

BLUE RIDGE PARKWAY
SECTION 2-H

766
- By Browning

The determination of a suitable route for this section of the Blue Ridge Parkway, which extends around the southern exposure of Grandfather Mountain, has required, and has been given a great deal of careful study. As a result of these studies and investigations, a route was found which, upon being surveyed in detail, was approved by the National Park Service. The length of the section included in this project is 5.5 miles and it extends from Beacon Heights on the west to Gap "X", near the eastern foot of the Grandfather Range.

In proceeding with the acquisition of the right of way for this section of the Parkway the owner of a large body of land, through which the right of way was projected, asked for a reconsideration of the route, stating that he was hopeful that a route might be found near to the Yonahlossee Trail that would be less damaging to him than the proposed location which roughly parallels the Yonahlossee Trail, but on a somewhat higher elevation and passes through Pilot Ridge instead of going around the southern end of this ridge as a lower route might do.

In support of his request for a re-examination of the proposed route, he presented a number of photographs and considerable written material, requesting that these items be given consideration in reaching a final decision on whether or not the Parkway location might be modified. A summary of his suggestions was presented in the form of a brochure entitled, "A Capsule of Facts Substantiating Opposition to a Possible Change in the Established Right of Way for the Blue Ridge Parkway at Grandfather Mountain."

The following remarks are directed toward either an answer to, a comment on, or a correction of the statements made in the brochure; and a map and a profile is attached hereto which illustrates graphically the various matters referred to.

- (1) PROTEST: ON PRESENT RIGHT-OF-WAY -- Stack Rock Creek Falls on the 1,000 foot wide right-of-way secured in 1939 for the Blue Ridge Parkway. This and eight

other waterfalls in beautiful settings would be abandoned if the Parkway should undergo a change in route.

COMMENT: Stack Rock Creek Falls cannot be considered as a true waterfall. It is rather a series of rapids in a small rock-choked mountain stream which are almost unnoticed except in extremely wet weather. If the Parkway were to follow the existing Yonahlossee Trail, it is very likely that this so-called waterfall would be eliminated by the construction work. Seven of the other eight waterfalls referred to are of little or no consequence at any time of the year. They are on very small drains or streams and, except during a heavy and prolonged rainy season, could easily escape notice. Furthermore, if the Parkway were to follow the Yonahlossee Trail by taking out the curves that are recommended to be taken out by the property owner, these waterfalls, likewise, would either be by-passed or destroyed. The remaining waterfall is on Green Mountain Creek on the outer side of a sharp curve in the Yonahlossee Trail and if this curve were taken out, as recommended by the land owner, this waterfall would be completely by-passed. This creek is almost completely dry in the summer months and it seldom carries more water than would run through an 18" pipe, while the height of the fall is not more than 12 or 15 feet. In this connection it should be remembered that the Parkway location along the Yonahlossee Trail, suggested by the land owner would destroy the waterfalls above-referred to; whereas, the location proposed by the State would lie far enough up the mountain to preserve them intact and where they might be seen from the Yonahlossee Trail if it were left in its present status.

(2) PROTEST: HAVE ONE RIGHT OF WAY ALREADY - The right of way several miles long and a thousand feet wide provided by The Linville Company in 1939 for the Parkway is the best and most logical route around Grandfather Mountain. Now that the long incoming construction funds have been appropriated some sixteen years after the right of way was secured, the National Park Service should delay no longer in building this section of the Parkway.

COMMENT: In this paragraph the implication is that the Linville Company "provided" the right of way for the Parkway. To prevent a misunderstanding, it is necessary to explain that the right of way referred to was purchased from the Linville Company by the Highway Department for \$25,000.00 and other considerations, and this purchase was made before it was definitely decided whether or not the Parkway could be adapted to the tortuous curves of the Yonahlossee Trail; but since there was some uncertainty about the final location of the Parkway, the Highway Commission, upon recommendation of Charles Ross, who, at that time was Chief Counsel for the Commission, reluctantly granted the urgent request of the Linville Company to buy this section of right of way because it was so badly in need of money, and the matter was finally handled in that manner.

