

Legislative History for Connecticut Act

SB 284 CPA400 ~~8~~ 1921  
Roads + Bridges 105-126 (22)

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FINANCE COMMITTEE - -  
ROADS, RIVERS and BRIDGES COMMITTEE.

(Joint Hearing, March 1, 1921 )  
(Hall of the House. )

SENATE BILL NO. 284 - (Introduced by Senator Macdonald)

- An Act concerning Motor Vehicles, amendment to Section 20, Chapter 233, Public Acts of 1919, relating to Fees for the Registration of Motor Vehicles. -

COMMISSIONER STONCKEL-

"It occurs to me it would probably expedite matters if you took this Fees Schedule up by sections. The first section, "A" relates to commercial Motor Vehicles. "

COMMISSIONER BENNETT-

"Mr. Chairman and gentlemen- I want you all to hear what I have to say. I wish to preface what I have to say by the remark that the State Highway Department at the present time is met with demands for work that cannot be one half or one tenth done. This is due mostly to the operation of Motor Vehicles on the highways. After looking over this situation and studying it for a long time, we decided to advance this system of Motor Vehicle fees as a remedy for some of our troubles. Mr. Chairman, I prepared a written statement, which I will read and file with you. "

Reading of statement .-

CHAIRMAN-

"Is there anyone who wishes to speak in favor of this Section of the Bill?"

No one spoke in favor.

OPPOSITION \* \* \*

A. P. MARSH, (New Britain, Conn.)

"I represent the manufacturers, business men, merchants and the truckmen of New Britain, and I am here to say that we are all opposed to this proposed increase in Motor Vehicle registration fees. We have looked at this question from every angle, and we fail to see why the motor truck business particularly should be punished for

what they have done for the public. We are not in favor of all the burden being put upon the motor vehicles for the maintenance of the highways, nor is it just that it should be. We have heard a lot lately about the good old days. Quite recently in one of our local papers, it was suggested that we "go back to the good old days". It is all right if you want to be reactionary, but many of these people don't care to be. Those "good old days" gentlemen, were about the best days that our toiling, struggling ancestors could make them. They worked to give us a better day. So I say - away with all the foolish talk about the good old days. What we should do is to look forward to better days, but these reactionary measures will never give us better days in the future. I say we have come to a modern day with a big future before us, - we have motor vehicles and every kind of development possible, and we are opposed to anything that hinders our progress, - anything that has for its object the eliminating of things worth while, and we see in this proposition before us the elimination from the highways of the heavy duty trucks, and we object to it. The manufacturers object to it. Now if you want to go back to the good old days - let's go back 20 years - 20 years ago the railroads were obsolete. Westerners came into New England and since that time it has been demonstrated what railroads can do. Now, where would we have been during the war if it hadn't been for the motor trucks; where would we have been last spring if it hadn't been for the motor trucks? Motor trucks made it possible for manufacturers to get materials, and get their goods shipped, - now you will turn around and propose a measure that means the trucks will be crowded off the highways. It is beyond the conception of justice. Now I am not up here to advocate no increase, and I am not here to say we should not pay our part of these highway costs, but out in New Britain we have agreed that we should pay a reasonable increase. I have letters here from a good many business men and manufacturers, only one of which states they are in favor of a greater rate of increase on motor trucks than on pleasure cars, and they are all in favor of a smaller increase than is proposed - not one is in favor of an increase of more than 100%. We are going to see if we can get something for our money, and will not favor any increase of more than 100%. We have talked with some of the best men in Connecticut, and they are with us on this. We don't feel that the motor truck should be put out of business. We want the privilege of using the highways. We have done our share toward destroying the highways, we know very well, but while we have been doing that we have been serving the public, and right here in Connecticut when the railroads have failed us the trucks have come to the rescue. Now of course we have to admit that the railroads are able at present to take care of the business, and they always will be when there is no business, and this is about the only time in 20 years when the railroads could take care of it. Now, gentlemen, please let's look into the future to that bright and better day we are all looking forward to, and what about the railroads. They are looking for increased rates now - they fall down every time you want them to do anything extraordinary. Last spring the manufacturers of New Britain trucked their goods to Boston and shipped by boat to Springfield, Mo., Oklahoma and to Wyoming. I see no reason why the operating of trucks should prompt such an increase as is proposed. It has been said that the railroads don't want short haul stuff. Well, if they don't, what is to become of it if you get rid of the motor trucks? Now I understand they do want it, but they are

