

# MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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FIRST REPORT

OF THE

Legislative Research Committee

TO THE

90th Legislature



October 31, 1941



**FIRST REPORT**  
of the  
**LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH COMMITTEE**  
to the  
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**ORGANIZATION**

The Legislative Research Committee organized and appointed Donald W. Webber of Auburn, Maine, as its attorney. The Committee has had two sessions at which it received the reports of its attorney and took evidence. The Committee has first turned its attention to the Department of State and more particularly to the administration of the Motor Vehicle Division. The Committee called as witnesses Mr. Frederick Robie, Mr. Frederick Payne, Mr. Julian Mossman, Mr. Stanton Weed, Mr. William Hayes, Capt. Laurence Upton and Mr. Luman N. Nevels. In addition the Committee has had informal discussions with Governor Sumner Sewall and has also begun work on the Insurance Department, but findings in connection with the latter department are reserved for a later report. The Committee is filing with the Clerk of the House of Representatives its exhibits and supporting evidence consisting of approximately 225 pages.

**INSUFFICIENT ALLOTMENT**

The Committee inquired as to the apparent causes of insufficient allotment to carry on the work of the Department of State. Mr. Robie testified that he made estimates prior to the Legislative session of the probable cost of administering his department during the next appropriation period, and submitted estimated running expenses to the Budget Committee of approximately \$187,000. The Budget Committee recommended to the Finance Committee an allotment of \$172,000, with a further proviso that automobile plates should be manufactured at cost by the State Prison rather than at a profit, which it was estimated would effect a saving to the Department of State of \$15,000. This recommendation had the practical effect of giving to the Department of State its original request. Mr. Robie appeared before both the Budget Committee and the Finance Committee, and the

figures approved by the Budget Committee were in turn recommended by the Finance Committee. Mr. Robie never appeared before the Ways and Bridges Committee, and here an apparent misunderstanding arose. Mr. Robie apparently expected to be called before the Ways and Bridges Committee, and the Ways and Bridges Committee apparently expected Mr. Robie to request an opportunity to be heard, but neither made the first move. The Ways and Bridges Committee reduced the suggested allotment to \$160,000, and this was passed in the closing hours of the Legislature. The Governor was not informed by the Secretary of State of the insufficiency of the allotment in time to take any action by way of veto or otherwise. The net result was what is generally admitted to be an insufficient allotment which would necessarily result in an overdraft.

The Commissioner of Finance has partially alleviated the situation by causing to be transferred out of general highway funds to the Department of State the inspection and examination fees, by ordering the State Prison to deliver the plates at cost, and by allocating to the Department of State the proceeds of the sale of the so-called commercial list.

It is interesting to note that there has been a marked and definite trend of increase in business in the Motor Vehicle Division, with the necessary and inevitable result that there has been an accompanying increase in revenue to the state. There has been, however, no proportionate increase in appropriation, and what might properly be called the additional profits to the state arising out of this increased business have simply been added to general highway funds.

There is some confusion as to exactly what happened when the Legislature passed the Financial Responsibility Law late in the session. It is true however that Mr. Robie informed the Finance Committee that no funds were available to administer the new law and that he later wrote letters to the members of the Ways and Bridges Committee calling their attention to the fact that no funds were provided for this purpose. These letters were not received until the Ways and Bridges Committee had completed its preparation of Highway allotments. Mr. Robie made no effort to inform the Governor. As a result of the general misunderstanding; no funds have been as yet provided and the law is at present being administered on an overdraft basis.

In the light of these circumstances, it is therefore recommended that the allotment to the Motor Vehicle Division of the Department of State be finally approved and recommended by the Appropriations and Financial Affairs Committee without submission to the Ways and Bridges Committee. The Committee feels that it will be a proper subject of further study as to whether this principle should not be extended to certain other

allotments out of Highway funds. It is obviously imperative that department heads make every possible effort to obtain hearings and adequately present their necessities before the Committee which has the authority to take final action, at some time before such final action is taken. This should be particularly observed where bills passed or in progress of passage do not in themselves provide necessary revenue, but do entail unanticipated additional expense. It is further recommended that department heads provide further safeguards in such circumstances by presenting the facts seasonably to the Governor, so that he may be able where circumstances warrant, to call the attention of the Legislature to an insufficient appropriation and a prospective overdraft.