The further statement that the Yonahlossee Trail offers the "best and most logical route around Grandfather Mountain" is simply not supported by the facts disclosed by intensive studies over a period of several years by experienced engineers.

The Park Service is certainly not to blame for holding up construction work on this section of the Parkway, as they had made definite arrangements to proceed with it when the plans were halted, due to this property owner's complaint. As soon as a mutually agreeable adjustment can be made between him and the Highway Commission, there is no doubt that the Park Service will immediately proceed to construct this short gap in the Parkway which has existed for so many years.

(3) PROTEST: CHANGE IN ROUTE COSTLY - The much discussed higher route for the Parkway across Grandfather Mountain would be a costly monument to a whim and serve no useful purpose. Extra expense to the Federal taxpayer: \$2,000,000. Extra costs to North Carolina and its citizens for added right of way: several hundreds of thousands of dollars and an unsightly gash that would change the whole face and character of its most loved and respected mountain.

COMMENT: The higher route for the Parkway cannot be considered a "whim" or that it would serve no useful purpose. The upper route was determined only after the most

painstaking efforts by thoroughly unbiased engineers, who were motivated only by a determination to find a location which would be in keeping with the dignity of this great Parkway and which at the same time, would protect the interests of all the land owners involved to the greatest possible extent. Careful estimates by reliable and capable engineers disclose that the cost of constructing the upper route would be at least \$76,000.00 less than to build the lower route. These figures include the cost of completely lining the tunnel on the upper route which may actually not be necessary, as the tunnel almost certainly will penetrate solid rock; and if this proved to be the case, the upper line would be very much less expensive. This could mean a further saving of about \$300,000.

As far as the value of the right of way is concerned, the State has bought much land for the Parkway of similar character in that vicinity at a low price and there is no reason to believe that this land, which is on a rough, steep cliff over the mountainside, would be given a very high valuation. As a matter of record, it is now assessed on the tax books at an average of about 15 dollars per acre.

With respect to the possibility of an "unsightly gash" being made on the face of the mountain, should the upper line be adopted, it is obvious to anyone familiar with the terrain that the scar resulting from grading the lower line would be infinitely more noticeable and more prominent than would be the case on the upper line. Naturally the engineers, in studying various proposed locations across the mountains, not only Grandfather Mountain, but all the others traversed by the Parkway, spent a great deal of time in so locating the route as to minimize scars and to avoid conflict with natural beauty spots, such as cliffs, waterfalls and beautiful stands of timber, shrubbery, etc.

(4) PROTEST: PRESENT ROUTE HIGHEST SECTION FOR 350 MILES - The right of way secured in 1932

hovers for its entire distance around 4,250 feet elevation, which will be the highest part of the Blue Ridge Parkway for 350 miles. In the 300 miles to the North to its beginning point in Virginia, the Parkway never reaches such heights, and only after a distance of 44 miles South of Grandfather Mountain at a point near Mount Mitchell does the Parkway rise to 4,250 feet again.

COMMENT: It is well known that the section of the Parkway through the Grandfather Mountain area will be one of the outstanding portions of the entire route and it is unthinkable that the engineers, whether employed by the State or by the Park Service, have, for or moment, overlooked the beauty of this section of the Parkway, nor have they ever contemplated doing anything that would needlessly mar its natural beauty.

(5) PROTEST: HIGHER ROUTE HAS FANTASTIC CONSTRUCTION PROBLEMS - Longer construction time and at least \$3,000,000 cost would be involved in the second route, which has among its other shortcomings a fantastically impractical tunnel 1700 feet long (five city blocks) through solid rock. The 1939 estimates for reconditioning the already purchased Parkway right-of-way following the Yonahlossee Trail (U. S. 221) around Grandfather Mountain was \$400,000, even at today's prices the cost of this work would not be likely to exceed \$1,000,000. The 1700 foot tunnel is more than half as long as all of the Parkway's eight tunnels put together and the money saved by following the more sensible route could well be spent on one or more of the Parkway's yet to be completed sections in North Carolina.

