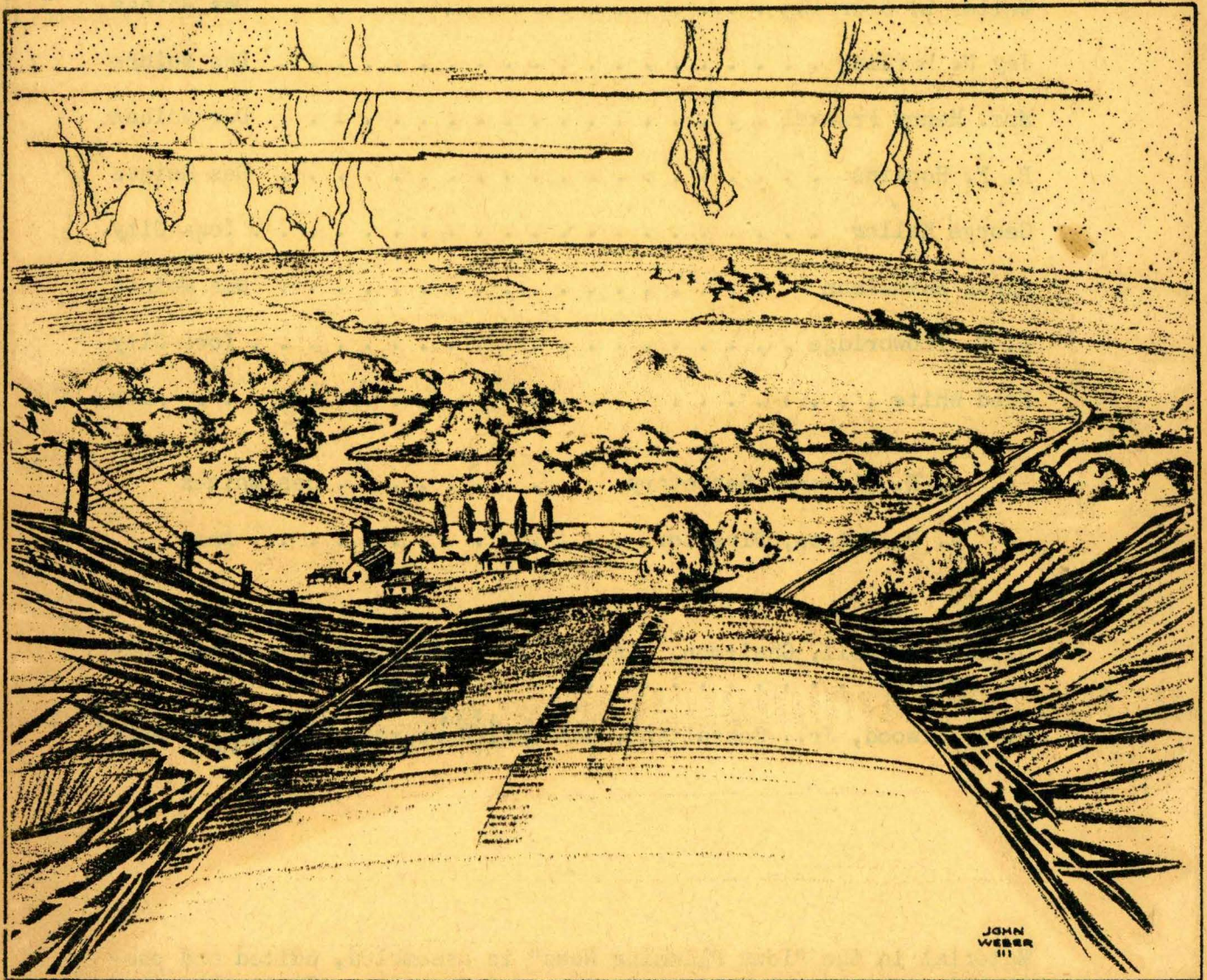


IOWA

PLANNING NEWS

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IOWA

PLANNING NEWS

Vol. 1 No. 1

Elm Lodge, Ames, Iowa

April 1936

PULLING IOWA OUT OF THE MUD - A STUDY IN MODERN HIGHWAY PLANNING

THIRTY YEARS AGO the ordinary travel map of Iowa showed only the complex network of railroads which linked together the cities of the state and formed practically the sole connection with the outside world.