The Committee feels that a proper subject of further study is the matter of providing sufficient authority under the Legislative formula to make transfers in emergency situations out of general highway funds to departments which are by law financed out of highway fund allotments. It is manifestly unfair for the Legislature to provide a grossly insufficient appropriation or allotment and leave the Governor and Council with no alternative except to cover the inevitable overdrafts by transfer from the contingent fund, particularly when there are ample funds being produced by the activities of the department itself which are not by law available for the use of the department which produced the money.

It is interesting to note that in the year 1940 the business of the Motor Vehicle Division amounted to approximately \$377,000 more than the previous year, whereas up to July 1, 1941, the current year's business amounted to approximately \$402,000 over 1940. The increase in business is further illustrated by the following figures. Total number of registrations issued in 1940, 220,917. Total number of registrations issued in the first six months of 1941, 212,423. Total number of operators' licenses issued in 1940, 260,039. Total number of operators' licenses issued in the first six months of 1941, 254,209. Such an increase in business cannot be absorbed without an increase in expense.

### **REGISTRATION METHODS**

The Committee has made a detailed study of present and proposed methods of issuing registrations and licenses, including an examination of the Massachusetts system. At the same time the Committee was conducting its investigation, the Governor was causing an independent analysis of the problems in the Motor Vehicle Division to be made for the benefit of the Governor and Executive Council. As a part of his inquiry the Governor commissioned George S. Armstrong & Company, Inc., industrial engineers and management consultants of New York City, to make an

investigation and report to him, which was done. This report was made available to the Committee to supplement its own findings.

During the year 1940 the Joint Special Legislative Investigating Committee commissioned Remington-Rand to make a survey of proposed improvements in the system in the Motor Vehicle Division. As a result, the Department of State installed the Dexigraph system, which has been in operation up to the present time. Under the present method, therefore, a customer goes to the tax collector in his town or city and pays his excise tax. The tax collector prepares an original, and either two or three carbons, of an excise tax receipt, the original of which also contains the form of a registration application. The original and first copy of the excise tax receipt are presented to the customer, and by him presented to the nearest registration clerk. The application is first rated to determine the fee, and on payment of the fee the plates are issued with a temporary registration certificate which is valid for twenty days. The registration clerk also types on a separate form, which is detached from the temporary certificate, an auditor's control sheet which gives the date, the fee paid, and the number assigned. The original application is then sent to Augusta, if from a branch office, and the auditor's control sheet is sent under separate cover direct to the State Auditor. The original application is then sent to the Dexigraph room, where a picture is taken of a part of what appears on that form. At the same time certain other material which makes the form a valid registration certificate is Multigraphed so that the positive, when completed, contains a combination of the Multigraphed material and the material which was photographed from the original application. The original application then goes into the master ABC file. The negative goes into the numerical file, and is filed in accordance with the registration number. The first positive is mailed to the customer and becomes his permanent registration certificate, taking the place of the temporary. The second positive goes to the motor serial number or engine number file. The third positive goes into a file which is sold upon bids to concerns which prepare commercial lists.

Mr. Robie stated to the Committee that when he found that it was apparently going to be necessary for him to operate his department upon an allotment of \$160,000, he was forced to the conclusion that he could not afford to continue the Dexigraph system, and he then decided to return to a manual typing method. It should be stated that the system on operators' licenses was quite similar to that on registration certificates, but Mr. Robie had added a system of renewal stubs, which stubs were attached to the original operator's license, which was mailed to the customer. It was planned that sometime prior to the end of the current year, the operator's

