

# EXPECT TRAFFIC SOON ON PARTS OF EXPRESSWAY

## Congress St. Project Moves Ahead

BY THOMAS BUCK

Sections of the new Congress st. expressway are expected to be made available to motorists beginning this summer, altho the entire route probably will not be completed for at least three years.

This outlook for the new super-highway was expressed by officials of the city, Cook county, and state highway departments. The three governments are carrying out the Congress st. project at a cost of more than 150 million dollars.

William J. Mortimer, superintendent of the county highway department, reported that a stretch of the new super-highway will be opened this summer from 1st av. in Maywood west to 17th av. By fall, this stretch, Mortimer said, will be extended to Mannheim rd., making a total of three miles of traffic on the new route.

### New Contract Outlined

This fall the county also plans to let a contract for paving another stretch between Sacramento av. and Laramie av. in Chicago. This section, Mortimer said, should be available for traffic in the summer of 1955.

State highway officials said substantial progress has been made on a section between Halsted st. and Sacramento av.

Virgil E. Gunlock, Chicago commissioner of public works, said the city is well along with most of its share of the super-highway project. He said the city should have all of its work completed by 1956.

### Three Projects Pending

Gunlock said the city has three major projects to be completed. One is the bridge over the river to bring the new super-highway into the Loop. The bridge now is about 25 per cent completed. All work on the bridge is expected to be done by the spring of 1955.

A second big project facing the city is taking the new route thru the post office, where a right of way was reserved when that building was constructed in 1931. A final agreement on this phase of the job has been worked out between the city and federal government, and the post office has begun rearranging ramps and other facilities which blocked the right of way.

The city plans to begin its work on the highway at the post office next year, Gunlock said. In its agreement with the federal government, the city agreed to pay \$600,000 toward making the necessary changes in post office facilities.

### Work on Station

The third major project still to be finished by the city is the construction of the super-highway thru the La Salle st. station. The city has completed most of the work of rearranging certain station facilities to permit the highway to cut thru the building.

This fall the city plans to begin structural work in the station for carrying the railroad tracks at second floor level over the Congress roadways. This job probably will not be done until the fall of 1955.

Highway officials said the new Congress st. expressway probably could be completed entirely in 1956 were it not for one big construction phase. This phase is the state's job of building a 2½ mile stretch of highway from Chicago's city limits at Austin blvd., thru Oak Park, and to Des Plaines av. in Forest Park.

### Depressed Tracks Planned

When the project is completed, the CTA tracks will be in a depressed right of way in the area now used for the B. & O. tracks, and the B. & O. tracks will be in a depressed section on the south edge of the super-highway right of way.

State highway officials said it would be 1957 before all of this work and construction of the highway roadways can be completed. By this time, most, if not all, of the other parts of the new expressway will have been opened to traffic.

Ultimately, the Congress expressway will provide a 15 mile nonstop sweep from Chicago's Loop west thru Cook county and into Du Page county.

In Hillside, the expressway will split into two spurs. One branch is to extend north along the Cook-Du Page line to a connection with Lake st. [U. S. route 20]. The other branch is to go southwest to Cermak rd., and then west along Cermak for a connection with Illinois route 83.