Highways were not shown for the simple reason that improved, through-highways did not exist and very few persons had any interest in roads outside the township in which they resided. Within the township roads had a use. They furnished "road access" to the farms and were the medium through which the ordinary male citizen between the ages of 21 and 45 "worked out" his poll tax.

Township roads, an inheritance from New England, were laid out by the original survey parties, one mile apart, and promptly forgotten for almost three quarters of a century. A universal system, and often almost impassable, the original township roads served their purpose so long as the farmer's horizon did not extend beyond the local community, or the distance a horse could ordinarily travel in one day.

Today, by way of contrast, one seldom sees a map of Iowa that does not peer out through the screen of narrow black bands which represent the paved highway system now embracing more than 4,374 miles, and a less conspicuous secondary road system of gravel.

The period which separates the railway map of thirty years ago and the be-ribboned highway map of today has witnessed the growth of a planned highway

system for the state of Iowa, the object of which plan is to expedite the traveler in his movement from the location in which he finds himself to the place he would rather be.

Long before that plan existed on paper it was forming in the minds of a comparatively small group of individuals, men who were looking ahead to the time when roads would be laid out with reference to the needs of the state and not with reference to the proximity of farmsteads belonging to local trustees and supervisors.

Over the long pull of more than a quarter of a century, probably no one has had more direct influence on this plan of Iowa's highway system than Senior Dean Anson Marston of Iowa State College. For twenty-three years a member of the Iowa Highway Commission, he has today a ready stock of anecdotes and reminiscences centering about the development of planned highway transportation, from its birth as the "good roads movement" to the present when all kinds of transport can set out in practically any state of weather short of blizzards, tornadoes or floods with reasonable assurance of reaching its destination.

Earliest agitation for improvement of roads came about partly as a result of the necessity for farmers to move steam driven threshing outfits from farm to farm. Township bridges were entirely inadequate to carry the load of these heavy machines, and after a

number of lives had been lost when bridges gave way, the pressure for better culverts and bridges began.

Under the old township system of roads, three township trustees in each township had the responsibility for these structures. With the demand for more expensive structures the townships began to call upon the county for assistance, eventually enlisting the aid of the county supervisors in the construction of a county-wide system of bridges and culverts.

Up to that time, approximately at the turn of the century, there had not been developed any kind of uniform plan for spans and culverts, nor any uniform system for determining the location of county roads and key bridges.

It was at this juncture that the influence of Dean Marston and the Engineering Division of Iowa State College began to come into the picture. Charges of graft, of favoritism in the location of roads, of incompetence in the building of county bridges, were being leveled on all sides at those in charge of road building.

In 1904, a bill was introduced and passed by the state legislature, authorizing the Iowa State College to act as an embryo highway commission for the state. Approximately two paragraphs in length, the bill did not provide for real authority for the newly created commission nor for any appropriation. A "good roads investigation" appropriation by the same legislature, however, permitted a part time engineer to be placed in charge of research. The first engineer to be employed by the commission was Thos. H. McDonald, now head of the U. S. Bureau of Public Roads; he was employed half time by the commission and half time by I.S.C.

The commission began the preparation of standard plans for bridges, and together McDonald and Dean Marston went out on a series of "barnstorming" meetings for the purpose of selling to various communities better planning methods in highway construction.

The influence of the automobile had by that time come into the picture, and automobile associations were getting into the movement for good roads. It was under the influence of these groups that several roads were linked up, county to county, across the state, forming the River to River Road, The Great White Way, The Hawkeye Highway, and others.

Dean Marston has characterized this period in the development of highway "improvement by hot air" stage. This was the age of "good roads trains" and similar booster movements.

By 1913, the inadequacies of the "improvement by hot air" method had been pointed out and were generally recognized by sufficient people to give impetus to a revolutionary legislative enactment, which in 1913 created a highway commission with real authority; it consisted of three members, two appointed by the governor, the third, ex officio, the dean of Engineering at Iowa State College. It required that all counties hire county engineers to supervise all roadwork for the county and to work with the State Highway Commission. The Commission divided the state into districts, each under a district engineer. The law provided for setting aside a system of county highways, to be established by county supervisors and the highway commission. "Since that time", Dean Marston states, "roads have been located strictly with regard for merit and sound engineering."

