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SEVENTH ANNUAL REPORT  
OF THE  
COMMISSIONER  
OF  
MOTOR VEHICLES  
TO THE

Legislature of the State of New Jersey

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# Commissioner's Report.

To the Legislature of the State of New Jersey:

Gentlemen:—In pursuance of the provisions of Chapter 113 of the Laws of 1906, known as the Motor Vehicle Act, I take pleasure in herewith transmitting to the Legislature a report of the operations of the Department of Motor Vehicles for the year 1912, and recommendations for its improvement.

Following is a statement of the work of the Registration Division and the amount paid to the State Treasurer during 1912

	Registrations	Licenses	Fines	Rank Int	Agents' Fees	Amount paid to State Treasurer.
December (1912 business)	4,942	4,161	\$608.00	\$6.57	\$2,624.32	\$41,535.25
January	6,682	5,858	1,499.00	64.11	2,223.96	62,483.15
February	4,847	4,907	570.00		2,072.40	42,382.10
March	9,876	10,056	1,250.50	56.01	3,964.05	84,485.96
April	5,660	5,694	375.00		2,623.70	48,516.36
May	3,261	3,153	95.00	33.22	1,350.65	28,325.07
June	6,473	5,992	1,352.75	38.75	2,708.78	61,334.21
July	3,911	4,259	2,895.40	100.58	2,081.86	41,797.62
August	2,874	3,028	2,541.00	2.95	1,603.02	28,817.93
September	1,809	1,535	1,603.35	32.68	882.49	13,294.38
October	1,298	1,147	1,175.00	32.95	711.92	8,676.78
November	1,286	1,137	1,436.00	53.70	948.20	8,857.75
December	270	218	563.00	4.50	310.89	2,040.61
	53,189	51,145	\$15,964.00	\$426.02	\$24,106.24	\$472,547.11

The 53,189 registrations includes the following classification:

43,056 automobiles; 6,188 motor cycles; 857 manufacturers' registrations; 2,910 transfers; 178 tourists.

For the year 1911, \$413,786.27 was collected and 38,401 automobiles registered. For the year 1912, \$496,653.46 was collected and 43,056 automobiles registered. The increase in revenue for 1912 is \$82,867.19, or over twenty per cent. of the amount collected for 1911. The increase in the number of automobile licenses for 1912 is 4,655 or over twelve per cent. of the number licensed in 1911.

## CHANGES IN OFFICE SYSTEM.

The present Commissioner of Motor Vehicles, after assuming office on May 15, 1912, made the following changes in the manner of handling the business of the Motor Vehicle Department. A new system of bookkeeping was established at the main office, entailing the opening of accounts for each agent under the department and operating the same through the cash book system of bookkeeping, with the result that the department is at all times in balance, and it is possible at all times to determine the exact value of each agency.

The method of handling the funds of this department while in the hands of agents has been changed so that all moneys are now deposited in the name of the commissioner of motor vehicles in the bank with which the agent deals, instead of in the name of the agent, as formerly, and are drafted upon by the said Commissioner of Motor Vehicles at such times as the agents are required to make their reports. The establishment of this system has minimized the possibility of embezzlement or misappropriation of state funds.

The bonds of the agents have been very generally increased in order to insure greater safety in the handling of the funds of this department.

## AGENCIES.

A number of changes have been made since May 15 in the manner in which the agencies of this department have been constituted. The office in Jersey City has been changed from a fee basis to a compensation basis. The agent there, in place of receiving twenty-five cents for each license issued, now receives a set commission at the rate of seventeen hundred dollars per year. This was found necessary on account of the large amount collected by this office and the resultingly large compensation received by the agent, which, under the fee system, it is estimated would amount to twenty-five hundred dollars per year, or thereabouts.

The office in Newark has been placed on a basis of \$1,900 yearly compensation. The office in Camden has been established on a basis of \$1,400 per year.

All the expenses at the above offices, formerly paid by the state, are now borne by the agents. By abolishing agency expenses, it is estimated that the department should save approximately \$3,000 per year.

On taking office, the Commissioner found a number of agencies which appeared to do but very little business. A continuance of such agencies caused an unnecessary complication of the accounts at the Trenton office and a waste of supplies, consequently, twelve such agencies in the state have been abolished. Two new agencies have been added; namely, Englewood and Woodbury, as the need of these two agencies appeared to be a matter of public convenience.

