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FIFTEEN CENTS

Lacks Federal Approval

Cross-Valley Plans At Impasse Once Again

The plans for the construction of North Cross-Valley Expressway seemingly are at an impasse again, due to lack of Federal approval of the proposed route. Approval is needed because the highway's location would involve lands termed "recreational in nature."

This would include land (already purchased by the state) on which King's College had an athletic field, a gymnasium, and a playground; the latter operated by Kingston Borough. This was known as Scandlon Field.

Additional recreational land would be taken for a proposed interchange at North Washington Street, Wilkes-Barre.

According to Section 4 (f) of the Highway Act of 1966, Federal approval is prohibited of "any program or project which requires the use of any publicly owned land from a public park, recreation area, . . . unless there is (1) no feasible and prudent alternative to the use of such land, and (2) such program included all possible planning to minimize harm to such park, recreation area. . . etc."

A request for approval under Section 4 (f) was submitted to Pennsylvania Department of Transportation in Harrisburg and to the U.S. Highway Administration the first week in October, according to Thomas J. Harrington, PennDOT regional engineer, Dunmore. Final approval must be awaited from U.S. Transportation Secretary John Volpe.

If the selected location is not approved, this could leave PennDOT holding property which it has already purchased. The land would not be usable by PennDOT, and would have to be sold for other uses.

The North Valley-Expressway would expedite traffic from the Back Mountain-Luzerne-Swoyersville areas across town to a section near the VA Hospital. The need for a new expressway has been highlighted in recent days by backed-up traffic on Union Street, Luzerne, a State highway.

Many Back Mountain motorists and others have complained about new line-paintings on Union Street. The police chief of Luzerne Borough said traffic has been backed up in the morning west toward the Back Mountain and in the afternoon as far back as the Kingston Borough boundary line.

Donald Wiltshire, district traffic engineer for PennDOT, said the new markings are to provide a safer movement of traffic through the area. He stated that the section of Union Street where the island is painted always has been a bottleneck, and "it's not the new traffic island that is to blame."

There is not room for four lanes on Union Street, as the road is about 40 feet wide and utility poles are near the roadway.

With the new delay in approval of the Cross-Valley Expressway, Regional Engineer Harrington said he has no estimate of the time needed for approval. He added that PennDOT is continuing with the acquiring of properties along the originally proposed right-of-way for the expressway, but only if the land can be acquired by an amicable settlement. The department will not become involved, at this time, in any litigation to acquire properties.

Mr. Harrington reported that the state transportation department feels the presently planned location for North Cross-Valley Expressway is the best possible route.

Prosecution Calls 34

Eye Witnesses Implicate John Wilson in Murder

by Shawn Murphy

Apparently proceeding on the theory that if one eye witness is good, eight eye witnesses are better, the Commonwealth had called a total of 34 witnesses when court adjourned Tuesday afternoon, eight of whom offered eye witness testimony implicating John Terry Wilson in the



Photo by Pat Cancro

murder of George W. Wesley Jan. 10. The eight eye witnesses included two of the victim's brothers, Harry and Warden Wesley; George Nichols, the bartender at Sorber's Lake Silkworth Hotel the night of the shooting; Dara Bowen, a barmaid at Sorber's; Fletcher Whitesell, a patron at the tavern, and Earl Eck, Donald Purvin, and Charles Coombs, three of the six persons with whom George Wesley arrived at Sorber's Hotel the night he was killed.



Photo by J. Kozemchak Sr.

Game Warden Ed Gdosky of the Pennsylvania Game Commission holds the head of a pure albino deer which was fatally injured Tuesday morning when it jumped a fence trying to escape several dogs which were chasing it. The deer, which was solid white with pink nose and eyes, broke its back when it landed in a four-foot ditch on the opposite

side of the fence. Warden Gdosky said this was the first time in 15 years with the commission that he had seen a pure albino, whose birth would be approximately one in 100,000. He said he wanted to remind dog owners not to allow their animals to run loose and gather in packs to chase deer, particularly during the times of deep snow.

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Earl Eck, a Sweet Valley resident, was the first of the eye witnesses to testify, and his recollections place Wilson squarely behind a 30-30 caliber rifle which has been introduced by the Commonwealth as evidence. Eck told of a night of partying, first with George Wesley and Donald Purvin at the apartment of one "J.R." in Dallas, and then at Chief's Bar in Demunds, where Warden Wesley was playing in a band. Sometime before 2 a.m., he said, he and Purvin, the three Wesleys, Charlie Coombs, and Ted Montross left for Sorber's Hotel "to get a couple of drinks."

"Who called Sorber's to see if it was still open?" asked Atty. Krohn during cross-examination.

"That was me," replied Eck. He said he believed he'd talked to Marge Sorber,

the proprietor of the tavern, and that she had told him John Wilson was there. (Marge Sorber subsequently denied talking at length with Eck and Miss Bowen, the barmaid, could not recall the conversation).

"Didn't it seem strange to you that she should tell you John Wilson was there?" asked Krohn.

"Not for the reason she gave," Eck answered. "She said he was causing trouble and it wouldn't do much good to come over."

"And still you all piled into three cars and headed in a caravan for Lake Silkworth?" Krohn asserted. "But you knew there was bad blood between the Wilsons and the Wesleys, didn't you? And as a matter of fact, you knew there was a feud between the families," Krohn asserted. "Yes, but not that night," was Eck's reply.

The issue of "bad blood" between the Wilsons and Wesleys has been brought up time and again by Krohn, and his questions on the subject have elicited different answers from the witnesses. Both Harry and Warden Wesley flatly denied the existence of any family feud or hard feelings between themselves and Wilson or their deceased brother and the defendant. But Purvin recalled hearing several statements made in the bar that evening which suggested trouble.