The increase in automobile travel throughout the entire country brought federal assistance after 1919, by which time the surfacing of roads with gravel had been considerably advanced. This federal aid was limited to a system of "primary roads" (state roads), at first administered jointly by the Highway Commission and the county supervisors.

In 1927, the Highway Commission was again reorganized and increased to five members, none ex officio, to be appointed by the governor with the consent of the senate. Primary roads were taken over entirely by the highway commission

to be administered and maintained by them, while township roads as such were turned over to the counties.

After 1927, the rapid rise in the number of cars and trucks had multiplied the traffic to the point where the demand for better "improved" roads was sufficient to speed up the paving program, which had actually gotten under way in the early twenties. The story of how Iowa came out of the mud onto the pavement in a few short years, and climbed into the position as one of the leading "good roads states" is recent enough to be remembered by nearly everyone.

In the fall of 1926, a Chicago newspaper reporter sent to Iowa to cover a University of Iowa football game, began his story with the lead, "ALL MUD ROADS LEAD TO IOWA CITY." The spectacle of the dozens of Iowa fans "stuck in the mud enroute to the football game" had taken precedence over the game itself in the mind of the reporter as news of the day. Just four years later those roads of which he wrote, had all been paved, and today, just ten years later, the new highway map of March 1, 1936, shows in the primary system of roads alone 4,375 miles of paving, 323 of bituminous surface, and 3297 miles of gravel.

A new generation of Iowans, reared in a surrounding of excellent, all weather roads that seem to lead naturally enough to the places it wishes to reach, will take for granted the amenities of its particular time, with little thought of the struggle that has gone into the achievement of a planned highway system. They will not have experienced the bitterness that so often attended the giving up of old, local privilege in the interest of much wider and universal freedom of movement and communication.

Today, with a reduced demand on his time at Iowa State College, Dean Marston has again turned his attention to the advancement of highway planning, upon request of the Commission, for which he now works part time. With its major construction program out of the way, the

program which, in a sense, was the answer to the immediate demands of the sudden upsurge in automobile traffic, the Highway Commission has entered an advanced stage in highway planning.

As transportation coordinator for the Iowa Highway Commission, and in cooperation with the Iowa State Planning Board, Dean Marston, together with Mark Morris, research engineer for the commission, had charge of a traffic survey last year under which one master counting station was maintained for one year, and about two thousand lesser counting stations were maintained for shorter periods in other parts of the state. Much more extensive highway traffic and other economic highway studies are just beginning, and are to continue a full year. They are being made jointly by the Iowa Highway Commission and the U. S. Bureau of public roads.

Future highway construction will be determined more and more by these scientifically determined traffic counts, Dean Marston believes. And not only will location be determined by these data, but actual highway design as well.

"These figures," Dean Marston explains, "give us unquestionable evidence with which to support our decisions when local political groups try to apply pressure in obtaining preference for highway construction."

However, even after all highways are paved, there still remains much to be done toward their appearance and increasing the safety and comfort of those who use them. This, some highway engineers feel, is one of the important developments of the future in highway planning. Considerable progress along this line has been made in accordance with the federal program outlined two years ago by the chief engineer of the U. S. Bureau of public roads, Iowa's T. H. McDonald, when he insisted that a certain percentage of federal road funds allotted to the states must be used for landscape and improvement of the highways.

This next phase of highway improvement is not to be considered just one

of the many beautification movements. It involves many of the fundamentals of highway location and design. The ferms, shoulders and slopes of the cross section of the highways are concerned, as well as the final touch of tree and shrub planting.

The present highway planning survey that is in progress in all parts of the state will supplement the data gathered

last year, and will make Iowa's basis for scientific planning of highways among the most complete and up to date in the United States, Dean Marston believes.

(In a forthcoming issue of the Iowa Planning News, there will be a further discussion of future highway planning programs.)

PLANNING OFFICIALS, INTERESTED LAYMEN INVITED TO CONFERENCE AT AMES

WITH A TWO FOLD OBJECTIVE, The Iowa State Planning Board is launching a program of "extension education" for 1936, prefacing the program with its first state-wide conference on the general subject of "Planning".