## TAGS.

The department, by broadening the specifications, has this year secured a low bid for official motor vehicle registration markers, with the result that the average cost of such markers for the year 1913 will not exceed twenty-eight cents per pair, as against an average cost for the year 1912 of forty-three cents per pair. The execution of the above contract should mean anywhere from seven to eight thousand dollars saving in the cost of motor vehicle markers.

## REGULATION.

The office of the chief inspector, formerly maintained at Jersey City has been found to be unnecessary, and was therefore abolished. The office of the chief inspector has been moved to the main office at Trenton, where it was the opinion of the Commissioner the work could be much more satisfactorily conducted. This has resulted in saving the rent of the branch office, which amounted to thirty dollars per month, and also the saving of at least thirty dollars more in the regular office expenses of such branch. By this change, the central office gained the use of one stenographer who was detailed to Jersey City without sufficient work to warrant such assignment.

During 1912, besides the informal complaints handled, there were six hundred and five complaints investigated at this office. A great many of these cases were tried before the Commissioner



in person and resulted in either a revocation, a reprimand, or such other punishments as the motor vehicle act vests in the discretion of the commissioner. For the year 1912, thirty-five licenses were revoked.

The state has been districted, and each inspector is given charge of a district and is held responsible for all motor matters which may originate in such district. It has been the policy of the Commissioner from time to time to make transfers of inspectors, believing that better results are attained by placing new men in unfamiliar territories.

During the summer months when tourists are frequent in New Jersey, the department has devoted much of its inspection force to the work of enforcing the fifteen day reciprocity privilege. The results directly traceable to such work have increased the revenue of the state many thousands of dollars. Had there been a larger inspection force, the revenue would have been still further very materially increased.

## Recommendation.

### RECIPROCITY.

With the adoption of reciprocity last April, new problems confronted the motor vehicle department, the proper solution of which has become apparent under the operations of the above amendment.

Reciprocity, as we have it in New Jersey, would appear to be more a reciprocity of privilege than a reciprocity of both privilege and regulation. The peculiar position in which New Jersey is located, with its magnificent system of public roads, makes it very important that any reciprocity law which may remain upon our statute books should be of such a nature as to provide for proper regulation of foreign cars using our roads under the reciprocity privilege. New Jersey is in the nature of a great highway between two metropolitan centres, and between these metropolitan centres and the many coast and mountain resorts which are found in our state. For this reason, the roads of New Jersey, probably more than the roads of any other state in the Union, are used by tourists and business vehicles bearing licenses from other states, with the consequent difficulty of both road maintenance and police regulation.

The result of one years trial of reciprocity would seem to indicate that there were many features of the law which should be amended and strengthened.

The department would respectfully recommend to the consideration of the legislature the passage of an amendment to the reciprocity law giving the Commissioner of Motor Vehicles power to suspend the fifteen day touring privilege against any license issued by another state, in order that the department of motor vehicles may at all times have automatic control over every motor vehicle using the roads of New Jersey.

The increased wear and tear upon our roads under reciprocity brings the question of revenue strongly to the front. It would

seem to be necessary that an even greater revenue than that derived by the fifty per cent. increase in the license fee which attained after the adoption of reciprocity be provided for. If the system which is known as reciprocity is to be maintained in New Jersey, there would appear to be only one way in which this additional revenue could be provided, and that is by either a small or great increase, as the needs may be, in the license fee charged to motorists. With this idea in view, the department has examined the laws of the several states contiguous to New Jersey, and finds that in at least three instances these states charge a slightly higher fee for registering cars than is charged by New Jersey. The department would therefore recommend that the motor vehicle license fees be made to conform in amount to such states as New York, Pennsylvania, and Maryland.

I respectfully recommend the following schedule of fees as a fair basis of registration:

Horse Power.	Fee
1 to 10 .....	\$5.00
10 to 30 .....	10.00
30 to 40 .....	15.00
40 to 50 .....	20.00
50 and over .....	25.00

Commercial trucks according to horse power, and \$10.00 additional for all trucks weighing, unloaded, over 4,000 pounds, and \$5.00 additional for each 1,000 pounds thereafter.

Manufacturers, \$5.00 per set, not exceeding five sets.

