

Friday, September 15, 1989

Senate approves \$5 billion construction of super collider project outside Dallas

WASHINGTON (AP) — Nearly three years after Texas launched an expensive and aggressive campaign to win the super collider, the Senate gave final legislative approval Thursday to a bill authorizing construction of the \$5.9 billion particle accelerator on Ellis County farmland.

The bill, which sets aside \$225 million for the super collider, is on its way to President Bush for his signature.

The funds for the SSC, a 53-mile underground tunnel, are included in a measure providing \$18.6 billion for next year's federal energy and water programs.

Under the bill, Texas received \$482 million for energy and water projects, according to Sen. Phil Gramm, R-Texas, including \$31 million for construction of the long-awaited Cooper Lake in Northeast Texas and \$43.3 million for the Pantex nuclear weapons assembly plant in Amarillo.

The biggest Texas project in the bill is the superconducting super collider. Expected to take up to seven years to complete, the SSC would be used by scientists to hurl beams of protons into each other in a search for the basic building blocks of the universe.

"The SSC will put the United States on the cutting edge of the technological advances gained from increased knowledge of the basic forces in the universe," Sen. Lloyd Bentsen, D-Texas, said.

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Rep. Jim Chapman predicted some construction would begin soon at the SSC site south of Dallas in Ellis County.

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— Lloyd Bentsen, U.S. Senator

"There is just going to be a flurry of activity this fall, as the program begins to actually move toward construction of the project," Chapman, a Sulphur Springs Democrat, said. "This is just going to be a tremendous boost to Texas and the nation. After a long, long struggle, the SSC is

headed toward becoming the law of the land."

Chapman said he also believes Congress' commitment to build the SSC will make it easier for the Energy Department to obtain cost-sharing agreements from foreign sources, who are expected to finance up to one-third of the project.

"One of our challenges next year is to move forward aggressively in negotiating those agreements," Chapman said. "The entire world is interested."

Department of Energy officials told Congress earlier this year it would be difficult to convince other countries to help finance the project until Congress signaled its commitment. To date, only India has signed a cost-sharing agreement of \$50 million.

Texas has committed \$1 billion.

Chapman said Congress' decision to build the collider will make it harder for lawmakers in future years to abandon the project, although he anticipates a yearly struggle over the appropriation.

"This year the effort was doubly difficult because we had to make believers of the Congress in the merits of SSC," Chapman said. "We will continue to have to justify the expense each year because the appropriation will increase. We are never totally safe until we launch our first proton in that tunnel."

New president of S. Africa allows protests

CAPE TOWN, South Africa — National Party leader F.W. de Klerk was elected Thursday to a five-year term as president and was criticized immediately by conservative opponents for allowing a protest that drew an estimated 20,000 people.

Police allowed two smaller protests to go on Thursday, even giving flowers to leaders of one march. Anti-apartheid leaders announced plans for more activity Friday.

The Electoral College, dominated by Parliament members of the National Party, cast a unanimous vote for de Klerk, one day after the march in Cape Town. It was the largest legal protest march in South Africa's history.

Moolman Mentz, spokesman for the Conservative Party, the largest parliamentary opposition, said approval of the Cape Town march was "a knife thrust in the back" of the security forces. Mentz called for immediate Parliamentary debate.

In a rare move, the anti-apartheid Democratic Party voted with the Nationalists to defeat the Conservatives' motion.

In carrying out his stated policy to allow peaceful protest, de Klerk faces opposition not only from right-wing parties but from the security establishment that enjoyed wide powers under former President P.W. Botha.

East Germans continue dash to Austrian border for freedom

BUDAPEST, Hungary (AP) — East Germans made a last-minute dash for the border Thursday, with more than 100 per hour reported crossing into Austria in fear the Iron Curtain's hole to the West might close again soon.

Hungarian authorities said they had no plans to stop the exodus, which has prompted East Germans in Poland and Czechoslovakia to seek refuge in West German embassies in hopes they too will get to go West.

Poland's Foreign Ministry confirmed that some East Germans were at the West German Embassy in Warsaw. About 150 East Germans were reported in the West German Embassy in Prague, Czechoslovakia.

The Vatican newspaper praised Hungary's move, but a pro-Solidarity newspaper in Poland cautioned against Warsaw following Hungary's example.

After a brief letup in the refugee flow Wednesday, Austria's Interior Ministry reported Thursday that 100 East Germans an hour were arriving en route to West Germany.

West German border officials said more than 700 new refugees arrived overnight. Aid workers in Budapest, where would-be emigrants register before going West, said at least 13,000 people had crossed since early Monday.

The East Germans are automatically granted citizenship in West Germany and have been put up in camps and given assistance finding housing and jobs.