The objectives are:

1. To attract the attention of civic minded persons throughout Iowa to the subject of "Planning for Human Needs," and to disseminate information on planning methods.

2. To stimulate and foster an interest in the formation of orderly planning in each county in Iowa, undertaken voluntarily by the citizens within the county.

The first state-wide planning conference will be held in the Memorial Union at Iowa State College, Ames, Thursday, April 16, under the joint sponsorship of the National Resources Committee and the Iowa State Planning Board.

A general invitation has been issued through the press to all persons, private citizens and those holding public office, to attend. In addition, 2,000 invitations have been mailed to individuals most likely to be interested in community planning.

The headliner for the conference will be Walter H. Blucher of Chicago, Executive Director of the American So-

ciety of Planning Officials. Mr. Blucher will give a lecture on "The Place of Planning in a Government Organization." This is a number in the Iowa State College lecture course on "National, Regional and State Planning."

Other featured addresses are to include:

"Story of the Iowa State Planning Board: Its Functions and Its Future," by Dean H. H. Kildee, division of Agriculture, Iowa State College and chairman of the I.S.P.B.

"Planning for Health," by Dr. Walter L. Bierring, State Health Commissioner and member of the State Planning Board.

"The Relation of Planning to the Problems of Rural and Urban Resettlement," by B. W. Lodwick, state director of rural rehabilitation, U. S. Resettlement Administration.

"The Relation of Planning to Economic Stability," by Prof. George Keller, State University of Iowa, a member of the Planning Board.

"Coordinating Urban and Rural Interests in a County Plan," Murl McDonald, assistant director, Agricultural Extension Service, Iowa State College.

"A State Plan for Soil Conservation," J. L. Boatman, Iowa state coordinator, U. S. Soil Conservation Service.

"A State Plan for Parks and Recreation," Prof. J. R. Fitzsimmons, Iowa

State College, landscape architect consultant to the Iowa Conservation Commission.

"The Citizen's Contribution to Community Planning," by O.L. Brownlee, member of the editorial staff of the Sioux City Tribune.

There will be noon luncheon and evening dinner programs for which advance reservations are necessary.

Copies of the programs are being mailed to all who request them.

An effort is being made to stimulate the formation of delegations representing various counties, who would attend the conference as county units.

SIMPSON COLLEGE SPONSORS RURAL LIFE CONFERENCE

ON THE 27th and 28th of April a Rural Community Life Conference will be held at Simpson College, at Indianola. The Warren County Planning Council is cooperating in the sponsorship of this two day conference and members of the Extension Service of Iowa State College have also given advice and assistance.

On the 28th it is planned to have a Student Conference on Rural Life in conjunction with the Rural Community Life Conference. The Alpha Zeta group at Iowa State College, with Willard Latham as president, has taken the lead in arranging a program for this student conference. Students interested in rural life are being invited from all colleges and junior colleges in Iowa.

Three outstanding authorities on rural life have already been secured as speakers for the conference. They are: Dr. Carl C. Taylor, Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C.; Dr. T. W. Schultz, head of department Agricultural Economics, Iowa State College; and Dr. M. A. Dawber, Superintendent of the Rural Church Department of the board of Home Missions of the Methodist Episcopal Church, Philadelphia. Leaders will also be secured to present the problems of the rural school and the rural home.

It is expected that this two day forum will be of especial interest and value to the actual leaders in the rural communities of Iowa. Invitations are being extended to editors, the chairmen and members of county planning councils, ministers, county agents, county superintendents of schools, school superintendents and teachers, housewives, club leaders, and all others who are interested in rural life.

