

# RUSH TO OPEN 2½ MILES OF CONGRESS ST.

## Gap in Thruway to Be Paved

BY HAL FOUST  
(Picture on page 2)

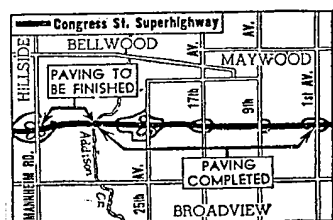
Contractor William C. Cagney will begin pouring concrete Monday in a race with winter to complete 2½ miles of Congress st. expressway before operations are halted by severe weather. His contract is for the half mile east from Mannheim rd. A 2 mile stretch east to 1st av., Maywood, has been finished for a year, but not used by traffic.

Unless the work is delayed by unusual weather, William Mortimer, Cook county highway superintendent, said yesterday, the 2½ miles will be completed and opened to traffic early next month. It will be the first expressway on the west side of the metropolitan area, altho a super-highway west from the Loop has been sought for more than a quarter of a century.

### Plan Opening by Sections

Authorities said, however, that as soon as a "usable section" of the highway was completed it would be opened to traffic. They said they considered more than half a mile of continuous pavement as the minimum necessary in opening sections to traffic.

A check with county, city, and state engineers found no



prospects that any other sections of Congress st. would be opened to traffic until the fall of 1955. It appeared that the entire job, started in 1945, would not be finished for at least another four years.

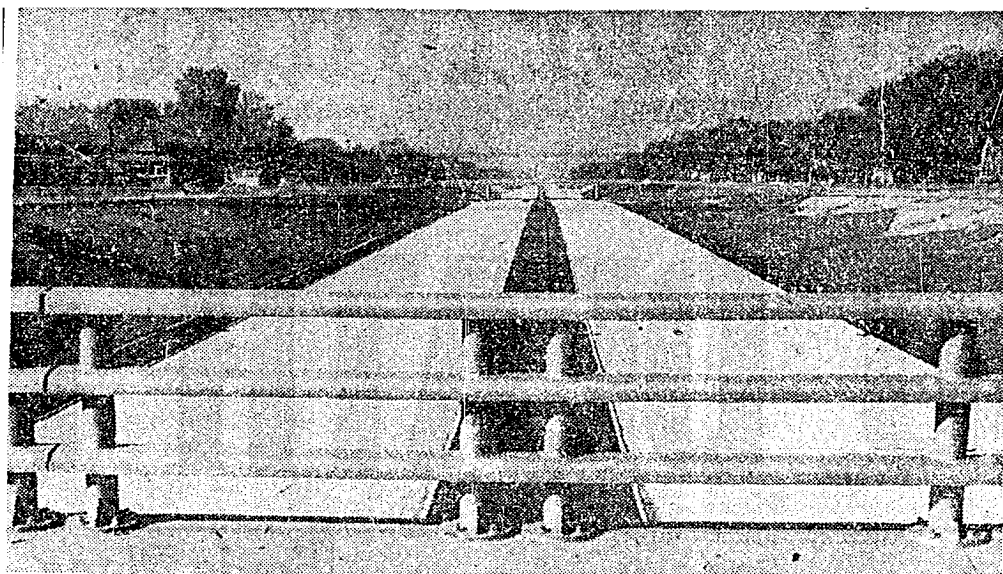
### To 5200 West in '56

Roger Nusbaum, state expressway engineer, and George DeMent, Chicago commissioner of public works, said they expected the 3½ miles from Ashland av. to Kostner av. [4400 west] to be opened to traffic by late fall of next year. Grading and bridge construction in this section are being finished this winter and next spring so that the paving can be laid next summer.

By the fall of 1956, the engi-

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## Plan Opening of Completed Expressway Section



View from 1st av. overpass in Maywood of the completed but still unused section of the Congress expressway, which is to be opened soon to local traffic. Bridge in background is the 5th av. overpass.

(TRIBUNE Photo)

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[Continued from first page]

neers of the three cooperating governmental agencies said, Congress st. will be finished from Michigan av. to Laramie av. [5200 west]. The connection with a double decked Wacker dr. extension is to be completed at the same time. Work on a Wells st. plaza, with a traffic interchange between Congress and Wacker, is to start this winter.

West from Laramie for 3 miles thru Oak Park to Desplaines av., Forest Park, plans call for a relocation of the Baltimore and Ohio Chicago Terminal railroad tracks to provide right of way for the expressway. Nusbaum and Mortimer said they were hopeful of completing negotiations with the railroad soon.

### Need Cemetery Land

After reaching an agreement with the railroad, the highway engineers estimate that the construction will take four years. The operation will have to be done in stages, first building temporary trackage and later permanent trackage, without disrupting rail traffic.

From Desplaines av. west a mile to 1st av. the right of way requires land from three cemeteries, Concordia, Waldheim, and Forest Home. The plans call for moving 3,762 graves at a cost of approximately \$1,861,000. The state's attorney is seeking consent of surviving descendents and is prosecuting condemnation suits. This is a protracted process.

The 2½ miles of expressway from 1st av. to Mannheim rd. will be of limited usefulness to traffic after it is opened, probably next month, because the east-west connections are not convenient. West of Mannheim, the county has been negotiating unsuccessfully for about a year to acquire right of way from the Consumers company near its large quarry.

### Planned County Line End

Progress west of Mannheim also has been held up to await the outcome of Gov. Stratton's billion dollar toll road plans. One of the proposed turnpikes would extend north and south near the Du Page-Cook county line. The toll engineers are to present their final plans to the governor on Nov. 17.

Before the toll proposals this year, Congress st. was planned to terminate on the west with two branches connecting with state highways just west of the Du Page-Cook line.

A south branch would link it with Roosevelt rd. and a north branch would link it with North av. and with Lake st. Blue prints have been drawn and some of the bridges have been constructed.