Purvin told the court that he was standing at the bar near Wilson and George Wesley when he heard Wilson say, "You know any Wilson can take any Wesley." George Wesley replied, Purvin recalled, "Get your boys together but no knives or guns."

Fletcher Whitesell, a bystander, testified that he left the bar "pretty fast" when warned by the bartender that there was trouble brewing, and the bartender, George Nichols, suggested that "the whole atmosphere there that night made me think there was going to be trouble."

William Murphy, who with George Hackling and Wilson had come to Sorber's earlier that evening, said that at one point Purvin had attempted to introduce Wilson to George Wesley but that Wesley had "slapped his hand away." (Other witnesses recall that the handshake was made without incident). After the hand shaking incident, Murphy said, "Wilson waited until George had gone into the men's room and said to Hackling and me, 'Let's get out of here.'"

A Drama Plays Itself Out

The drama which is currently being played out in courtroom two at the Luzerne County Courthouse has, as have most dramas, a cast of players whose roles were assigned long before the opening day of John Terry Wilson's trial for the murder of George W. Wesley. The roles are those of the defendant, his attorneys, the Commonwealth's representatives, the presiding judge, the witnesses and the jurors. Within the confines of these parts, however, each player has taken his assigned role and shaped it to fit his own temperament and personality—a fact which sustains interest throughout much of the seemingly interminable testimony.

Seated at the table closest to the witness stand are Dis. Atty. Blythe H. Evans and his associate, Atty. Hopkins Rowlands. Mr. Evans' style might best be described as low key; his is not the flamboyance of a Melvin Belli but the prosaic—one is tempted to say plodding—

efforts of a determined workman. His quiet manner is contrasted and possibly complemented by the briskly nettlesome temperament of Atty. Rowlands, who voices all of the Commonwealth's objections and springs to his feet whenever challenged by the defense counsel.

Theodore L. Krohn, Mr. Wilson's attorney, is given to dramatic vocal inflections and occasional eye rolling when perturbed. He and Atty. Rowlands engage in verbal fencing with all the agility of well-clawed tigers, and each is inclined to grin with ill-concealed satisfaction when a swipe draws blood from the other.

The one imponderable, of course, is the jury. Comprised of seven women, five men and two women alternates, they were carefully screened by both the prosecution and the defense from a group of over 80 persons during a week-long period.

The women are all housewives and the

men are all retired. Despite presiding Judge Albert H. Aston's admonition during the early stages of jury selection that "the court is unwilling to have a jury comprised only of the aged and retired," most are in fact elderly. There is not one as young as the defendant.

In addition to these statistics, the questions posed by both attorneys during the selection process provide an interesting profile of the group as a whole. None of them has conscientious scruples against capital punishment (D.A. Evans has announced his intention of seeking the death penalty for Wilson); all are in reasonably good health and each would be able emotionally to find the defendant guilty if so proved.

More important from the defense's point of view is their declared willingness to give the defendant the benefit of a

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Organizations Oppose UGI Rate Hike

A number of Back Mountain organizations, both governmental and private, have gone on record as being strongly opposed to proposed rate increases by UGI Corporation.

Among the first to voice opposition were Back Mountain Protective Association and Lehman Township Taxpayers Association. Added to those protesting the increases are Dallas School District Board of Directors, Kingston Township Supervisors, Dallas Borough Council and Dallas Township Supervisors.

The proposed 20 percent residential rate hike and 10 percent commercial and industrial rate hike were announced by UGI during the first week in October. Residential increase, if approved by Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission, would become effective Dec. 7. Commercial-industrial increases' effective date would be June 30, 1972.

All the demurring groups have filed or will file protests with PUC, according to their spokesmen.

Back Mountain Protective Association announced a public forum and town meeting would be held last night in the auditorium of Dallas Senior High School, and Association President Everell Chadwick urged all interested consumers and groups to be present.

The protective association is a chartered, non-profit, non-partisan group concerned with protection of taxpayers, stated its solicitor James Lenahan Brown.

Kingston Township Board of Supervisors voted their protest against the proposed hike, as they felt it would mean a half-mill increase in taxes to township residents.

Although Dallas Township Board of Supervisors will not meet in regular session until Nov. 1, Supervisor Fred Lamoreaux stated Tuesday that the three members of the board have agreed among themselves to go on record at their meeting as being against the hike.

President Joseph Reina of Lehman Township Taxpayers Association reported the executive directors went on record as being against the large rate boost, although not being against a hike in general.

PUC granted UGI, Luzerne Electric Division, a step-up in rates in 1970.

Group to Conduct Air Pollution Study

Sandra Raymond, director of the Luzerne-Lackawanna Citizens' Council for Clean Air, has announced that the Environmental Protection Agency has contracted with the local group to conduct a 10-county workshop on the proposed Pennsylvania Air Implementation Plan.

The plan, Mrs. Raymond explained, "is the manner in which the state of Pennsylvania plans to clean up its air, so that the quality of the air we breathe meets the federal standards as mandated in the Clean Air Act of 1970. The plan will incorporate controls and regulations which must be enforced throughout the Commonwealth." According to Mrs. Raymond, the proposal will be submitted for federal approval in January.

The workshop, scheduled for Nov. 29, will outline the plan and work toward preparation for the December hearings on it. The council also hopes to engage an army of local citizens in a "watch-dog" capacity to see that regulations set forth in the plan are enforced following their adoption.

At the same time, Mrs. Raymond also revealed that LU-LAC is one of 74 agencies and institutions throughout the

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