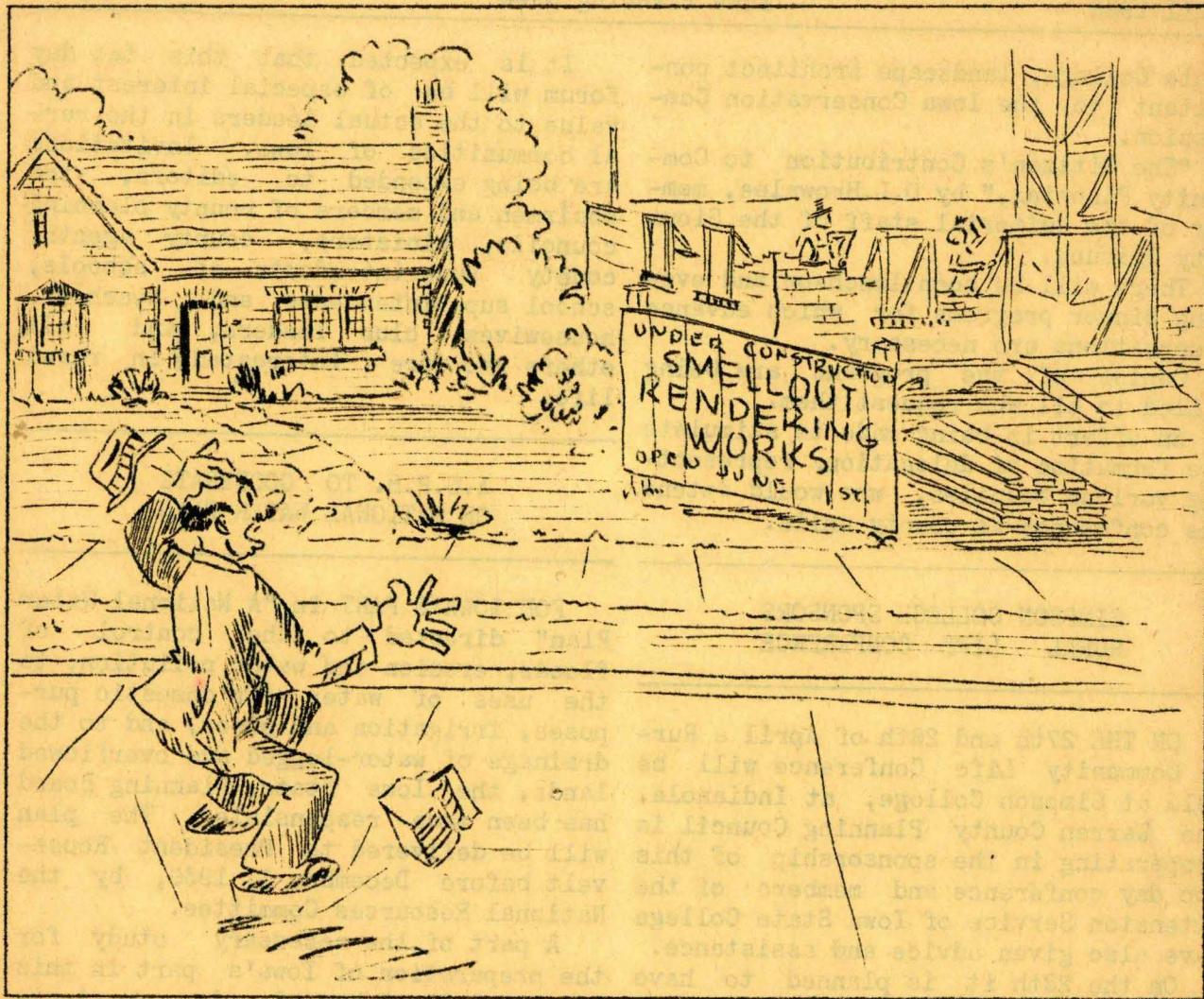
I.S.P.B. TO COOPERATE ON NATIONAL WATER PLAN

FOR IOWA'S PART in "A National Water Plan" directed to the control of floods, erosion and water pollution, to the uses of water for domestic purposes, irrigation and power, and to the drainage of water-logged and overflowed lands, the Iowa State Planning Board has been made responsible. The plan will be delivered to President Roosevelt before December 1, 1936, by the National Resources Committee.

A part of the necessary study for the preparation of Iowa's part in this "National Plan" has already been started. The work reported in the Board's first and second reports will form the basis for the necessary further studies for obtaining the information which the National Resources Committee will desire.

"While Iowa has not suffered this spring from flood disasters as have other parts of the country," R. H. Matson, director of the Iowa State Planning Board explained, "our experience of the past has demonstrated that such an eventuality in Iowa is possible and no doubt quite probable in the future. It is, therefore, necessary that we do all in our power to see that Iowa's part in the National Plan shall provide adequately for the state's needs."