COMMENT: The statement that "longer construction time and at least three million dollars cost would be involved in the second route" is a statement that can be considered nothing more than a misleading guess and, as for the tunnel which is described as "fantastically impractical" because it is 1700 feet long, is a statement that is difficult to understand, in view of the free use of tunnels on many of our most modern highways. The Pennsylvania Turnpike is operating several tunnels more than a mile in length and many of our large cities are honeycombed with subways which carry enormous traffic volumes. A large vehicular tunnel has been completed at Newport News; one is nearing completion under Baltimore Harbor; and in North Carolina, Beaucatcher Tunnel in Asheville, which is 1,000 feet long, is carrying approximately 17,000 vehicles a day without noticeable congestion, delay, or danger. A tunnel 1,035 feet long has recently been completed on the Pigeon River Road between Walters Dam and Waterville, and this will be flanked by another of about equal length to provide an additional lane for the heavy traffic which is expected to use this important section of the North Carolina Interstate Highway System.

Actually, there is nothing fantastic or unusual about driving a tunnel. It is purely a matter of economics and, with respect to safety, a first-hand report from the Pennsylvania Turnpike authorities is that, although they are operating a large number of tunnels, they consider them the safest parts of the Turnpike.

(6) PROTEST: PRESENT ROUTE COULD BE GOOD ROAD AT ALL SEASONS - The route decided upon in 1937 involves 7.4 miles of Yonahlossee Trail. This road has 76 curves, only 18 of which are necessary, and the entire road is on a relatively even rather than steep grade. When the useless curves are removed and the distance thereby shortened, it will have less than three curves per mile. On the 80.1 miles of Parkway already complete between Grandfather Mountain and Asheville there are 378 curves for an average of 4.66 curves per mile. Even North Carolina's wonderful super-highway U. S. 70 between Old Fort and Ridgecrest has 3.6 curves per mile, so by standards set on the best highways in the mountains, the Parkway as the already purchased right of way properly reconditioned can be the best one of them all from the curves standpoint, and few acquainted with its beauty will deny that it is also the most scenic route. It will not be a section that the Park Service locks up November to April as they do in the Mount Mitchell-Craggy area, but can be a year-round road at the logical 4,200 foot elevation.

COMMENT: The suggestion in this paragraph is that on about seven miles of the Yonahlossee Trail 76 existing curves could be reduced to 18 in number; but to put this suggestion in effect would involve engineering difficulties which no experienced engineer would undertake. The truth is that a very careful study of the terrain would be necessary to determine what curves could be eliminated at permissible cost and it is certain that they would be few in number. In most cases, to eliminate one or a series of sharp curves, it would be necessary to shift the location off the mountain where deep cuts and fills would be required and these embankments, due to the steep slopes, could easily be of enormous height and bulk; and also very long and expensive drainage structures would be necessary under them. At the same time the resulting scar would be of tremendous proportions and the belt of original timber which

has been preserved along the Yonahlossee Trail for many years, in spite of all the timber cutting on both sides, would be almost completely wiped out. Since on account of the heavy earth work that the elimination of these curves would require, the cut slopes would run so far up the mountain and the fill slopes so far down, that in many places the distance from the top of the cut slopes to the bottom of the fill slopes would be 500' or more. This is a condition which all experienced engineers endeavor to avoid in a location of any highway and this is particularly true in selecting a route for the Parkway. These raw slopes suffer serious erosion for many years and it is only by the most careful and persistent landscape work that they can be made presentable.

Considering the weather conditions along the two routes, there is probably no perceptible difference between them simply because both routes have a southerly exposure and the maximum difference of elevation, as will be seen from the attached profiles, is so insignificant that a storm that would warrant closing one route, would just as certainly affect the other. As a matter of fact, it has only been during the most prolonged and bitter winter storms that the Yonahlossee Trail has been briefly impassible on account of snow and ice; and, at this time attention should be called to the fact that the suggestion that the Parkway might follow the Yonahlossee Trail overlooked the fact that if that were done, a commercial highway, parallel to the Parkway from Beacon Heights toward Blowing Rock, would have to be provided by the State and permanently maintained. The engineers took into consideration that not only was the latter location much more suitable and economical for the Parkway, but by selecting it, the Yonahlossee Trail, with nominal improvements and widening, could, at very reasonable cost, readily take over of the commercial traffic on Route 221, which, of course, would not be permitted on the Parkway.