already asking for increased rates. Now, what are you going to do? Put up the fees so the motors cannot stand it? It is said here that we don't pay a fair proportion and that is the reason we can compete with the railroad company. I maintain that we do pay a fair proportion, and we don't get any too much for it. There are a few highways in the state that are fine, and kept in very good condition, but its a different thing back in the farming districts. Last winter when the roads were so bad the farmers could not get their produce to market, the motor trucks went there and took supplies to them and stuff to the markets, but I see no roads through those sections that are much good for trucks to use- I do see bridges posted " 2 Tons " though. Now we are willing to pay more if we get more. We are willing in New Britain to stand for an increase not to exceed 100 per cent, and we are going to fight tooth and nail anything above that. I talk advisedly because I have consulted those who are deeply interested. Now there is one little thing about this proposed rate we don't like there. It says "The Motor Vehicle Commissioner shall determine the capacity of these trucks." If we buy a Ton truck we want it rated as a Ton truck. If we have a 3 1/2 Ton truck we don't want it rated as 5 Ton. We want that eliminated. Furthermore, we don't want to be taxed for every bit of repair we have to pay for. Why don't you tax those who repair watches and clocks? I say that is not an honest tax- it is not right. A man should have the freedom to go into any business, and not be taxed because he repairs automobiles. It is a roundabout way of getting a little more out of the automobile owner. Now, gentlemen, I believe we have the right idea about this. We believe there should be more and better highways, but we don't believe if they had the money that the state could get the roads built much sooner. Just as quick as business picks up, they could not build roads because they could not get the men to do the work. We want you to go a little bit slow, and then if the burden of wear and tear and up-keep warrants our paying more, we will come to you fair and square and say the rates should be raised, but we don't intend to have the fees raised to the extent you propose if we can help it at the present time.

William E. Egan,  
Hartford.

I presume you are discussing the proposed rates of the Highway Commissioner on motor trucks. There is no justification in the law or equity in the tax on motors at all, and you cannot make reasonable a tax based on inequity, and which has for its purpose the repair or maintenance of highways. The confession of the commissioner that our roads do not carry the load, and asks this committee by its policy of taxation to adopt such a policy, is retrogressive. He has no business in asking for this, he is exceeding his position, and it is your business to consider the desire of the people at this time, and if they are willing to pay the tax they ought to have the say how it shall be determined upon. There is not in existence in the United States a class of property owners so heavily taxed as the automobilist, he pays from the time he buys his automobile until he is buried and then his administrator pays. If the reason for this tax is that you want the money, why not say so? If you want the money fix it in a general tax upon the public. It is not only the automobile owner who receives benefit, everyone derives some benefit, and if you put this tax on the consumer will pay it. Looking at it from the standpoint of engineers, I was told today that motor trucks do not destroy the highway any more than other vehicles do and that the destruction is relative in most instances to improper construction, with due respect to the Highway Commissioner, and not the people of Connecticut. Good roads is one of the principal means of the advancement of civilization, and we should have a bond issue and let posterity pay for the benefits they will receive from them. I have here today a man who has made a study of road construction and understands the advantages of certain systems of roads. You cannot take the motor trucks off the road without causing loss to the producer and consumer, and I wish to introduce Mr. Hauer, an engineer of ability, and would like to have him tell you the facts in the situation.

Mr. Hauer: In going over Mr. Bennett's statements - we have made a very careful study of roads, we did not take the study up until two years ago. We have to have roads to run motor vehicles.

Committee: Who do you represent, and your name, please.

Mr. Hauer: I represent the Motor Vehicle Conference Committee of New York City, and the International Motor Company who operate six factories.

Committee: This is a Connecticut bill and I do not think it is necessary to bring anyone from outside into the hearing. I would rather have Connecticut people.

Mr. Egan: This man represents a large number of Mack trucks, and a large number are operated in the state of Connecticut.

Mr. Hauer: I represent the Mack Company who were incorporated in your state and have six factory branches here. We have a lot of information. If you do not want to hear it, that is up to you. I am sorry this thing has come up as we have looked at it from a broad angle, and somebody has to study it. Going back to Mr. Bennett's

first statement, where he says the cause of the trouble is the motor trucks. I speak for Connecticut owners of trucks, and we feel that we are not responsible, based on what little information the automobile industry has. The Department at Washington has been making important studies as to what damages the road. You feel that the state should build the roads and the vehicles should maintain them. The Department has made about 4,000 tests. Their results are now in the hands of the printer and will be ready for distribution in 3 or 4 weeks. As to our trucks ruining the roads, we do not believe with the present knowledge it is necessary to impose a tax at anything like the rate proposed. The experience of other Highway Departments do not bear out the excessive tax Mr. Bennett has proposed. He stated it is assumed the construction of the road ought to carry 5 tons, increasing the cost \$15,000 a mile over other trucks. That may be true, the figures vary in each state, but he doesn't tell you what you would get for that additional \$15,000. The ordinary road is a 4" road in territories where they are not affected by frost, the strength is in comparison with the depth of the slab, and if the road is built we have a relative strength of 16, and for an 8" slab, which is standard, you have a comparative strength of 64 or 400% more. It doesn't cost him twice as much for 8" as 4, and it is a pretty good slab, and stands up under conditions comparing favorably with Connecticut, that is in Detroit. They are carrying 15 and 20 tons and it stands up. Two weeks ago I was in Pennsylvania at a convention and the highway commissioners of four states were there. There was shown on slides 650 road failures. No one was referred to as being ruined by trucks, it was the experience that the damage was caused by faulty drainage or poor grade or foundation. If you will look at Mr. Bennett's report you will find the picture of a road that has failed. If you will go a little way back you will see it is probably the fault of a faulty drain. This is not only true in Connecticut but in other states as well. About three years ago we made a preliminary survey of the different methods of taxation and the vehicles causing the damage to the road. At that time it was guess work. The tests are very hard to follow and impossible to put through any legislation according to the many things that affect and damage the roads. Here is a simple method of taxation. A one ton truck doesn't do one-fifth the damage that a 5 ton truck does, it is the impact, and it is hard to get over to the average man. Mr. Bennett stated the tax would not drive the heavy trucks off the road. In the United States there are five states that have passed such measures, Georgia, Iowa, Mississippi and South Carolina. One state has a charge of \$405. for a 6½ ton truck, there is not one truck of that capacity operating in one of those states today. This increase of \$1.36 per ton mile is more than the railroad get, including their hauling, taxes, overhead, etc. \$1.36 per ton mile is the tax on a 5 ton truck as prepared. That will be passed on the consumer. Our interest in this taxation is that we feel at this session bonds should be issued. We are trying to look 5 or 10 years ahead and find out what the public is demanding. We haven't the large trucks covering the state roads today such as are operated in New York and Chicago. As the truck loads increase they are decreasing the damage on the roads.