A Water Consultant will be assigned to Iowa to assist in the preparation of the report.



"THERE OUGHT TO BE A LAW!!"

The gentleman in the picture seems to be excited. This, no doubt, is because the Smellout Rendering Works is constructing a building next door to his cottage. The gentleman noticed several days ago that something was about to be constructed. At that time he had a mild curiosity as to the nature of the future building, but until today no sign appeared to answer his unvoiced question.

Now the gentleman is excited. He is about to glare at the carpenters and bricklayers working next door, then march into his cottage where the telephone will enable him to tell the mayor and, if necessary, the building inspect-

or and chief of police that a crime is being perpetrated.

There ought to be a law against such things, the gentleman is thinking. A man's home should be protected against a rendering works, of all things, on the very next lot.

Recalling that on Saturday afternoon the city hall is closed, the gentleman turns from the telephone to an easy chair. There his breathing becomes more regular and his thinking more rational.

Only two years ago, he is thinking, I moved into this neighborhood. There was certainly no threat then that such an event would come to mar the atmos-

phere. Atmosphere! There certainly ought to be a law.

The gentleman ponders. Why, we did consider some kind of law to cover a situation like this. Zoning or something, I believe they called it. Last year it was.

The gentleman struggles for further details. We had a neighborhood meeting he recalls. Several of them, in fact. We talked about recommending that the council pass a zoning ordinance. That was it, zoning. But they didn't pass it. We didn't even recommend it to them. I wonder why

The gentleman remembers. The neighborhood group did not recommend that the council pass a zoning ordinance, because three or four in the group developed an extreme animosity toward the idea. They said a zoning law would mean that a person who owned a vacant lot in a restricted residential district couldn't build a filling station or a store building on it unless an exception were made to the law.

Several others said they thought the welfare of the whole neighborhood, in such a case, should be considered more important than the right of an individual to erect any kind of structure he might choose in an area of homes. But the three or four persisted.

Then someone said exceptions would be made in cases where hardship could not otherwise be avoided. Someone else said, if exceptions were going to be made, who would put the brakes on?

Finally, everybody more or less concluded that the whole proposition was unnecessary in such a small city, and the meeting broke up.

.
The gentleman looks out the window at the site of the future plant of the Smellout Rendering Works. I don't suppose, he muses, that I'll be able to get so much out of the place if I try to sell it now. If only I had known last summer, I might have sold it then.

Or the gentleman might have called another meeting of the neighborhood folk -- had he only known last summer.

ELWOOD LEAVES FOR TOUR OF INSPECTION IN TEXAS

Prof. P.H. Elwood, consultant for the National Resources Board to the Iowa State Planning Board, recently assigned for part time to the Resettlement Administration, left Friday, April 3, for a 10-day inspection tour of large resettlement projects in Texas.

With headquarters in the Regional office at Dallas, Professor Elwood will visit projects including from 100 to 300 families each, in which individual farmers are purchasing through the Resettlement Administration from 30 to 50 acres of land. He will be particularly concerned with the general phases of resettlement layout, and with the operation of community social centers which have been established to serve families in each project area.

RESETTLEMENT NEWS NOTE

E. F. GRAFF, AMES, IOWA, temporarily connected with the Resettlement Administration as Regional Chief in charge of Rural Rehabilitation for Region III, which is made up of Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Iowa and Missouri, has returned to the Extension Service of Iowa State College after having had a twenty months leave of absence.

The appointment of W. E. Johns to succeed Mr. Graff was recently announced at Champaign, Illinois, Regional headquarters of the five midwestern states. Johns, widely known agriculturist and contributor to farm publications, was State Director of Rural Rehabilitation for Illinois prior to his new appointment.

According to the original land surveys of Iowa, 1832 to 1859, about 7,200,000 acres or 20 per cent of the total area of the state, were covered with timber.

PLANNING BOARD SPEAKERS
FILL NUMEROUS ENGAGEMENTS

The Iowa State Planning Board is considering the organization of a "speakers bureau" within its staff personnel, in order to meet an increasing demand for public speakers to talk on subjects pertaining to planning.