license negatives would be run through the machine on a new Multigraphed form which would in effect produce a photographic operator's license for the coming year. It was planned that when the renewal license application or stub was received it would only be necessary to go to the numerical file, look under the number shown on the renewal stub, and pull from the file the new 1942 operator's license, which would be all made up in advance. It was anticipated that the number of changes of address and the like would be relatively small, and only in these cases would it be necessary to make any change and print the new license over again. Mr. Robie stated that he did not wish to abandon the renewal stub system, even though it might be necessary to abandon Dexigraph, and he therefore proposed to have typists in his department commence immediately to type the new 1942 operators' licenses, believing that it would be possible for him to have them finished and in the file, ready to be pulled, when the demand for them arrives. Mr. Robie gave as one of his reasons for adopting this method, that it is necessary for him to maintain a certain basic trained staff which will be ready and able to handle the peak rush of business, which occurs in the early part of each year. He admitted frankly that during periods when there is no peak rush, there is not enough work to keep all of these people fully occupied, particularly in the branches, which during the slack periods are admittedly over-staffed. It was his position, therefore, that on the basis of his belief, that it is necessary to maintain this basic crew all during the year, it would represent a substantial saving if they should be put to work on the manual typing of the licenses and the department freed of the expense of Dexigraph.

All who have approached the problem of the best possible method to be adopted in this department have kept in mind three essential factors—economy, efficiency and public service. It may be fairly stated that there are three possible methods of handling registrations and licenses. First, the so-called customer method, under which the customer prepares his own material; second, the so-called manual method, under which the material is typed by clerks; and third, the Dexigraph system or its equivalent, under which some mechanical process is substituted. There is no dispute by anyone of the fact that the customer method is by far the cheapest which can be employed. It is the method used in both Massachusetts and New York. As a practical matter, however, in Massachusetts, with its compulsory liability insurance law, the actual work of filling out the multiple forms required of the customer is done by the insurance company which issues the liability policy. In this state it must be assumed that under a straight customer method, the customer would be compelled to fill out his own multiple forms, and it is questionable whether the public in the State



of Maine would willingly accept a system which entailed so much detail work on the part of the applicant. It may be noted that the Armstrong report submitted to the Governor recommends the customer method, and points to the New York system as a successful example. Attention should be called, however, to the fact that neither the New York law nor the Massachusetts law provide for the prepayment of excise taxes as is required by Maine law. The Committee feels, however, that the possible savings to the state from the customer method are so great that some adaptation of this method, possibly in conjunction with some features of the Dexigraph system, would be advisable.

### **DEXIGRAPH SYSTEM**

The Committee cannot conclude that as yet the Dexigraph system has had a fair try in the State of Maine. A summary of the costs of Dexigraph from October 1, 1940, to August 19, 1941, shows the following specific expenses of Dexigraph. The first item is that of salaries, totaling \$3,780.50. It should be pointed out, however, that in this expense is included the salary of one man at \$45 a week, and it is the opinion of the Committee that there should be no salary in the Dexigraph room in excess of \$25 a week. The Committee believes, therefore, that there should be deducted from the salary figure at least \$960, to obtain a more accurate picture. The other expense items for the period are rental, \$2,810.25, chemicals and paper \$13,184.65, supplies \$759.61, installation \$267.91, equipment \$742.34, or a total of all these items of \$21,545.26. It should be further pointed out, however, that when Dexigraph was first installed, the work was badly in arrears under the manual method and for some time Dexigraph was used to bring all work in arrears up to date, so that only part of the total expenditure can be properly charged to normal current operations. It was at times necessary for the machine to be operated by three crews on shifts and on an overtime basis, and it is very questionable whether this would be necessary to keep the normal current work up to date. It should also be noted, in fairness, that the original recommendations of Remington-Rand were that the Dexigraph should be used on registrations, but not on operators' licenses. The Secretary of State, however, felt that the use of Dexigraph on operators' licenses would greatly increase the service of the department to the public, and although this is undoubtedly true, it has also greatly increased the expense of the system, possibly out of proportion to the service rendered.

