

From Mrs. FergusonDate 12-10-25

THE EDITORIAL OF THE DAY

THE SPECIAL SESSION QUESTION

From Ft. Worth Star-Telegram.

Whether there will be a special session of the Legislature now appears to rest entirely with Governor Ferguson. Members of the body, in unofficial session sometime ago, petitioned her for a special session and advised that unless she issued a call for such by Dec. 10 the Speaker would call it. However, the Attorney General's department held that a session called by the Speaker would not have authority to appropriate money, not even for its own expenses. Now, his department has held that such special session, financed by outside individuals, would not be legal and against public policy. Thus, unless the members agree to defray the expenses of the session themselves or Governor Ferguson calls it, there is not much likelihood of a special session.

The Star-Telegram declared itself in favor of a special session sometime ago and it feels, as it felt then, that Mrs. Ferguson as Governor should call it. This, it believes she should do in the interest of her own administration, as much as in the interest of the public.

The attorney general's investigation into the Highway Department and the revelations in the American Road Company case, in the opinion of The Star Telegram, warrant a special session to investigate the entire highway situation. The American Road case showed that the Highway Department had awarded work to this one concern totalling \$2,000,000 at a price the court held excessive and unconscionable and that it was awarded on merely a "gentleman's agreement" and without bond of any character. Another suit of a similar character, and embracing similar allegations has been filed against the Hoffman Construction Company and is scheduled for trial Dec. 16. The evidence in the American trial and the allegations in the Hoffman petition indicate a character of operation and a waste of the people's money that is shocking. Naturally, with these two cases before them, the public is wondering if other transactions of the Highway Department have been handled with the same carelessness and disregard of business judgment. And the public will continue to wonder until the situation has been cleared up.

The Ferguson administration can not escape criticism as a result of the highway revelations to date. The Commissioners chiefly responsible for the same were Ferguson appointees. The Highway Department is a coordinate part of the Ferguson administration. Until the situation is cleared up, the stigma of the highway revelations will rest upon the Ferguson administration and if Mrs. Ferguson declines to call a special session of the Legislature, her refusal might be interpreted as evidence of a desire to shield her administration and of fear to have the full facts brought to light.

At the time of the American suit,

Governor Ferguson defended the contract and employed outside attorneys to resist the attorney general's suit and even since the confession of judgment by that company and the decree of the court, the Governor's husband, "Governor Jim," has persisted that the "contract" was a good deal for the State and that instead of recovering funds for the State, the attorney general has caused the State a great loss. The special session at least will afford the Fergusons the opportunity of proving these contentions, but until they do prove them the public naturally will be more inclined to accept the verdict of the court than the statement of the administration, whose representatives were responsible for the deal.

As matters stand now, the public doesn't know the real facts about the highway situation. All it knows is what came out in the American case and that was bad enough. What the real situation is it may never know, unless there is a special session and a thorough investigation of the entire situation. This, we feel the public is entitled to and has a right to expect from Governor Ferguson. She made her campaign for Governor on the plea of vindicating her husband's name and to remove from the family name the stigma that followed his impeachment. A special session will afford her the opportunity of further vindication if she proves her contentions regarding the American case and the conduct of the Highway department. Otherwise, she is certain to go out of office with a certain stigma at-

tached to her administration as a result of the highway revelations and the more or less fixed belief among many that her refusal to call a special session was nothing more nor less than fear of meeting the situation.

Certainly Mrs. Ferguson must see the logic of this situation and The Star-Telegram is still hopeful that, having seen it, she will meet it by issuing the call herself and letting the public know what the real facts are with reference to the Highway Department.