The reform-minded Communist government in Hungary opened its border to Austria at midnight Sunday, ending a weeks-long standoff that began when thousands of East Germans flooded the West German Embassy in Budapest seeking legal emigration.

Many had come to Hungary in May, after the country began dismantling barbed wire and other barriers along its westernmost border, and had been caught trying to cross to the West illegally. They feared they would be punished if they returned to their homeland.

West Germany's ARD television network reported rumors Hungary would close the border soon, but government spokesman Zsolt Bajnok said he knew of no such plans.

Bajnok quoted Foreign Minister Gyula Horn as saying Thursday that "no decision has been made" on stopping the flow of East Germans.

East Germany accused Hungary of breaking an accord prohibiting unauthorized departures to the West of residents of the Warsaw Pact countries, and it filed a formal protest.

Hungary's Foreign Ministry said the government let the East Germans go in accordance with a U.N. human rights accord that outweighed its agreement with East Germany.

The ministry, in a statement carried by the official MTI news agency, also said the 1969 East German-Hungarian accord contained a secret article invalidating the

agreement "if conditions change fundamentally."

"The conditions had changed fundamentally" it said, referring to the influx of East Germans. It indicated the borders would remain open to East Germans as long as masses of them want to cross.

"Considering that the causes underlying the decision of the Hungarian Peoples' Republic have not changed, the Hungarian party cannot consider rescinding the decision at present," it said.

Emotions in East Berlin appeared to cool Thursday, with the Communist Party daily *Neues Deutschland* refraining from additional criticism of Hungary.

Chicken pox vaccine awaits approval in U.S.

NEW YORK (AP) — A vaccine that would be the nation's first for chicken pox has been submitted for federal approval, and a new whooping cough vaccine with less risk of side effects may follow soon.

Chicken pox strikes more than 3 million Americans a year, mostly children. While it is generally just bothersome, a small fraction of patients suffer harm to the nervous system or other complications such as pneumonia or bacterial infections. About 175 Americans a year die from such problems.

Some calculations suggest that given the medical costs of complications, a chicken pox vaccine can make economic sense for society as a whole.

Merck Sharpe & Dohme of West Point, Pa., in August asked the Food and Drug Administration to approve its vaccine, which Stanley Plotkin, chairman of the American Academy of Pediatrics said is already used in Japan and Europe.

The vaccine contains a weakened version of the chicken pox virus.

The standard vaccine for whooping cough is given in early childhood as part of the DTP vaccine.

About half of the children who get the DTP vaccine run a fever, with swelling or soreness at the injection site in 40 to 50 percent, according to one large study. The fever can also cause convulsions.

In contrast, recent research found that fever appeared in only about 5 percent of children vaccinated with a new "acellular" pertussis vaccine, and localized reactions were minimal, said James Cherry of the University of California, Los Angeles, School of Medicine.

Witness testifies that nursing home aide murdered five, threatened to kill babies

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. (AP) — A former nursing home aide charged with suffocating five patients threatened to kill babies at a hospital nursery after she left Michigan, her alleged co-conspirator testified Thursday.

Catherine Wood, the prosecution's key witness, continued her testimony in Kent County Circuit Court in the trial of her former lesbian lover, Wendolyn Graham.

Graham, 25, is charged with five counts of first-degree murder and one count of conspiracy to murder in the 1987 deaths of female patients at Alpine Manor Nursing Home in Walker, a suburb of Grand Rapids.

Wood, who has admitted to helping Graham kill the patients, said she decided to go to police after Graham moved to her native Tyler, Texas, in July 1987 and began working at Mother Frances Hospital as a nurse's aide. The two sometimes talked by telephone.

"She told me she liked walking past the nursery and she wanted to take one of (the babies) and smash it against the window," Wood testified. "I had to stop her somehow."

Her statements were made out of the presence of the jury at the defense attorney's request.

Bobbie Burks, a spokesman at Mother Frances, said in a telephone interview Thursday that there were no unusual occurrences or unexplained injuries at the hospital while Graham was employed there between July 1987 and October 1988. Graham, who was not assigned to the nursery, was fired when the hospital found out she was being investigated in the Alpine Manor deaths.

Wood, 27, has pleaded guilty to one count of second-degree murder and one count of conspiracy to murder and agreed to testify against Graham.

Wood testified she felt badly about the murders while they were occurring, but went along with Graham, sometimes acting as a lookout while Graham allegedly smothered the patients with rolled-up washcloths. Graham allegedly told her the killings "relieved tension."

The two had planned to take turns killing patients, Wood said, but said she lacked the nerve to kill anyone.

The two split in July 1987, after living together for nearly a year, and Graham moved to Tyler with another nurse's aide.

Defense attorney James Piazza said Wood made up the slayings because she was hurt and angry that Graham had left her for another woman.

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