At present, Dean H. H. Kildee, chairman of the board, and Prof. P. H. Elwood, National Resources committee consultant to the board, have fulfilled most of the requests for speaking dates. Dean Kildee early in February had as many as a dozen engagements booked for the month, most of which had to be postponed because of the severe weather and bad highway traffic conditions. He since has been filling these postponed dates.

Saturday, April 4, Dean Kildee addressed a dinner gathering of the Iowa Branch, American Association of Social Workers, at the East Des Moines club, in Des Moines. On the same program was Dr. Howard Bowen, department of sociology, University of Iowa, who was the coordinator in the compilation of a report on "Population and Social Trends in Iowa," prepared by a committee of the State Planning Board, a year ago. He is supervisor of the planning board's present Population and Social Trends project.

Dean Kildee delivered his talk on "Origin, Organization and Objectives of the State Planning Board" before an open forum meeting in the high school auditorium at Mapleton, March 30, and before a Community Club gathering of town and rural people at Grimes, March 19. He spoke on "Iowa Looks to the Future" on the program of the citizenship school sponsored by the Des Moines chapter, League of Women Voters, in February.

A telegraphic invitation came to Dean Kildee, April 2, to report on Iowa planning activities before a joint planning conference being sponsored by the National Resources Committee and the National Planning Organization, to be held at Richmond, Va., May 4 to 6.

Prof. Elwood addressed a women's club group on the subject of state planning, at Charles City, March 10.

The Planning Board has an excellent set of lantern slides, showing maps, charts and typical Iowa beauty spots in color. These are receiving much use in lectures on state planning activities.

Requests for speakers on planning subjects may be made directly to the Iowa State Planning Board, Elm Lodge, Ames.

PLANNING BOARD REPORTS ON
PLAN FOR APPANOOSE COUNTY

UNDER THE TITLE, "An Approach to County Planning - Appanoose County," The Iowa State Planning Board will publish early in April a report calculated to present information basic to planning in an Iowa county.

Although this report deals specifically with Appanoose County, it is not any hard and fast plan or blue print to be forced upon any county. It is offered for the express purpose of stimulating interest in the subject of county planning, and represents an attempt to show the type of material that is basic to such planning.

Appanoose County was chosen for this particular study principally because it had been included in several of the earlier surveys of the Planning Board, so that considerable information was already available, and further because, in a number of respects, that county presents some of the most acute problems facing Iowa planning groups, such as: erosion and flood control, extensive unemployment among mine workers, and declining population.

Two hundred pages in length, the report will consist of nearly one hundred pages of illustrative material--charts, plans, and photographs--and one hundred pages of mimeographed text.

BLUCHER LAUDS OREGON
COUNTY PLAN PROGRESS

CLACKAMAS COUNTY, ORE., with a population of 45,000 scattered over an area of approximately two thousand square miles, believes in looking ahead as fast and as far as possible. According to Walter H. Blucher, Executive Director of the American Society of Planning Officials, it is "Exhibit A" in the demonstration of what an active county planning agency can do.

In May, 1935, the county court created the Clackamas County Planning Board. Up to December, 1935, the county received total allotments of \$1,893,469 in Federal and State funds for planned projects, which, with a contribution of three-quarters of a million dollars voted by the inhabitants themselves, has resulted in progress many years ahead of normal development.

When the Clackamas County Planning Board presented a report to the third Pacific Northwest Regional Planning Conference held at Spokane, Wash., recently (February 13-15), these were some of the accomplishments listed:

1) A constructive organized road program involving projects totaling nearly \$900,000 was established under the provision that all highway construction must be approved by the planning board before it is authorized by the County Court. In this connection a countywide traffic survey, the only one in the state, was made with relief labor. Nearly 30 miles of farm-to-market roads were selected for improvement with oil-rock, costing the county \$50,000 once, but saving \$40,000 in annual maintenance expenditures.

2) Plans for 13 PWA projects, including a new court house, a city hall, and work on nine public schools, costs totaling \$1,300,000, which the people voted to finance by bonds.

3) Plans for 16 WPA projects, costs totaling half a million dollars, including stream measurements, National Youth

projects, parks and county-wide library program.

4) Land settlement and reforestation studies looking toward best use of land for the support of residents of the county. Investigation of new types of industry which might be brought in.