Bill  
Harbury.

I do not believe it is necessary for me to say anything. It seems the ground has been pretty well covered by the opposition to this proposed increase in taxation. I am chairman of the legislative committee of the wholesale grocers of South Norwalk. I appear here to say that I do not think it well to increase the registration fee from 300 to 400%. It is all wrong. The state of Connecticut could afford to pay a year's license fee to the operators of trucks of Connecticut for the service they rendered during the last two or three years. I know of instances where the communities would have gone without the necessities of life if it had not been for the trucks, the railroads couldn't do it. Sugar was laying weeks and months at the refineries and the railroads couldn't take it away and they were compelled to send automobile trucks to the refineries at a very great added expense so that the communities would be supplied. This increase in the rate is absolutely all wrong. I cannot talk to you from the standpoint of a lawyer or an engineer. Let them increase 50% on the motor trucks. I believe 50% is all this committee should recommend.

Mr O. Wells  
Hartford.

I represent the Connecticut Retail Merchants Association and practically all the department stores of the state, and the wholesale grocers association comprising most of the wholesale grocers. The proposed fees which have been advocated by the Highway Department will not drive the trucks from the roads of Connecticut but they will tend very much to drive the Connecticut owned trucks from the roads in Connecticut. Connecticut is differently situated from the other states mentioned, in that it is small, surrounded by other states with low registration fees. On 5 ton trucks the proposed registration fee is \$450. In New York it is \$25., in Massachusetts, \$50., and in Rhode Island \$20. The Connecticut merchant and wholesale grocer is in competition with the merchants from Springfield, Providence and New York and all the other surrounding cities, and the effect of this bill is to put the Connecticut man out of competition with those of other states. The wholesale grocer and the department store operates within a radius of 25 to 50 miles, so that the Hartford grocer is in competition with the Springfield grocer, both selling in the country towns between Hartford and Springfield, and some of the outlying towns can be supplied only by motor trucks, the railroad facilities will not take care of them delivering from the wholesale grocer to the retail merchant in the smaller towns. If you place a prohibitive or very large registration fee, which must be paid by the Connecticut grocer or department store, in this instance, you are giving his Springfield competitor a large advantage, and instead of a Connecticut grocer or department store operating his truck and selling goods to the outlying towns, you will have the same kind of trucks operating over the roads of the state of Connecticut and selling goods for the benefit of merchants of other states. Take the other end of the state and you come into competition with the New York grocer. He has a larger capital and operates on a larger scale, and consequently will drive his trucks as far as Hartford, you are permitting

him for a license fee of \$25. as against \$450. proposed in Connecticut, to sell goods in place of the Connecticut man, and consequently the effect of this bill is to eliminate the operating of these trucks by the Connecticut owner and put him out of business, and allow the man from out of the state to do business here. \$1500. is considerably more than one-fourth the cost of the truck. By this act you will put nothing into the Connecticut treasury and you will take away from the Connecticut merchants. The damage to the roads done by the heavy trucks is mostly done in the spring of the year, in the two or three weeks when the roads are soft and the truck will destroy the road in places. If it is the desire to protect the roads it might be best effected by having the roads closed to heavy trucks during the few weeks in the year when the frost is coming out of the road - to foreign trucks as well as domestic. In that way the roads would be protected when soft and allow these trucks to pay a reasonable fee, as in the other states.

MR. WEXLER ( Representing New Haven Manufacturers Assn.)

"Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen- I want to say at the outset, that the manufacturers in approaching this subject have turned to us in a fair minded and splendid manner; we appreciate the necessity of maintaining roads, and we believe too that towards the maintenance of roads all users and owners of trucks should pay their fair contribution. We believe, however, that there are certain substantial reasons for opposing the excessive and unreasonable increase in rates which is now proposed here. In the first place in our opinion this curve of increase comes too sharply. We believe that this principle of taxation which has been evoked by this legislature is rather an extreme principle, in that the tax proposed is a tax upon the privilege or rather the absolute right of trucks to use the highways of this state. In fact it is proposed to make these roads "toll" roads, and to impose upon the direct users of these roads a fee or toll for the right to use them. Now, this may be all right, but it is not fair to impose the entire burden of the maintenance and replacement of roads upon the direct users of the roads, because the users themselves are not the sole beneficiaries of the roads. Manufacturers have a very pressing interest, a very important interest in the keeping open of these highways. The consumer- the user of commodities has an equally important interest in seeing that these roads are not barred from use. And if you impose this very high tax it stands to reason that many users will be barred from the road. The Commissioner has acknowledged that he expected these proposed rates would bring a storm of protest, and I believe he has proved himself a very wise weather prophet, for there is a great storm of protest. I have read with considerable interest the published statement of the Commissioner, and have followed his statement here. He has admitted that these proposed rates are based on rather rough estimates, and not on particularly scientific basis. I have sought to obtain some explanation of just how these rates were arrived at, and it was not forthcoming. Now this Motor Vehicle Conference in which was employed the best minds in the country, engineering and otherwise, Commissioner Bennett was a participant in that conference- that conference did arrive at a scientific basis for determining rates and they are right. Now, Mr. Atwater, who is to ask the privilege of speaking, has prepared a very carefully tabulated statement of rates arrived at along these lines. Now mind you, gentlemen, these are scientific figures, not hit or miss. The Commissioner has apparently bases his figures upon the grounds that there is not enough money to do the necessary work, and here is an easy way to get more money. I would suggest, if you are willing, that you give attention to the tables that Mr. Atwater has prepared in this connection.

F. ATWATER (Representing American Hardware Corporation)

Brief filed with the Committee.

A. L. DeLaney ( Senator )

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"Gentlemen, on behalf of a great many of the manufacturers of Fairfield County, as well as several individual truck owners, at their request I desire to oppose any unreasonable increase in the fees for the registration of motor trucks. I firmly believe that our financial condition in this state is such at the present time that relief must be had from somewhere. The manufacturers of the state- at least those in Fairfield County, have written to me, as well as individual truck owners, to the effect that they are willing to pay an increase of 100% above present fees. I believe that the Committee will, in fairness to the owners of trucks, bring about a measure, fair, just and equitable, commensurate with the need of the state, but that no other Bill ought to pass."

SENATOR BROOKS.

"I am probably going to say something that will not agree with two of the best friends I have in Connecticut. With one exception, the man seated on our Committee, I am probably the oldest 'good roads man' in this assembly, and I want good roads, and I want to keep good roads just as long as I am alive. Now, I am afraid if the present bill were to be passed as proposed, we would be doing something we did not figure on. The time we started good roads was when we had the old high bicycle for the safety, before motors were thought of, and so it has come on up to the present day when there is heavy use of the roads by machines, and we are paying our share of the expense of keeping up the roads, only I always maintained and always shall maintain that any automobile tax is all wrong. The only regret is that we didn't fight it out when we had the chance and do away with it forever. Now what you are trying to do is going to drive pleasure vehicles and trucks off the road in certain localities and they will get the horse drawn vehicles back again, and then you are going to spoil the roads by vehicles that don't pay any tax even in their own town. By putting such a tax on trucks you are going backwards instead of ahead, and the state of Connecticut has generally gone ahead in everything it has done, and I have always maintained that until every user of the highway pays his part of the expense that the motor vehicle tax is not fair. I stood in Hartford yesterday and watched a pair of truck horses go through with heavy hauls on - they did more damage than any 5-ton truck would do. The same thing holds good on the country roads. A pair of horses today on a semi-finished road, with hauls on, will do more damage than a 5-ton truck at any time. Now don't put a prohibitive fee on. Put on a rate as high as consistent with the damage done by the users and the benefits they receive. I wish you would write into the law that every vehicle, every horse, that moves on our highways should bear its proper proportion of the expense of building and maintaining that road. Then you will be fair. Until you do that, you are not fair. A gentleman from Waterbury made a very pertinent statement here, when he said that motor trucks ought to have a good deal of consideration on the strength of what they did for us in the past two or three years or so. Many times their use made it possible to keep the factories running when the railroads failed to get the materials through. We ought not to put the whole burden on the man who used the truck - we don't want to put the whole burden on the man who employs it for business purposes. And another thing, I want you to bear in mind, if you are going to put us where we have to build and maintain the roads ourselves, for heaven's sake give us some rights on these roads instead of restricting us so we don't have anything to say on them. The man who drives a motor vehicle today, whether pleasure car or truck, is a criminal before he starts - he is licensed and tagged, he pays his bills, but you can always catch him. A man driving a horse can get away with anything on the road, no matter what he does. Now you have put up this fee 100 on pleasure cars - it is all right if you will tax other men who use the road in proportion. But don't put it onto us and then fix it so we have nothing to say on the road, and don't fix it so on the trucks that they will think they have all the rights - I want to see them pay only enough so that we can order them to one side so we can get past them on the road. It is not just money on this thing - We have to get money, and I am just as much interested in getting the money to build roads with as anyone else. We want to get fair show and we have

never had it. Not any man who drives a motor vehicle has a fair show. We have the best motor vehicle law in the United States today, and we have a good system of roads, and want to keep it, but we don't want to stop where we are- we want to go ahead and not be made the laughing -stock of all the rest of the country by putting fees on the use of roads that are a joke. "

Mr. Farnham: Would it not be a better idea to tax automobiles according to the value, a car costing \$5,000. should be obliged to pay more than one costing \$500. I think that would be fair.

