

Michigan Mirror

'No rustics by '78' is the traveler's call

By ELMER E. WHITE

The "pry" patches along Michigan highways look ever more modern as the state moves ahead with a real stop renewal program.

Back in 1969 the state Highway Commission ordered a changeover from the 36 rustic rest stop facilities to modern equipment. Four years later, after a dozen of the rustics were switched, the commission called for a speedup.

Today, three of the remaining 24 facilities have been dropped from the list because of relocation of the entire rest stop site. Nine others have been modernized—

seven during 1975.

No rustics by '78 is the rallying cry. Jack Burton, supervisor of roadside development for the Department of State Highways and Transportation, says the remaining 23 half-moon type facilities will be under contract for modernization by the end of 1978 or shortly thereafter.

What does all this cost?

The latest modernization, in Ottawa County, cost nearly \$72,000 for the building alone. Added expenses were incurred because of the need for new driveways, sidewalks, lighting and a sewage system.

"What price comfort?"

NUMBERS, LETTER and border stripes on your license plates already are shabby—after many legislative hassles about reflectorizing.

Now the fight appears to begin anew, as a special legislative committee gears up to study whether Michigan's license plates should be fully reflectorized.

An earlier study reportedly found no significant advantage to adding the material to reflect light. And Secretary of State Richard H. Austin opposes reflectorizing.

Critics also point out that completely reflectorizing license plates could nearly double the current 78 cents per pair of plates manufacturing cost.

But Rep. Thomas Anderson (D-Southgate) is sponsoring a bill to require full reflectorizing. He says the current plates are ineffective in bad weather and provide inadequate illumination.

The special study committee will "sort out the data available," says Democratic Sen. Jerome Hart of Saginaw, who sponsored the measure creating the committee.

PICTURE A SUNLIT cemetery on a crisp morning, squirrels hopping about birds flitting here and there.

Old-style guns—one with a bayonet con-

dition that won't quite stay in position—a salute, and an ever-so-slightly ragged bunch of fellows in 18th century British uniforms go through their drill.

Then the historical marker is unveiled. Among one of Michigan's sons who fought in the American Revolution, Jerry Roe is at work, bringing Michigan's history to the people in a way that's anything but dull.

Roe, a member of Michigan's Historical Commission, isn't content with ponderous pronouncements about heritage and that sort of thing.

He's into people history, the kind that gets into the personal background of Michigan's famous and not-so-famous folks, the kind that most people can relate to and enjoy doing so.

The executive secretary of Michigan's Republican Party, Roe currently is trying to save the abating scarf worn by former GOP Gov. Albert Sleeper.

"It's a little bit of history," Roe declares, "longer only part way in check."

Sleeper was a chief executive of this state and if there's something of a governor's worth saving, we'll save it.

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