(7) PROTEST: BETTER ROUTE FOR TRUCK TRAFFIC ALREADY NEARING COMPLETION - The new Linville-Boone super-highway over the general route of the old "Tweetsie" railroad is nearing completion and will cut 11 miles in distance between the two towns (19 miles instead of 30). This new road, with connections at Foscoe and Shulls Mills to the Blowing Rock-Corral Price areas, will provide a better alternate route for the truck traffic than was formerly provided by the portion of the Yonahlossee Trail (U. S. 221) to be taken over by the Parkway.

COMMENT: The new highway from Linville through the Linville Gap to Boone is simply another highway, and it is, of course, futile to think that people traveling from Linville to Blowing Rock would prefer to go by way of Boone rather than to use the Yonahlossee Trail as it now is located; but if another road were constructed from the Linville-Boone Road near Shulls Mills to the Yonahlossee Trail near Mont Vale, it would involve using a long and tortuous route and one less attractive than the Yonahlossee Trail. Even if this were done, it would preclude the necessity of maintaining the Yonahlossee Trail, which is quite well adapted to care of the commercial traffic because the grades on it are generally very slight and although the alignment is broken by many curves, some improvements here and there could be made at a minor cost, that it is felt that it would serve the commercial traffic better and with less expense than to spend nothing on it and try to force the traffic to use the proposed road by way of Shulls Mills and Mont Vale.

(8) PROTEST: BETTER TRUCK ROUTE - A new super-highway over which truck traffic may travel cutting 11 miles of the distance between Linville and Boone is now in the advanced stages of construction over the old "Tweetsie" railroad route West of Grandfather Mountain. With connections at Foscoe and Shulls Mills for the Blowing Rock-Cone-Price areas, this road provides a more rapid and in most cases shorter commercial route than the present Yonahlossee Trail (U. S. 221).

COMMENT: While it is true that the new highway from Linville to Boone is a fine route between those towns, it should not be overlooked that this highway can do nothing to benefit the traffic from Beacon Heights to Blowing Rock and, beyond question, this route would have to be maintained and improved, to a reasonable extent at least, to take care of this traffic.

(9) PROTEST: PARKWAY BRIDGES WOULD BE WASTED - This Parkway-style bridge at Wilson's Creek and several companion structures, built along the Yonahlossee Trail right-of-way in anticipation of it becoming the Blue Ridge Parkway around Grandfather Mountain, would be abandoned by a change in route. (Picture shown with statement.)

COMMENT: This paragraph is misleading in the highest degree and, of course, it is untrue.

The culverts or bridges referred to were built several years before the Parkway was ever thought of. They had no connection whatsoever with the Parkway and if the suggestions made by the land owner were to be carried out; that is, if the Yonahlossee Trail were to be used for the Parkway, which, of course, would require the existing alignment to be vastly improved, every one of these bridges would be a total loss. Most of them are situated in sharp curves, too sharp for the Parkway design, and even if the alignment could be brought to them, it would be necessary to rebuild them completely because the barrels are too small and the head walls would have to be demolished in remodeling the culverts; however, if the Yonahlossee Trail is retained as a commercial road, certain arrangements might be made to utilize these culverts for many years to come. It is certain, however, that they were never designed for use on the Parkway nor would it be at all feasible or economical to reconstruct them for that purpose.