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Mr. Stoeckel: The rest of the bill are repetitions of the old law, with slight changes, mostly in office work. We are proposing a charge of \$1.50 for making out new cards, the charge now is \$1. I think they might all be taken up at once, they are very simple.

Mr. Snyder, Vice-President, American Motor Works, Portland. The new law asks for twice as much as before. Four times the amount for the first registration and for each set of license plates. It will be absolutely impossible to comply with Section J. If on that basis we manufacture this year 500 cars, we will pay \$1000. as against \$500. last year, and \$100. for markers as against \$25. now which is credited against the final amount. In addition \$10. for each set of license plates, and it takes from 10 to 12 license plates to keep our cars going, mostly now our cars are driven from the factory. In order to retain the old license number you must apply to the Commissioner before December 1st, and a report must be made before December first for the year's business, how can he tell what he will do in December.

Mr. Stoeckel: If there are any technical imperfections we will correct them.

W.A. Rutz, New Haven. I would like to protest against the proposition of a charge of \$100. for the automobile dealer. If you will consider that the average dealer's cars are not used a great deal on the highways of the state, most dealer's cars are used for demonstration and usually confined to some particular city where he is located.

David Leach,  
Bridgeport. I have Mr. Bennett's report. This is more than we can stand.

Manager, Seaman Ice Cream Co. Everyone is trying to lower the cost of his products, but the conditions that are coming up every day are things that are very detrimental to our future. I want to go on record as representing the ice cream men of Connecticut against the advance in price of vehicle rates. I want to offer one thing that has not so far been considered. The man who owns the truck or pleasure car when he starts to drive that car at any time of the year is obliged to take out a license for the entire year. If his car is laid up for six months or three months he has no redress. There are businesses in the state that are seasonal, among them is my own. We have 18 trucks and 6 or 7 pleasure or business cars. During four months of the year, May, June, July and August we use most of those truck and vehicles, and in my shed now are not less than 10 trucks that have stood idle since labor day. If we are going to pay taxes to this enormous amount for trucks, there is only one possible way to do it and that has to be added to the cost of our goods. We cannot pay for it out of our own pocket, but if we are to reduce the high cost of living it is one of the points to be considered. If we pay this license and allow the trucks to stand idle eight months in the year, it is an enormous expense. I believe the money has to be raised for the building of roads and maintenance, but I believe we ought to have a bond issue and that all should not come out of the automobilist. There are hundreds and thousands of men in Connecticut who have their cars laid up four or five months in the year in which they are paying a license and we are taxed from the beginning to the end. We want good roads but our Connecticut vehicles are not ruining the roads of Connecticut, they are numerous enough, but we have dozens of trucks of all descriptions traveling through Connecticut and every truck that passes makes wear and tear on the roads. We will have to go back to the old system of toll gates and make every traveler on the roads pay toll.

H.M.Kent,  
Norwalk.

I have a great many letters from people in my section asking me to oppose this proposed legislation on motor trucks. I wish to register my protest and to say these people are all willing to pay a reasonable tax but they do not feel that three or four times as much is reasonable.

C.B.Whittelsey, President, Hartford Rubber Works, a subsidiary of the United States Rubber Co. We wish to register our protest against the extremely high motor truck fee, and if I am not misinformed your Committee is looking for means to arrive at a just tax rate. I would suggest that other vehicles using the road be taxed. I would also suggest that you consider the piston displacement which you have considered on passenger cars, which is agreed to be a just rate. The A.L.A.M. we have outgrown and I would suggest that you give this serious consideration in reference to your rate.

Bob Goodheart,  
New Haven.

I represent the Merchants Association of New Haven County. We desire to register as opposed to this proposed law, for the reason that an increase of anywhere from 66-2/3% to 500% is not reasonable.

Walter, Manufacturers Association of Bridgeport, numbering about 100 members. We are practically unanimously opposed to this bill, but we are willing to stand a reasonable increase.

Representative of owners and operators of trucks in Danbury who are members of association. This tax on 5 ton trucks taxes us off the highways if it becomes a law. Under the present adverse business conditions trucks ~~trucks~~ cannot be run at a profit and pay that tax.

Committee: Those opposed to this bill rise.

Practically everyone in the House stood, probably about 300.

Mr. Perkins,  
Hartford.

I own and operate 10 local trucks, which do entirely city work and do not use the state highways. I am already taxed for the use of those trucks on the state highways which I do not use. I am opposed very strongly to paying any more for the use of the state roads which I do not want to use. I am using city streets and pay a tax for the use of city streets and also pay for the use of the state highways which I am not equipped to use.

Mr. Hickey,  
Stamford.

I appear for various firms using trucks. They are not opposed to a reasonable increase but are opposed to this proposed bill because it is unreasonable and unjust. In Stamford they have to compete with the trucks from New York City and neighboring towns and feel they cannot do so if they have to pay such a tax as is proposed in this bill. The commodities carried by these trucks are not carried merely for the benefit of the owners but for the benefit of all, and, therefore, I want to register as opposed to the bill.

