

# Rural Transportation Problems Continue

The 18-month long crisis in transporting agricultural commodities and farm supplies has subsided, notes a report released recently by the Committee on Agriculture and Forestry of the United States Senate. However, certain problems will continue, unless changed are made.

The Committee Print, "Prelude to Legislation to Solve the Growing Crisis in Rural Transportation," contains two parts. The first, "Transportation in Rural America," was prepared by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Economic Research Service (ERS), at the request of Congress. The ERS study cites flexible pricing of rail services as one way to prevent future crises. Locating storage facilities for surplus food grains near ports could also help by preventing wide year-to-year variations in agricultural demands for domestic transportation services.

Private automobiles and small trucks will probably continue as the major means of travel for rural residents but some fairly inexpensive means exist for providing service to people who cannot afford vehicles. Although the quality of some rural high-

ways has improved, many remain deficient, according to the study.

Conditions of rural roads, and potential for improvement, should be considered in decisions to abandon rail service in rural areas. Mass abandonment of unprofitable lines could cause economic hardship in some rural communities. But, analyses of conditions in the United States and Canada reported in the Committee Print suggested that grain marketing costs could be reduced by substantial rail abandonment, consolidation of elevators, and multiple car shipments.

Part II, Meeting Rural Transportation Needs, was prepared by the National Area Development Institute (KY), under contract for the Library of Congress at the request of the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Forestry. Bearing out findings of the ERS study, Part II focuses primarily on attempts to handle problems in rural transportation through legislation. It further provides insights into rural people's major concerns and the relationship between rural development and transportation needs. A single copy of "Prelude

to Legislation to Solve the Growing Crisis in Rural Transportation" is available free on postcard (please include zipcode) or telephone (202-447-7255)

request from the Publications Unit, Economic Research Service, Room 0054 - South Building, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250.

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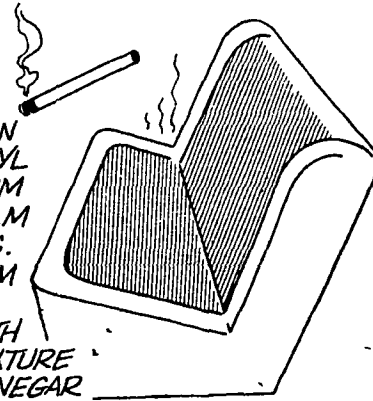


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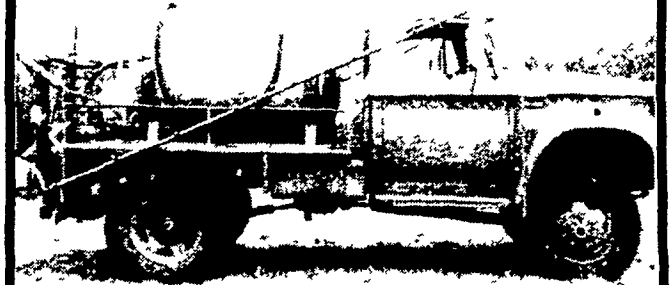
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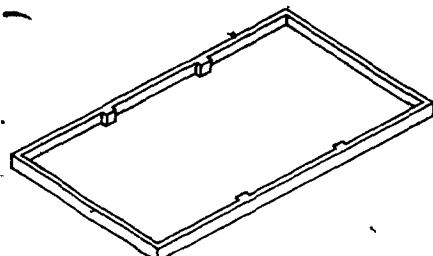
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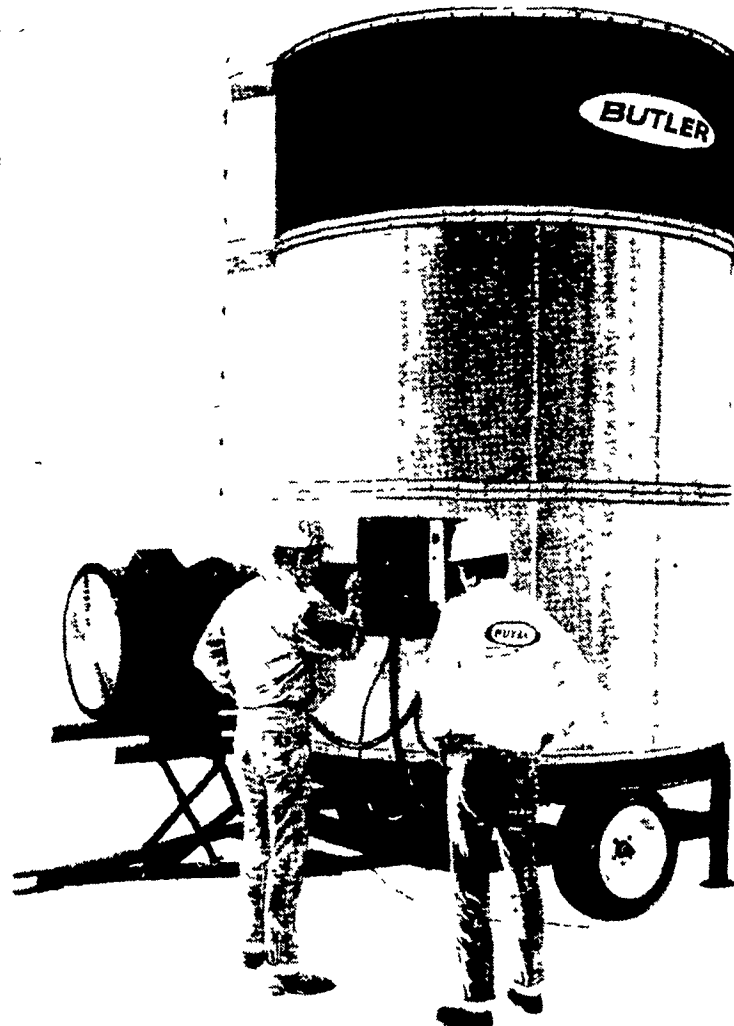
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