There are other criticisms of the Dexigraph system which have been raised. The first is that the Dexigraph as it has been set up took a picture,

the printing on which was only about 60% of the size of the printing on the original photographed sheet. Where the original printing was the so-called "elite" type, the type on the picture was so small as to be difficult to read. When this photographic license was inserted in a window envelope and went to the post office, the post office authorities had difficulty in handling the mail. Many of these actually went astray in the mails and never returned. This added to the complaints and correspondence in the department. Remington-Rand, however, has given the Committee and the Governor assurances that it stands ready immediately to readjust the camera to blow up the type to 80% of the original size. This size type is standard in states where Dexigraph is used and will satisfy the postal authorities.

The next complaint lodged against Dexigraph is that as the machine is now set up, it only makes one positive at a time, so that with three positives on registrations now being required, three separate printings by the operators are necessary. The Committee, however, has received the assurance of Remington-Rand that the machine can be readily adapted to make either two or three negatives at a time, which will reduce the making of the registration copies for filing to one operation.

The next complaint against Dexigraph is that as the developing process goes on and the chemical bath is used, the developing strength of the chemicals is gradually reduced, with a resulting change of shade in the negatives. The final result is the production of light and dark positives, with quite a variation in shade and strength. To surmount this difficulty the Dexigraph crew has gone through an extra sorting operation to separate the light negatives from the dark and produce a uniform shading on the positive. This problem would probably be in large measure solved if three negatives are made at a time and no positives run as is now suggested.

The advantages of Dexigraph lie in the fact that the work is turned out with great speed, and in the fact that it produces photographic copies which eliminate all chance of error. The Dexigraph apparently has a further advantage in that the equipment is probably adequate to care for the normal current requirements of the Department of State, and in addition turn out work for other departments. It has not been possible in the short time that Dexigraph has been in operation to fully explore the possibilities in this direction.

### **PROPOSED SYSTEM**

The Committee recognizes that it is undoubtedly too late to make effective any system which it might recommend in the year 1942, and the Committee

has therefore approached the problem largely with the thought of attempting to help establish a system which might be permanent, and which might offer the best solution over a period of years. It has already been pointed out that it would be impossible to adopt either the Massachusetts or New York system in the present form of either, because unlike those two states, we have a law which it seems very desirable to retain, which requires the prepayment of excise and poll taxes. After mature consideration and after obtaining the suggestions and comments of the Commissioner of Finance, the Controller and the Auditor assigned to the Department of State, the Committee feels that a suggested program should be an adaptation of the customer method combined with the use of excise tax receipts and some use of the Dexigraph system. The basis of the plan which follows was suggested by Mr. Weed of the State Auditor's Department, and the Committee wishes to acknowledge his cooperation and assistance. In detail the Committee recommends that tax collectors issue to the customer duplicate excise tax receipts, as at present, the first copy to contain, as at present, the application for registration and the signature of the applicant. It is recommended that the second copy of the excise tax receipt should become the permanent registration certificate. Some difficulty has been experienced in the past because of the illegibility of the handwriting of tax collectors preparing excise tax receipts. Section 94 of Chapter 12 of the Revised Statutes provides, "Receipts for the payment of this excise tax shall be in the form prescribed by the Secretary of State." It is recommended that under this authority the Secretary of State require that the excise tax receipt be printed or typewritten. Under the proposed system the customer after paying his excise tax and after receiving from the tax collector the first and second copy of the excise tax receipt, would take or mail the same to a registration office. The application would be rated to determine the fee, as at present, and the fee paid. The first copy would become the permanent file of the Secretary of State as at present. The second copy would be marked on its margin, "Registration Certificate." It would be stamped with the date, the fee and the registration number assigned, and would be validated by having impressed upon it the seal of the Secretary of State and would be given to the customer to constitute his permanent registration certificate. The important material on the first copy would be photographed by Dexigraph. Only one operation would be necessary. This operation would create three permanent negatives, the first for the numerical file as at present, the second for the motor serial number file and the third for the commercial list.