(10) PROTEST: GRANDFATHER AIR VIEW SHOWING POINTS MENTIONED IN TEXT - (1) Intersection Parkway at Beacon Heights with U. S. 221, Parkway being complete north from Asheville to this point. (2) Yonahlossee Trail (U. S. 221) right-of-way purchased for Parkway in 1939. (3) Pilot Ridge, location of 1700 foot tunnel if higher route is taken. (4) New Linville-Boone highway which cuts distance between points 11 miles. (5) Foscoe, and Shulls Mills, intersections for connections with Blowing Rock-Cone-Price areas for commercial traffic. (6) Julian Price Memorial Park. (7) Boone. (8) Calloway Peak of Grandfather Mountain. (9) Mile High Swinging Bridge and parking area. (10) Grandfather Mountain Entrance one mile from Parkway no matter which route taken. (11) Location of bridge if Parkway taken impractical high route up cliffs. Bridge would further add to the bypassed condition of Linville and Grandfather Mountain. (Picture shown with statements.)

COMMENT: The view of the Grandfather Mountain area with the various numbers shown there is misleading. It will be noted from the map that the point (10) does not correctly indicate the route for the Parkway because it diverges only slightly from the Yonahlossee

Trail from the point marked (1) and running toward (2). Point (3) marks the outline of Pilot Ridge, but the tunnel is much farther south than this point indicates and the entrance to the tunnel is about 350' in elevation below the top of this ridge. A grave misunderstanding prevails regarding the type of bridge that would be built in the vicinity of the point marked (1). All that is necessary here is to raise the grade of the Parkway by means of a bridge over Route 221, so as to provide a clearance under this bridge of 14'. At that point, an elaborate intersection will be constructed by the Park Service so that travelers can turn in either direction at that point. This should not, in any way, interfere or obstruct any traffic that might be going to the Grandfather Mountain entrance at point (11). The high bridge development shown at the point marked (10) is a purely private one and it can only be reached by means of a toll road which has been constructed from Route 221 at point (1) to the parking lot at the bridge near point (10). The difference in elevation between the parking lot at point (10) and the Parkway interchange at point (1) is 1105 feet and the horizontal distance is approximately 3750 feet. There is no discernable reason to believe that the interchange proposed at point (1) would, in any way, even remotely affect the toll road that might wish to go to the toll road and to the high bridge.

(11) PROTEST: LITTLE SOIL, TONS OF ROCK - The most costly construction known to Blue Ridge Parkway road building would be a consequence of a higher route. It would produce an unsightly scar and change the whole face and character of North Carolina's most loved and respected mountain.

COMMENT: The property owner is, from his own experience, well-qualified to testify regarding the amount of rock and the scarcity of earth on that part of Grandfather Mountain where he laborously blasted out a steep and winding road over the naked cliffs to his parking lot near the high bridge, but it is a fact that on most of the proposed "upper" Parkway location, the terrain is much more favorable. The grading is not very heavy and the resulting scar would be almost completely hidden by the surrounding timber; whereas, the toll road as can be seen on this map, forms a scar on the face of this lovely mountain that can never be erased. Certainly neither the State engineers nor the engineers of the Park Service would

undertake such a glaring, ruthless, irreparable job as this at any point on the Parkway. A great deal has been said in the brochure to support the statement that this majestic mountain should not suffer desecration and to this we can all agree; but we do not think an example set in the construction of the toll road should be followed by the Parkway engineers.

(12) PROTEST: BLASTING ALL THE WAY - This picture made during construction of the road to Grandfather's Mile High Swinging Bridge is indicative of the terrain that we have to be reckoned with should the Parkway not follow its established 1939 right-of-way and a reconditioned Yonahlossee Trail. (Picture shown with statement.)

COMMENT: Rock excavation similar to that shown in the picture is to be expected in mountain work, but since the picture was taken on the toll road approaching the high bridge it was unavoidable that naked rock would be encountered. This is because the higher and steeper parts of Grandfather Mountain have been eroded by the storms of many centuries and little, if any, earth still clings to the basic rocks; however, this condition does not obtain on the lower slopes where flatter terrain minimizes the erosion and where, through the years, the soil from the upper levels has been deposited. The so-called "upper" location proposed for the Parkway passes through an area which is well-covered with timber and where there is a great deal of earth over-burden existing. Consequently, it does not follow that the same type of excavation encountered on the toll road would be found on the Parkway location.

