage of them.

Mr. Moore: That is a matter of opinion. These roads are not merely local roads.

Delegate: The Commission is directed by the law to make its first roads connected.

Mr. Hiller: I understood you to say that it is the policy of this Board to put these roads where they will give the most service?

Mr. Moore: Yes.

Mr. Hiller: That road south from Fort Scott has not been -- You are throwing away a lot of good money.

Mr. Moore: My judgment would be that 73 will go on that route.

Mr. Gateskill: Number 7 will go on that route too?

Mr. Moore: I doubt it.

Delegate: What is the idea in taking Number 7 from where it was?

Mr. Moore: It answers both purposes there.

Delegate: How will you get into Girard?

Mr. Moore: No trouble. It goes right on down. The state will not give up Number 7.

Delegate: Has that request from Galena and Baxter Springs for the paving of 96 from Riverton to Crestline, come of their own volition or has it been solicited?

Mr. Moore: They have talked to me in the past voluntarily. People from Girard, Fort Scott, Galena, Pittsburg and Baxter Springs.

Mr. Gateskill: That's the idea, to divert the traffic down through Pittsburg.

Mr. Moore: Not to my knowledge. You are seeing ghosts and a nightmare.

Mr. Gateskill: No, Doc. You know we will be left high and dry as we have been in the past when you make up your mind to put something through.

Mr. Moore: You might get what you want, a road to Wichita, if you would go do something in the place of sitting still and hollering.

Mr. Gateskill: Not until Number 12 is done?

Mr. Moore: I offered to help you.

Delegate: Do you remember Bellaires and I were up on two occasions and you asked us about how we were going to get across Neosho County?

Mr. Moore: What have you done to help yourselves on the Wichita road? The fellows at Pittsburg will go to work and they will put up their money to build roads.

Delegate: If you were a traveller and came to that place on the road, what would you do?

Mr. Moore: I would follow my map.

Delegate: The fact that there are five railroad tracks to cross if Number 7 is to go to the west there getting to the point where the proposed mile will come back on 7, is that a less dangerous thing for the public?

Mr. Moore: You will answer that for yourself.

Delegate: Is it more dangerous to cross five tracks, or one?

Mr. Moore: You have dangerous conditions on both roads.

Delegate: Why wasn't Number 7 fixed up instead of this road?

Mr. Moore: It is Number 7.

Delegate: We would like to have a copy of the records at the earliest possible moment. We are trying to be reasonable down there.

Mr. Moore: I have no objection to your having it.

Mr. Slawson: You made a statement covering our point. You said there would not be any change in the routing of 73 E, that it will be carried on through to the state line?

Mr. Moore: There will not be. I want 73 E to stay where it is marked. They talk of taking 73 E to the Oklahoma line and switching it over to Number 66. You will hear all kinds of talk, but there is nothing to it.

Delegate: Will the Commission take any action on this request about leaving Number 7 on its original routing?

Mr. Moore: I don't see how we can because we can't add any additional road mileage.

Delegate: Why was it put over there originally?

Mr. Moore: It was in bad condition and dangerous, and this does for the two roads.

Delegate: Thank you for your time.