Mr. Hills,

Manager American Thread Co., Willimantic. Bills are being proposed in the houses of other states on this same matter, the road commissioners having figured the same as Mr. Bennett, but in no case do the figures come near what Mr. Bennett calls for. None of them exceed 100¢. The American Thread is willing to accept anything up to 125¢ and feels some increase is warranted. The question of determining whether trucks are overloaded would cost the state thousands and would require a large force of automobile inspectors.

A. H. WILLOW, (Representative, Danbury)

"The Commissioner has told us he needs more money. That seems to be the question. Now I think the committee will be fair about these licenses. Now it is only a question of how much the automobilist shall be assessed for that money. I have talked with a good many that agree with me, and the concrete proposition which appeals to me would be to increase the fees for trucks by \$5.00 which will give us \$381,000. more than we are getting now. If we could get that increase on cars and trucks it would increase our revenue \$1,076,000. and the general opinion seems to be that the trucks are the only cars that are wearing out the roads. It is more speed than weight that wears the road, according to tests. For myself and the people of Danbury whom I represent, I want to say we would be in favor of the increase in licenses to \$5.00, giving us \$381,000.00 and of an increase of 35% on pleasure cars and 50% on trucks."

Black Motor Truck Co. Representative.

"There is one phase of this situation which I think should be presented to the Committee, and that is the fact that so far as trucks are concerned, possibly 85% of them are sold on what are called "conditional bills of sale" or "time". In other words an inducement is made to get a man into the trucking business by giving him a reasonably extended period of time in which to pay for the commodity which he uses in his business. The registration schedule which is proposed will be absolutely prohibitive in so far as increasing the trucking business is concerned, and it has been well explained here this afternoon that there is an urgent demand for and interest in the trucking business."

Mr. BUELLER- (Middletown)

"I was not present when Commissioner Bennett spoke in favor of this Bill. I have not presumed, however, for a minute, that he really has been serious in expecting that this measure would become a law. I don't think, Mr. Chairman, if we stood here for a week, that we would gain anything as far as the opinion of the committee is concerned, for the reason that that I believe a compromise measure will be the result of this hearing. One or two things I would like to mention- I happen to be president of a manufacturing concern where we own a truck which does nothing but go from the factory to the river, trucking coal, wood, and other materials to our plant, and carting goods to the railroad, and it does not seem fair to me that a truck of that sort should bear the cost which is actually charged against it in this measure, in fact I would like to go so far as to suggest that such trucks be registered at a nominal fee. We already put our trucks in the tax list in the city of Middletown- for the sake of illustration, we own three that cost \$5000.00- they are put in the tax list at \$3500. and with a 50 mill tax it costs us \$105. - This is not to be sneered at even by million dollar owners of factories. In behalf of my constituents I protest against the excessive increase in these fees."

H. I. --- (Industrial Assn. Naugatuck)

"We wish to register our protest against the unjust and unreasonable fees proposed here, and echo the sentiments of Mr. Atwater and his proposed rates. We ask favorable consideration of his proposed rates in addition to these rates at present in force."

J. D. Heffernan, (Representing Waterbury Chamber of Commerce, and  
Waterbury Automobile Dealers Assn.)

"I represent 1000 members, comprising merchants, manufacturers,  
wholesalers and jobbers. We wish to register our objections  
to any increase in motor truck license fees above 100%."

P. W. Brown, (Chasé Companies, Waterbury)

"Object to any increase over 100%."

REGISTERED OPPOSITION TO EXCESSIVE INCREASE.

Employers Assn., (New London)

Motor Trucks and Operator's Assn (New London)

Automobile Dealers Assn. (New London) Henry G. Chappel.

J. B. Palmer, (Middletown)

R. W. Miller, Crane Co., Bridgeport.

Louis Isaacs, Winchester Repeating Arms Co., (New Haven)

E. W. Snyder, V.P. Amer. Motor Truck & Tractor Co. (Portland)

H. L. Warener, The Locomobile Co. (Bridgeport, Conn.)

W. H. Pease, Bridgeport Brass Co. (Bridgeport)

## SECTION G.

Commissioner  
Koeckel.

I will make a detailed explanation of Section G. This section relates to passenger cars only and in effect it arrives at a new method of taxation. By the old system of taxation of passenger cars - I mean the pleasure cars - a formula was used known as the A.L.A.M. That has been in effect for a great many years. The former takes into consideration two factors in determining the horse power, that is the diameter of the cylinders and the number of cylinders. During the years that have passed since that first came into effect the construction of automobile engines has changed and it has been found possible to create a larger horse power by the development of a longer stroke in a cylinder of smaller diameter. We have, therefore, prepared a new formula which takes this new construction into consideration and we have applied that to all the different makes of cars in one schedule. Should this proposed rating be adopted by which we will be able to determine an equitable H.P. it will be equitable to all cars. Under the old rating a car which developed a small H.P. is taxed the same as a car which develops a large one, providing the diameter and the number of cylinders in the two cars are similar. Our old system is full of that kind of propositions. This schedule which many of you have we have prepared for the purpose of taxation gives the application of the new power rating with comparison with the old power rating.

