

OCTOBER, 1956

GOVERNOR'S COMMISSION ON ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL TRENDS IN IOWA

("Committee of One Hundred")

Final Report of the Sub-Committee on

T R A N S P O R T A T I O N

Members of the Sub-Committee:

- Robert H. Caldwell, Cedar Rapids (Acting Chairman)
- James F. Mulqueen, Council Bluffs (Acting Secretary)
- John J. Brady, Fort Dodge
- Professor Harvey C. Bunke, Iowa City
- W. T. Mahoney, Sioux City
- John Ruan, Des Moines
- Professor William H. Thompson, Ames

Transportation is the artery through which the benefits of trade and commerce flow. The economic and political development of Iowa has been recorded by the ever-changing evolution of transportation in our State. From the canoe and rafts of the early fur traders to the modern passenger and cargo air liners, each advance in the concept of transportation has widened the horizon and potentials of trade, commerce, and agriculture in the State of Iowa.

In the space of 150 years, we have seen the transformation of Iowa from a virgin wilderness traversed only by a few roving bands of Indians to a teeming agricultural and industrial state, one of the most prosperous in our nation. All this was possible because of the evolution of transportation. The roving fur trader with his pack horses, the early settler with his ox cart, the covered wagons of the homesteaders, the railroads that opened up the channels of trade and agriculture, the advent of the motor car and truck, and the air plane have each in their turn advanced and promoted the economy of our State.

We have and we will continue to see old concepts of transportation discarded, new ones adopted. The economic, industrial and agricultural progress of the State of Iowa will depend in great measure on the type and quality of transportation which its leaders provide for it.

With this background in mind, your sub-committee on transportation has, in several meetings, reviewed the transportation system of Iowa. We have generally concluded that although there are many deficiencies that should be remedied, basically the State of Iowa has a good transportation system, one that can adequately support and encourage more industry than we have at present.

We find that Iowa has 12 steam and/or diesel railroads, 6 electric lines, and 3 terminal railroads operating more than 8500 miles of railroad track, ranking Iowa fourth in the nation, connecting Iowa producers with their far-flung markets. Ninety-eight (98) interstate and 70 intrastate motor carriers form a network serving Iowa and connecting every county in the State with such regional marketing centers as Chicago, Minneapolis, St. Paul, Milwaukee, Omaha, Kansas City, and St. Louis. Overnight service is possible from most points. Thirty-four (34) bus lines or passenger motor carriers are available to our citizens. Both freight and passenger carriers have nearly 9000 miles of concrete paved roads upon which to travel. Five federal highways run border to border, east and west; seven federal highways run north and south. A reasonably good system of state highways intermesh with the federal system. Approximately 730 miles of four-lane super highways are under construction. Two trunk line air lines with 51 north-south and east-west flights plus several local service routes provide 13 Iowa cities, widely distributed throughout the State, with commercial air service. Approximately 100 municipal and commercial airports are available. All-in-all, the people and the products of Iowa are within hours of any point in our country, within days of any point in the world. Two navigable rivers, the Mississippi and the Missouri, provide

low-cost barge transportation to our industries. With the completion of the St. Lawrence Waterway and the channel connecting the Chicago river to the Mississippi, the Great Lakes will also be open to Iowa industries.

As we interpret our functions as a sub-committee, we are not expected to arrive at definite conclusions, but rather to define general areas of transportation in our State which, in our opinion, appear to have problems warranting further study and recommendation. The following represent problems which are so complex and so important to the various transport industries, to the shippers and to the public that the committee has neither the time nor the resources that are necessary for making definite recommendations:

1. Effective enforcement of present and future laws with respect to common, contract, and private carriers. While there is agreement as to the need for modifying present legislation, disagreement arises as to what form these modifications should take. Some groups advocate more stringent regulation; others feel that the existing high level of regulation is not conducive to a transport system which satisfies the needs of the Iowa economy. There is substantial evidence to indicate that present legislation, because of the lack of policing or the very nature of the existing legislation, cannot or is not administered in a manner which treats all carriers of a given class in the same fashion. The law should therefore be amended so that discrimination in regulation should be eliminated. This may be accomplished by strengthening or reducing regulation imposed on the various types of carriers. The committee was not able to reach any unanimity of opinion as to which of these two actions is more desirable.

2. The adequacy of our present highway system for future development of our State. Our present policy for distributing highway users funds is neither economical nor equitable. Devoting large sums of money to provide and maintain rural roads which receive little use is one of the major factors which has precluded Iowa from developing a primary road system equal to those

"boasted" by her sister states. Although the federal interstate highway system will go far in elevating some of the most acute highway needs, "fair play" as well as the needs of a state moving toward industrialization demands that a greater share of the user funds be allocated to primary roads. In conjunction with this it is recommended that legislation be enacted and that the Iowa Highway Commission be granted authority in the allocation of funds to primary, secondary and farm to market roads and be permitted to withdraw state aid from farm roads when traffic falls below a pre-established minimum.

3. Uniform vehicle and transportation laws, both interstate and intrastate. ^{should} Legislation/be enacted and administered which would protect all forms of transportation in Iowa. There is certain legislation in force which is designed to compel out-of-state motor vehicles to pay Iowa taxes, commensurate with their use of Iowa roads. Past experience in the administration of these laws prompts the committee to encourage further study by the legislature as a means of gaining the results anticipated by previous legislation. The committee strongly recommends the need for uniform reciprocity agreements and that Iowa as a state should give study to the desirability of federal laws governing state reciprocity agreements.

4. Integration and coordination of the powers and duties of various state agencies who now regulate transportation into one combined department of transportation so as to secure maximum utilization of our transportation system. The current state of affairs in regulation is chaotic. This is particularly true with respect to motor carriers. The division of authority among a number of agencies explains much of the confusion and discrimination now apparent in enforcing legislation. Along these lines, it is recommended that one state transportation agency be established and empowered to administer all legislation and regulate all forms of transportation. It is further recommended that members of this agency be appointed rather than elected.

5. A rate structure which will be conducive to attracting new in-

dustry to Iowa. This is not meant to imply that current rate structures discriminate against Iowa. Rather the function of such a study would be for the purpose of determining, in view of existing freight rates which industries Iowa could expect to attract. Moreover, such a study would be helpful in working out with all forms of transportation, more favorable freight rates which would increase Iowa's industrial growth and at the same time provide more traffic for the carriers.

The transportation system of Iowa has contributed immeasurably to its economy in the past; basically, it is in good shape today; it faces a challenging tomorrow.