5) An apprentice school has been established for the county, and school boards of the three towns in the county have been requested to appropriate money to pay instructors, who will train young people for various vocations.

Work on flood control, testing of farm lands, a survey of underground water reserves for irrigation purposes, drainage projects and a mineral resources survey, are among future items on the long-term plan of the Clackamas Board, which already has compiled a dozen maps showing basic information on these matters. Close cooperation between the Oregon State Planning Board and this local planning board has done much to speed up the various county projects, the Clackamas County Board reports. One important result has been the employment of nearly all relief workers, as well as many non-relief employables.

- The American City
March 1936

EDUCATIONAL USE
OF I.S.P.B. MAPS

IN THE PREPARATION of various reports, a wide variety of charts, maps and other illustrations has been prepared in the Iowa State Planning Board drafting rooms. The originals of these maps are retained in the office files. Frequent requests have been received for copies of these maps for use in schoolrooms and for discussion groups.

The standard map of the state used by the Planning Board is about three by four feet. These maps can be reproduced in black and white prints at four cents per square foot, and may be had by the schools at cost.

EDITORIAL COMMENT

It used to be said that when grass grew in our city streets, the decline of our civilization would have begun. Today some cities are making conscious efforts to grow grass in their streets.

They are not seeking to publicize or hasten the end of civilization; rather they are trying to bring back a necessary complement to the stone and steel of modern urbanism.

The point is, of course, that a city "street" includes legally all the space between property lines -- and actually (in effect) all the space between building lines. Parkways, strips of turf and rows of trees are coming into recognition as necessary features in even the large city's street system.

Fortunate are we who miss the sight of grass and leaves only through the winter months, rather than for years at a time.

THE ALLOTMENT of WPA funds to carry on the work of the Iowa state planning board affords an example of the use of this agency to promote a worthy and valuable project which might otherwise have had to be dropped.

Planning for the more distant future is a proper function of government, but it is one that often suffers because the future of a given political administration is apt to be insecure. That being true, the government is inclined to slight longtime planning for the sake of its record with respect to acts that are immediately effective.

The state planning board has gone a long way toward correcting that weakness. To realize the scope of its work and its probably increasing value to Iowa throughout the years, one needs but to study the reports it has already compiled. They are impressive scientific documents, containing data which

may properly be used for a long time as a guide to official policies.

It is splendid that continuation of this work has been made possible.

- The Des Moines Register
Saturday, March 21, 1936

Des Moines, Iowa
March 21, 1936

R. H. Matson, Director
Iowa State Planning Board
Elm Lodge
Ames, Iowa

Dear Sir:

Yesterday, through the courtesy of men in your offices, Miss Adria Titterington and I had the opportunity of looking over the material which the Planning Board has had printed. I am interested in the reports from the point of view of a reference librarian in the State Library and am checking your bibliography for the reports which are already in the various departments of our library. But, I am also very much interested in the work of the Planning Board as a private citizen whose life is rooted in all that is Iowa.

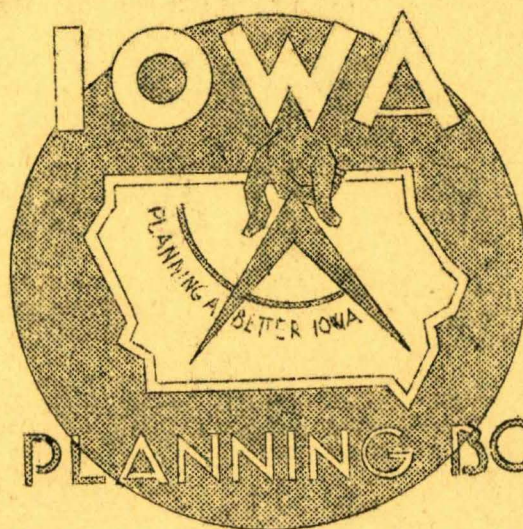
I have read with interest the first number of the Iowa Planning News and would like to be put on the mailing list for further numbers, if it is available to private individuals. *

I wish to commend the Board for the work it is doing and also for the clear and attractive way in which that work is being interpreted in print.

Sincerely yours,

Ruth Lombard

* Editor's Note: It is.



STATE PLANNING BOARD