Also the H.P. which is claimed by the one who makes that particular car. The question as to how much money it will raise is entirely that of the law. The proposed rating which we have prepared gives us as the basis of the determination of the H.P. the cubic contents of the cylinder, and we have therefore established as a unit the cubic inches of contents at 8¢. We believe that is about at the same annual rate of taxation as we now receive at 50¢ a H.P. We have figured our proposed power rating at 10¢ here. There is no reason why it should not be that, or any rate the Committee decides. This is the illustration. We believe the 10¢ rate should be adopted, but the mere proposition of determining how the money which the highway commissioner needs is to be raised depends upon the tax. I think it is thoroughly understood that the subject under discussion is as to the basis - whether this is a proper basis, and in addition what rate should be applied, and whether the 10¢ rate is too big.

C. J. Bishop, Is there any difference in the registration of closed or Waterbury open cars. The wear on the road in closed cars is a great deal more than an open. I should say there should be some discrimination.

W. E. Egan. I have not been in accord with the Automobile Commissioner, and I believe I am not entirely alone in believing this is not the proper basis of taxation. I do not believe in it because I believe it is a tax exclusive on the users of gas. I do not appreciate that a 50 H.P. car should be taxed more than a 30 H.P. unless it used the road more. If the cubic inch is the measure, then the man who gets 10 miles out of a gallon is compelled to pay out of proportion to the man who gets 20 miles. I further

object to it for it is a proposition for raising money, why not get the bull by the horns and say we will pay so much. Then we have some basis. If we are going to have \$300,000. a year at 100% more, let us have it that way. A tax cannot be equitable which has an unsound foundation. We pay all sorts of taxes now. Because of the large number of cars with small cylinder displacement the increase is not in proportion, that is there is a larger number of small cars of small cylinder, and we do not get the money. Now if it is the money you want - If it has not been fair for 10 years it is not now.

Mr. Rogers. I want to stand behind the Commissioner on this scheme. I have closed and open cars, and when I want to tear up the road I take an open car. This is the just and true way of getting at the real horse power of an automobile. If you will call any expert in the automobile industry you will find they will back up what the Commissioner has said, and I am satisfied he has been having some experts talk to him. I have been driving cars since 1897. Connecticut has an income in excess of \$20,000,000. and owes about \$8,000,000. Our public institutions and other departments are calling for \$50,000,000. This legislation means to get you automobilists.

Mr. Farnum, I am opposed to raising the taxes in any way. The people in this State are taxed enough. Everybody is howling about the high cost of living and I want to inquire how we are going to reduce if we are going to increase the taxes, and I am opposed.

Mr. T. McCourt, I represent the Automobile Club of New Haven, we have a membership of about 1500. and three-fourths of the members are opposed to the taxation which Mr. Stoeckel suggests as to the large increase in registration, but are not opposed to the method of cubic inches. They think at the present time they are paying about enough for the privilege of using the highways of the state. We are not agreed with Mr. Bennett that the users of the highways should pay for the upkeep and repairs. I believe that the burden should be distributed throughout the state and the cost should be collected by the state from the different towns. The public highways today are a necessity and a benefit to everyone in the state, and almost as much a necessity as our courts and schools. We would not think of saying that because a man did not have any children to send to school that he should not pay school taxes. The same reasoning should apply to the highways of the state. They should not say because we have an automobile that we are obliged to keep the roads in repair. Because a man uses an automobile is no reason why he should keep the roads in repair and maintain them. This state should do a little more in getting federal aid for our highways, there are large appropriations made. It is of material interest to the United States that we have good roads in all states, especially in Connecticut. They were largely used during the war. We wish to be recorded very emphatically as being opposed to this increase on the ground we are paying enough, that the state should not tax the users of the highways for the upkeep and believe this money should be raised by bond issues and have the different towns pay for it. The cities do not have a motor vehicle tax, if they have permanent improvements they are met by bond issue and assessment.

REP. FILLON- Danbury.

"I don't know how many people realize this new rating. I hope if the Committee adopt it, they will do some careful figuring."

Bristol.

I represent about 55,000 drivers of passenger cars belonging to the Automobile Legal Association, and they are very much interested in the outcome of this present legislation. For a long time this rate question has been quiet; I have expected that some time or other it would come up and it has done so at last. Now I am in accord with Mr. Bennett in his endeavor to build us better roads, and more of them, but I don't think that just because a man can afford to buy an automobile, that we should assess a lot more taxes at his door. The automobile industry is the most taxed thing there is in this country today, and it is the third largest business there is in the country. In the first place, a man pays a 5% tax when he buys his car new. Then he has his local property tax, his operator's license fee, and his registration fee. Now I maintain that the man who drives a car is not the only beneficiary of the road and the only man who should carry the burden of maintaining them- but that every man in the state of Connecticut is a beneficiary of our system of adequate highways. Now I believe we should have money for that system of highways. You don't tax the children who go to school on these highways just because they have the benefit of the schools- you lay a general tax; you don't tax the people who have fires to pay for the upkeep of the Fire Dept- you lay a general tax; you don't tax the man who is arrested to keep up the Police Dept.- you lay a general tax. It is just the same with the highways- they are a general benefit to our ever growing community- they link us together. If you had an island in the Connecticut River you could not rent a house out there- but if you build a bridge to the island you would readily rent the house, and if someone built a bridge to the other side, it would be worth still more. Now these highways we have built are merely bridges from one town to another- you build a highway out into a section of country with no railroad within a long distance, or any good way to get there, and it immediately increases the value of the land. Why should they not bear the burden in greater proportion than today. Our traveling public spends lots of money in the hotels and restaurants, and stores, etc. along the way- they are all reaping the benefits of these highways- why not raise the money by a general tax and not put such an increase as is proposed on the car owner. I don't think the principle of the Bill is just. In this state we have a small highway system as compared with two of our neighbors, and our highways are used by many outside cars. Since we started the highway system in this state, we have spent \$19,000. per mile for our roads. Massachusetts has spent \$12,700 per mile. We have only 84 cars per mile as against 120 cars per mile in Mass. Now the automobile owners have been contributing to this State toward the maintenance of its roads as follows-