## POSSIBLE SAVINGS

The reduction in the number of operations of Dexigraph would mean that a smaller crew could keep the work current without overtime expense, and there would be an additional saving in the chemicals, materials and supplies. Either part or all of the Multigraphing operation would be eliminated. One of the most vital savings, however, would be in the elimination of the issuance of temporary certificates. The issuance of each temporary has involved the time of the clerk in making up the temporary, the expense of the additional material involved in temporaries, and the additional postage required to mail all permanent certificates and to mail from the main office, in addition, all temporary certificates where the application is received by mail. The saving in mailing charges alone to the department would be substantial, and a survey of mailing costs is now in progress for the Committee, which will later show definite figures as to what these mailing cost savings might amount to. It must be further noted that a very large volume of the correspondence conducted by the Motor Vehicle Division has been necessitated by trouble over temporaries. The temporaries were issued and were only good for twenty days. At the expiration of this period many customers had not received their permanent certificates. There then followed correspondence between the customer and the department as to when the customer might expect to receive his permanent certificate. In many cases a renewal temporary was issued the customer to cover the interim period, and this entailed an additional operation. The Committee feels very strongly that any proposed system must necessarily include as a fundamental element the elimination of temporary certificates, and the Committee believes strongly that there will be not only resultant savings to the department, but better relations with the public as well, for much of the public's dissatisfaction appears to have been over temporary certificates. Mr. Robie has already approved this Committee's suggested plan and states that in his opinion the anticipated resulting savings will be very substantial.

## OPERATORS' LICENSES

The original recommendations of Remington-Rand and the present recommendations of Armstrong both coincide with the Committee's feeling that there should be a return to the system of having customers prepare their own operator's licenses. It is only necessary for the customer to prepare the form in duplicate. One copy becomes the department's permanent record and the second copy, when validated, becomes the license. It would probably be advisable for Dexigraph to make one negative for the

numerical file. The savings which would result would be similar to the savings under the proposed registration method. Temporaries would be eliminated, with savings resulting in supplies and postage, as well as general correspondence. Dextigraph operation would be cut in half. It would be necessary to abandon the renewal stub system, but it is questionable whether the increased service to the public is worth the additional expense. The Committee believes that the public will feel that it is best served by any method which will reduce the waiting time in the lines which form in the main and branch offices during rush periods. By eliminating the issuance of temporaries, the time of each clerk on each transaction will be reduced by approximately one minute, and this time saving multiplied by the number of transactions which take place during rush periods will greatly speed up the work and the customer will be able to pass through the line with a shorter waiting period.

It is fundamental that any program which removes or alleviates a seasonal peak rush is advantageous. There seems to be no good reason why a program cannot be instituted to make operators' licenses valid for one year from the date of issuance rather than on a calendar year basis. This so-called staggered system is used in Massachusetts and in other states. As a practical matter it does not entirely prevent a peak rush on operators' licenses at the end of the year, but as time goes on it is apparent that there should be a gradual diminution of the peak load. Many new drivers are added upon examination during the summer months, and under the present system they are simply added to the end of the year peak load. Under a staggered system most of them would undoubtedly renew their licenses at yearly intervals from the time they first took their driver's test. The Committee feels that over a long range period the staggered system on operators' licenses would prove very beneficial.

### **PERSONNEL REORGANIZATION**

The Committee feels that one result of the proposed program would be to relieve many of the clerks in the branches which are now admittedly overstaffed. It appears inevitable that the load of work in administration of the Financial Responsibility Law will increase, but undoubtedly the peak load on financial responsibility cases will not coincide with the peak load on registrations and operators' licenses. The Committee feels that clerks should be trained to do the work required by the Financial Responsibility Law and also to serve as rate clerks. This should not be difficult if the simplified procedure on registration and operators' licenses be adopted. Instead of maintaining the basic crews in the branches on a

year-round basis, as under present policy, the policy should be to maintain the basic crew in the main office, and clerks should be assigned from the main office to the branches to cover the relatively short period of the peak load on registrations and licenses. This would result in more clerks being available in the main office to handle financial responsibility, filing and the like. It has been suggested that the clerks would not consent to being shifted geographically, even for short periods, and would leave the department rather than consent, but it may be pointed out that numerous reassignments have been made in the past without undue loss in personnel.

