

THE HANDCROSS BY-PASS

Proceedings in the House of Lords as recorded in Hansard 10 February 1959

LORD HAWKE

My Lords, I beg to ask the Question which stands in my name on the Order Paper.

§ [The Question was as follows:

§ To ask Her Majesty's Government when they expect to be finished—

1. (a) the Handcross by-pass;
2. (b) the dual carriageway connecting that by-pass to Pease Pottage.]

THE EARL OF GOSFORD

My Lords, as your Lordships no doubt know, both these schemes mentioned by my noble friend are on the London-Brighton trunk road, A.23. The Handcross by-pass is expected to be completed by July of this year. The dualling of A.23 northwards from the Handcross by-pass to Pease Pottage has been divided into two sections; the first from the Handcross bypass to Woodhurst, and the second from Woodhurst to north end of the Pease Pottage Diversion. The first of these sections is practically completed and, in fact, both carriageways are now open to traffic. Work on the second section did not start until last month, because of difficulties over land acquisition, and is expected to be completed by April, 1960.

§ EARL HOWE

My Lords, I understand that the Handcross by-pass itself was started in May, 1956.

LORD HAWKE

My Lords, while thanking my noble friend for his reply, may I say how disappointed the general public will be that the completion date for the Handcross by-pass, which was promised for last December, has now been postponed until next July. While not wishing to press my right honourable friend into any precipitate or unwise action, twenty years does seem a rather long time to take to build one mile of by-pass. Could he not arrange for it to be ready in time for the Easter traffic?

THE EARL OF GOSFORD

I understand that difficulties over the Handcross by-pass itself (I am talking about that last section) are due to land acquisition, although we are

hoping that these difficulties will be resolved in the very near future. However, until they are, there is no prospect or question of completing this section of the road.

LORD HAWKE

Do I understand, then, that the land for the Handcross by-pass itself was not acquired before the war, which was always thought locally to be the position?

THE EARL OF GOSFORD

I regret to say that I have not complete information on that point, and I should be grateful if the noble Lord would put down another Question for answer.

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§ LORD LATHAM

My Lords, can the noble Earl assure the House that drainage will be properly attended to?

§ LORD DERWENT

My Lords, may I ask my noble friend why we have these repeated delays over land acquisition when land acquisition is carried out by Government Departments, whereas the same delays seldom occur when it is the duty of a local authority to carry out land acquisition? May I ask whether it is not time that the methods of land acquisition used by Government Departments should be radically overhauled?

THE EARL OF GOSFORD

My Lords, I think that that is the subject of quite another question.