

HIGHWAY GROUP FACES CHARGES OF MALFEASANCE

Holt Accuses Brown, Croonenberghs and M'Gregor of Illegal Money Collections.

Helena, Oct. 28.—(AP)—Gov. Elmer Holt Wednesday night charged Montana's three highway commissioners with illegal collection of mileage and expense money and ordered them to show cause November 5 why they should not be removed from office. Copies of the charges were served on Dr. Harry J. McGeorge of Great Falls, chairman, Beckwood Brown of Billings and L. J. Croonenberghs of Missoula, commissioners.

Governor Holt declined comment on the charges but said further investigation was being made into "present reports" of other alleged malfeasance.

Supplemental charges will be filed soon, the governor said.

In addition to the charge of illegal collection of funds directed at all three commissioners, Chairman McGeorge and Commissioner Brown were accused by the governor of authorizing Commissioner Croonenberghs to act as "traveling representative" of the commission and approving his claims for mileage when "you know that they were illegal."

The other reported illegal acts the governor said were under investigation are:

- "Malfeasance in the letting of contracts by the highway commission;
- "Preference of certain contractors over others;
- "Attempts by oversight inspection to drive certain contractors out of certain highway districts;
- "Skimping of gravel on highways;
- "Specifications so drawn as to stymie competition;
- "And the question whether any official or state employees had any improper financial interest in huge purchases of oil and road materials purchased the same without inviting contracts for the year, and even without the thirty notice, and sometimes on a few hours' notice."

Governor Holt explained that under the present purchasing agent, A. W. Regel, "contracts for such purchases have been entered into, and even with a rising market, he has effected a saving to the taxpayers of about \$60,000—in purchases of oil over a like period under his predecessor, Colman."

The governor's charge against each member began:

"You are hereby notified that you are hereby required to be and appear before the undersigned, governor of the state of Montana, on the fifth day of November, 1936, at the hour of 2 p. m., of said day, at the office of the governor of the state of Montana, in the state capital, in the city of Helena."

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Montana Governor Accuses Three Highway Commissioners of Malfeasance In Illegal Money Collections

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