Livery license. \$10.00 per set, not to exceed five sets.

From a comparison of the number and the horse power of cars registered during the year 1912, it is possible to determine what increase in revenue would have been derived to the state had the above schedule of fees been used during 1912. The actual increase in the state revenue under this system would have been approximately \$100,000.

The department regards reciprocity not as an absolute method of adjusting the relations between states, but simply as a step in the development which will eventuate in the establishment of an interstate license system which will contain the three necessary elements of any scientific motor vehicle law; namely, reciprocity of privilege, reciprocity of regulation, and reciprocity of revenue.

While no system along these lines seems yet to have been adopted by any of the states, it is entirely possible that such a system should be adopted, with the result that no vehicles would travel on the roads of our states without paying a proper road tax, the collection of which would not entail the slightest delay or other inconvenience to the owner of such vehicle.

The new problems which have confronted the state under reciprocity make it necessary that a larger number of inspectors be provided to enforce the fifteen day touring privilege, and the department recommends that the number of inspectors be increased to sixteen. If this increase is granted, the department is convinced that such inspectors would be able to increase the revenue of the department many thousands of dollars—an increase which would be greatly in advance of the additional compensation paid in salaries.

In explanation of the above request, the department would point out that in enforcing so complicated a provision as the touring privilege, it is necessary to detail inspectors to that work alone during certain portions of the year, with the result that the other branches of regulation are neglected.

As an aid to the enforcement of the fifteen day touring privilege, the department recommends a supplement to the motor vehicle act similar to a provision in the Massachusetts law providing that all garage owners keep permanent records of all incoming and outgoing machines in a book provided for that purpose, and subject at all times to inspection by the authorities of the state. If this amendment should be adopted, it would have the double effect of aiding in the enforcement of the fifteen day touring privilege, and in protecting the owners of cars against their unauthorized use by the attaches of garages.

#### A. L. A. M. RATING.

The present method of determining the amount paid by a driver for a driver's license or by a car for a car registration is based upon what is known as the A. L. A. M. rating, or upon a formula which applies alone to combustion engines, making it necessary for the department to accept the manufacturer's advertised rating on all steam or electric motor vehicles.



Considerable criticism has been directed against the use of the A. L. A. M. rating on the ground that it does not take into account the length of the stroke, and that by using the above-mentioned formula a rating lower than the true rating of a car is often adduced.

The department would respectfully recommend that the law be amended in this particular allowing the commissioner of motor vehicles thirty days before the relicensing period to adopt a formula which in his estimation would be a proper formula to determine true rating, and that all manufacturers or dealers indirectly or directly selling cars in the state be compelled to submit with each sale an attested certificate giving such information as the Commissioner of Motor Vehicles may demand concerning the necessary elements in arriving at a true rating. The department is convinced that such an amendment would result in a large increase in the amount of revenue from the registration of motor vehicles.

Had the department the above discretionary power during the year 1912, a conservative estimate shows that the income of the state would have been increased almost \$50,000. The following formulae and a comparative table prepared by State Road Commissioner Stevens indicate the results which can be obtained from the use of other formulae besides the A. L. A. M. formula.

N = number of cylinders

D = diameter of cylinders

S = stroke

$$1. H. P. = \frac{N \times D^2 \times S}{10}$$

$$2. H. P. = \frac{N \times D \times S}{2\frac{1}{2}}$$

$$3. H. P. = \frac{N \times D^2 \times \sqrt{S}}{5}$$

$$4. H. P. = \frac{N \times D^2}{2\frac{1}{2}}$$

the A. L. A. M.

Motor 4 cylinders.		Power by formulae.			
		1	2	3	4
1.	3 by 3	10.8	14.4	12.5	14.4
2.	3 by 5	18.	24.	16.1	14.4
3.	4 by 4	25.6	25.6	25.6	25.6
4.	4 by 5	32.	32.	28.6	25.6
5.	5 by 5	50.	40.	44.8	40.
6.	5 by 6	60.	48.	49.	40.

## LIGHTS.

An examination of our motor vehicle act as compared with the motor vehicle acts of other states, reveals certain salient weaknesses which are mere matters of detail and which may be very readily corrected. An amendment to the law should be passed providing that the rear light on all motor vehicles shall be so placed as to illuminate the number plate, making it visible for at least fifty feet.