In 1915 - 55 per cent.  
 " 1916 - 68 "  
 " 1917 - 63 "  
 " 1918 - 65 "  
 " 1919 - 110 "

, more than all the cost of maintenance, in 1920 - 80 per cent. In 1921 they will probably pay the full cost of maintenance. Now I maintain that it is fair that the automobilist should contribute to the maintenance, but whether they should be taxed until you tax them off the roads is the question this Legislature wants to consider. The general health and welfare of the entire community is benefitted by being able to get out doors. The farmer can get into town with his produce, and to buy his grain and supplies, quickly- both the city and the country people benefit. Now gentlemen, if you put the tax rate so high, you will make it impossible for the small car owner to have a car and continue to use it and enjoy it. Now a large proportion of the travel in this state is by outside cars. In a 72-hour period a count was made upon the Boston Post road, and there were approximately 20,000 cars; from outside the state more than 15% of them came. Now I maintain that as well as building good roads, we should protect them. As regards the wear on the roads by the heavy trucks- if the trucks were required to use pneumatic tires that would greatly relieve the situation. I don't think anyone is going to object to a reasonable increase. Everything else has gone up. If the Commissioner wants an increase, let him stick to the same basis that we all know and nearly everyone understands, and simply add on another 25 cents and let it go at that. The matter including the bore and stroke is all wrong. The only determining factor in horsepower is in the bore and not in the stroke. I think the best thing would be to have the state put out a bond issue, and bring all the roads up to date, and let them pay for the thing gradually. "

REP. FELLOW- (Danbury)

"I am not going to weary you- but we all appreciate this money has got to be raised somehow. We are willing to help, and we think that a 25% increase is ample as the other gentleman has said, but don't seem as though all the burden ought to be put on the automobilist because good roads are a benefit to everybody. We have to pay a 3% ~~excise~~ tax on our automobiles in my town- or in other words 29 mills."

MR. BUR PIFOOT (Secretary Auto. Club of Hartford.)

"We have made a canvas of our members as to their sentiments on this question, and we find that the proportion is somewhat similar to New Haven. About 73% are willing to stand some increase; 55% are opposed to anything as high as 50%. I think almost every car owner is willing to pay money for good roads, and they will pay their proportion, but we don't think that all the taxes for roads should come out of the automobile owner. These roads are a general benefit to the whole state and the neighbors thereof, and the amount of money which the automobile owners should be required to pay, it seems to us, is a smaller increase than that proposed so far."

G. E. LOOMIS- (New Haven)

"I am opposed to paying \$100.00 for dealer's fee, and the extra for the markers."

L. H. BLUMER - (Representing Ford Auto Agency)

"I may be fortunate or unfortunate in conducting 11 Ford stores, and if I am to be assessed \$120.00 for each one of these places for the privilege of doing a favor to the public by selling them a low priced automobile, which I consider is a favor, then I say it is exorbitant. Two years ago the law came about that we were to pay \$50.00, which is more than is required in any other state except one in the United States- they are \$10.00 to \$25.00 all but these. The horse man and the carriage man don't have to pay this license to do business. They don't have to have a man's sanity examined. Most dealers have one place, but we have to pay 11 licenses according to your present Bill. If dealers who handle large cars of 3 or 4 makes, have a Ford in stock, they aren't going to push the Ford- they are going to push the cars that show the big profit. The consequence of this Bill would be to lessen the number of Fords sold. If you are trying to squeeze out these little towns, you will shut out those little towns such as Willimantic, and Putnam and Windsor - where I have never made a single cent, but I have been loyal to the manufacturer, and tried to show the automobile dealer it is a necessity to have a low priced car. For 10 years I have tried to show you that the rating cars was wrong on bore and stroke- that part is all right, but trying to suck blood from the car owners and the dealers in this way is all wrong. The rate of insurance has gone up steadily on these cars. A lot of cars are being stolen all the time- But they don't do anything to the man who is found with the car - he is the real thief. He sends his car to jail. The car is sold at all times - if we have to pay \$110. and \$120. licenses, you want to remember there will be lots less cars sold, and you will sell less licenses, and less registrations. I want a square deal. They are trying to jack up everything, insurance taxes, li censes, everything- I say, give the automobile owner a square deal because he is taxed to death. I am opposed."