(13) PROTEST: OVER TWICE AS LONG AS THIS ONE - A tunnel five city blocks long (1700') would be chiseled through Grandfather's Pilot Ridge should the Parkway take a high route. Lighting, ventilation, and safety patrolling of the proposed tunnel would result in high maintenance costs, for it would be more than half as long as all of the eight tunnels on the presently completed Parkway combined. The tunnel pictured here is some 700 feet long, the longest on present Parkway. (Picture shown with statements.)

COMMENT: This paragraph has been answered previously but this further comment is made on the general proposition of tunnel construction. The Parkway route is nearly 500 miles long and tunnels have been provided at many locations where it was determined that it was

economical to tunnel through a ridge rather than to make an open cut and so far as the length of the tunnels used is concerned, the Park Service has never set a limit beyond which they thought it would be unwise to go and it certainly has been the experience of highway traffic using tunnels at a great number of places throughout the country, that a tunnel in itself presents no additional hazard to the motorist.

In this connection, our experience with the tunnel at Asheville might again be cited. This tunnel is at present carrying more than 17,000 vehicles a day. Its length is 1,000 feet and through the years that it has been in use, it has given complete satisfaction to the public and the Park Service authorities anticipate no difficulty whatever in operating this tunnel.

(14) PROTEST: ONLY 18 CURVES ARE NECESSARY - There are 76 curves on the 7.4 miles part of the Yonahlossee Trail that makes up the most logical route for the Parkway at Grandfather Mountain, and only 18 of these curves are essential. A reconditioned Yonahlossee, with vistas opened up and non-essential curves removed, would have less than three curves per mile as compared with the completed Parkway average between Grandfather Mountain and Asheville of 4.66 curves per mile. It would be the highest part of the Parkway for its northern-most 350 mile section, even without taking an expensive higher route.

COMMENT: This paragraph has been covered rather thoroughly in paragraph 6, but it should be pointed out that the cost that would be involved in eliminating all but 18 curves of the existing 76 on the 7.4 miles of the Yonahlossee Trail would be so exorbitant that an experienced engineer would find it feasible or economical to carry out this plan. It would not only be very costly to do the necessary grading and to provide the necessary drainage structures, but due to the steep slopes and the loops of the old road that would be cut off the whole area would be irreparably damaged. It would be inexcusable to follow this plan which could only result in creating a horrible and ineffaceable scar on the face of this lovely mountain.

(15) PROTEST: ECONOMIC DAMAGES HAVE MANY RAMIFICATIONS - Failure to honor the 1939 right of-way agreement by starting from scratch with a higher route across Grandfather would result in incalculable damages to existing business enterprises, not to mention the harm to abundant shrubbery and growing timber. More than 193,000 persons visited Grandfather during its 1954 season, making it the most visited privately owned attraction in North Carolina.

COMMENT: It should be remembered that the right of way which was purchased from the Linville Company in 1939 was bought because of the insistence of the Linville Company and it is felt, no doubt, that they were well-paid for the land conveyed to the State, but at the time the right of way was purchased, it was by no means certain that it could be fully utilized. In building the much superior upper route, a large portion of this right of way can be used.

As for the business enterprises that might be adversely affected by the construction of the Parkway on the upper route rather than on the lower one, it would be utterly impossible to compute any difference between the two routes, with respect to the effect it might have on the only business enterprise in that locality. The only business that is being operated on Grandfather Mountain is the toll road and high bridge, a private business venture, which was promoted and is being managed by the same land owner who is protesting the construction of the Parkway on the upper route. As for the harm that might be done to the shrubbery and growing timber should the upper route be constructed, it can be said with complete truth that due to the more favorable terrain through which the upper location of the Parkway has been projected and the presence of a great deal of fine timber and shrubbery, the landscaping of the finished route would be a simple and practical matter, and the owner of the land would be fully compensated for the land, the timber, and the shrubbery that might be found on the right of way. It is possible that the land owner is unduly alarmed by the feeling that if the Parkway were built around Grandfather Mountain as proposed, the attractiveness of the high bridge and toll road would be adversely affected. However, those who are in the best position to appraise this situation, without bias, feel that beyond question, the high

would have an enormous increase in visitors since the patrons of the Parkway could get a fine view of it from various places along the route. It would appear that the sight of an outstanding attraction would certainly create a desire to visit it.