## LIVERY LICENSES.

It has been the experience of the department that there has grown up a flagrant abuse of manufacturers' license—a license which is granted to dealers at a reduced rate in order that such license may be used for the demonstration of cars which are being sold. The department has found that this license is used by dealers for hacking purposes, and for other private use. In order to correct this and yet provide a license which would be a mean proportion in its cost between the regular maximum and minimum fees, the department recommends the establishment of a livery license which should cost from eight to ten dollars, depending on whether any amendment increasing the license fees be adopted.

## NUMBERS.

An amendment should be passed to the law prohibiting the hanging of numbers in such a way that they swing and are therefore not at all times capable of being easily read.

## AGE LIMIT FOR DRIVERS.

A number of serious accidents have come to the notice of the Commissioner during the past year as the direct result of allowing minors to drive cars. At present, the law provides that any person of the age of sixteen or over may be licensed to drive a motor vehicle. The department would recommend that this be amended so that no one may be licensed under the age of eighteen years.

## HEARINGS BEFORE THE COMMISSIONER.

In dealing with cases before the Commissioner, considerable difficulty has been experienced from the fact that the law does not provide that the Commissioner can impose any penalty except the extreme penalty of revoking a license or the very mild penalty of entering a reprimand against the record of a driver. In order to correct this apparent weakness, the department would recommend that direct power be given the Commissioner to suspend for a period of time, at his discretion, any license issued by the department.

In addition to this, the department would recommend that the powers of a police justice be conferred on the Commissioner of Motor Vehicles when sitting as a magistrate and hearing cases of violation of the motor vehicle law. A number of cases which have come before the Commissioner of Motor Vehicles are never tried before the various judges of the state, for the reason that it is not always possible or wise to bring offenders before a magistrate. In dealing with such cases the Commissioner of Motor Vehicles could more effectively compel regulation if it were possible for him to impose fines for violation of such provisions of the motor vehicle act below the grade of misdemeanors.

In connection with the above recommendations the Commissioner of Motor Vehicles should be given broad powers in summoning of witnesses and in compelling their attendance.

## FICTITIOUS MARKERS.

For the year 1913, the Commissioner of Motor Vehicles has established the system of issuing official temporary markers to all persons who have lost their regular markers, such temporary

marker to be loaned until such time as a duplicate of the original marker can be obtained from the contractor.

These temporary markers are similar in every detail to the official marker, with the exception that there is an O before the number and that they bear no seal. With such a system in vogue there can be no need for the use hereafter of painted or fictitious markers on any machine licensed by this department.

During the past year a number of apparent attempts to forge the official marker of the state have been discovered, and no penalty is found in the present motor vehicle act for dealing with such cases. The department would recommend that an amendment be passed, providing for a heavy penalty for the use of fictitious markers on motor vehicles.

## WIDTH OF TIRES ON COMMERCIAL VEHICLES.

The State of Massachusetts is considering the advisability of regulating the width of tire used on heavy commercial vehicles in proportion to the weight of the vehicle. The plan proposed is that each inch of tire width should not represent more than eight hundred pounds. The object of this act would be to protect the highways from wear. This system might be of value in New Jersey, and we respectfully recommend its consideration.

## POSSIBLE REDUCTION IN EXPENSE.

For 1913, the Commissioner is perfecting a scheme to abolish agency commissions by compelling all agents to collect the fees from the applicants for licenses by making the regular charge of twenty-five cents for each affidavit taken as a notary public. At the present time, the twenty-five cents commission is deducted from the amount of money paid to the state and the affidavit is taken free of charge. The Commissioner can find no reason why the applicant should not make the regular payment for such affidavit, and if such be the case, each agent would receive the same compensation as formerly and the state would not be compelled to pay commissions.

It will, however, probably be necessary to continue the offices in Jersey City, Newark and Camden on a flat compensation basis, on account of the exceptional amount of work which is

done at these offices, much of which is done through the mails. If the above plan is found practicable, the reduction in expenses of maintaining the department would approximate \$16,000, and possibly, should the volume of business largely increase during the coming year, even more than the above figure. There would seem to be no question about the power of the Commissioner of Motor Vehicles to adopt such a system under the general powers given him in the act.

Respectfully submitted,

JOB H. LIPPINCOTT,

Commissioner of Motor Vehicles.