In this connection, it should be pointed out that it is contemplated that a large overlook area would be provided near the west end of the tunnel through Pilot Ridge and from overlook, a breath-taking view of the high bridge would be inescapable. Many well-informed people who have commented on this aspect of the matter have stated that, in their opinion, the building of the Parkway on the upper location would be of the greatest possible benefit to the owners of the bridge rather than the slightest disadvantage.

(16) PROTEST: HIGH ROUTE BRINGS MORE FOG WORRIES - The mountain driving in the fog that bothers non-mountain drivers would be sharply increased by following a route higher than the Yonahlossee Trail. On many days the higher elevations of Grandfather are "socked in" while the Yonahlossee is in the clear. Approval of the high route would not represent the best thinking of North Carolina's Highway Commission.

COMMENT: The presence of fog in the mountains is not always confined to the higher levels and, while it is true that the upper end of the toll road and the high bridge are frequently blacked out by clouds and fog, the Yonahlossee Trail does not always suffer the same inconvenience at the same time because it is approximately 1,000' lower in elevation than the high bridge. Due to the southerly exposure along the upper route, the fog usually rises quickly, due to the influence of the sun, and the fog and cloud formations are generally concentrated on the higher peaks at about the 5,000-foot contour.

(17) PROTEST: ICE MEANS NO WINTERTIME USE ON HIGHER ROUTE - The Linville to Blowing Rock section of the Parkway would be padlocked November to April by the Park Service because of ice and snow if a route higher than the year-around Yonahlossee Trail is taken. The Parkway is closed in the Mitchell-Craggy section each winter for this reason.

COMMENT: The Yonahlossee Trail from Beacon Heights to Blowing Rock has seldom been closed due to ice or snow and certainly there would be no occasion to close the Parkway

through this area, at some particular date if icy conditions did not then exist, for the simple reason that a sleet or snow storm that would justify closing the Parkway would certainly affect the Yonahlossee Trail in exactly the same manner and the Highway Commission would certainly not stop traffic unless road conditions were really dangerous, yet this Parkway has not been closed except under the most unusual conditions.

In this connection, it might be well to point out that thousands of miles of important highways and turnpikes are operated continuously in various parts of the country regardless of snow and ice. The answer is simply this: If there is sufficient traffic to justify keeping the road open, it is, by no means, impractical to do so, and it is believed that as the traffic increases on the Parkway, arrangements will be made to keep it open during the winter in order that the public may have access to our beautiful mountains when they are covered with ice and snow. Instead of winter conditions being a disadvantage, no doubt in the future, the mountains will become an added attraction along the Parkway.

(18) PROTEST: EXPENSIVE BRIDGE PLANNED HERE - Plans for a higher route across Grandfather Mountain would be complicated by the need for a bridge to take the Parkway up to the cliffs shown in the upper center of photo. Grandfather Mountain's entrance is one mile from the Parkway and Linville is 3 miles from the Parkway to the left, and the bridge across the intersection would do much to add to the already by-passed condition of these two points. (Picture shown with statements.)

COMMENT: This paragraph has already been answered rather fully, but this additional comment will be offered. It is not true that the higher route would require a bridge to carry the Parkway up to the cliffs shown in the picture. This is, to say the least, a fantastic misinterpretation of the plans for the Parkway. The Parkway location lies completely under this cliff. It closely parallels the Yonahlossee Trail and it is only necessary to raise the Parkway high enough to provide a vertical clearance of 14' over Route 221, leading toward Linville.

It is impossible to see how a properly designed intersection between the Parkway and Route 221, at this point could, in any way, adversely influence traffic which might wish to go to Linville or to Grandfather Mountain by way of the toll road.