It should be further mentioned that if the only work assigned to Dexigraph is the making of necessary copies, there will be substantial savings in the cost of Dexigraph to the department, but on the other hand the work will be done much more rapidly, much more efficiently and at much less cost, than it could be done by manual operation. It also seems fair to state that the Dexigraph machine would not have to be worked anywhere near capacity to keep this volume of work current, and the next collateral step would be to investigate the possibility of using the machine to do special work for other departments, with resultant further savings to all the departments making use of the machine.

### **AUDIT CONTROL SHEET**

The Committee finds that at present the Department of Audit requires the Department of State to prepare a separate auditor's control sheet for every registration, license, or other transaction, which gives the date, number and fee. This enables the Department of Audit to maintain a current day by day complete audit of all the transactions of the department. The Department of Audit further requires that these slips be segregated from the other material involved in the transaction and sent under separate cover by express package (where the material comes from branches) to the Department of Audit. The other material in the transaction is sent by separate package to the Department of State. This involves additional expense to the Department of State in the extra time of the clerk, the extra materials, and duplication of express charges. The Committee is unable to see any reason why the material should not all be sent, for one express charge, to the Department of State. If the Department of Audit does not consider that a spot check audit of the original material furnishes a sufficient control, then it seems only fair that the additional expense involved in satisfying the requirements of the Department of Audit should be borne by the Department of Audit and added to its appropriation. It seems manifestly unfair to charge these additional expenses out of the appropria-

tion or allotment of the Department of State, which is already admittedly somewhat insufficient.

### **OPERATING SPACE**

The gross inadequacy of working space available to the Department of State and particularly to the Motor Vehicle Division, seriously hampers the efficiency of this department. Any proper reorganization of the filing system is rendered almost impossible by lack of room. The close proximity of desks and files, particularly in the Court Record and Financial Responsibility Section, causes delay after delay, as it is impossible for one clerk to pass while another clerk is looking up material in the file. There is no space available for the inevitable expansion of the Financial Responsibility Section. The bookkeeping and auditing is done on a balcony on the east end of the main room, but here the conditions of heat, light and ventilation are so bad as to be unhealthy. The best solution appears to be the construction of a mezzanine floor with a proper and adequate redistribution of heat, light and ventilation. There are no funds available for this purpose at the present time. It is recommended that the Governor and Council investigate this situation, and if it seems to them necessary and advisable, provide for the construction of an adequate mezzanine floor.

### **FILING SYSTEM**

The main part of the filing system consists of the ABC master file, the numerical file on registrations, the numerical file on operators' licenses, and the motor serial number file. In addition there are the smaller files of court records and financial responsibility, the hold file, and correspondence files.

In the ABC master file is placed the original material, which includes, for example, the original excise tax receipt and application signed by the applicant, the original operator's license application, and the like. This file is operated by a supervisor and five file clerks. The material is broken down alphabetically through the letters of the last name, and then through the letters of the first name, and then placed in the files. The material has to be re-sorted many times in order to get the alphabetical breakdown, and it seems impossible for the present number of clerks to keep anywhere near current on this filing. It is estimated that approximately 50,000 of the 1940 registrations and operator applications have not been filed, and over 100,000 of the registrations and operators' licenses for 1941 have not been filed. It is estimated that from thirty to forty working days will be necessary to complete this work, and in the meantime a large volume of trans-

actions resulting from the recent peak load on transfers will have accumulated ahead.

The numerical file is maintained by a supervisor who receives only part time assistance. Here the filing is by number and can be handled much more rapidly. This file is nearly current.

The motor serial number file is for all practical purposes non-existent. The material is prepared for this file and is piled up in baskets, but there is no crew available to do the filing and the material remains unfiled. This file was created by the Legislature in connection with the title law, and has remained as a legislative requirement since the title law was repealed. The work involved on this file would be to break the cards down by makes of car and truck, and then break down by serial number. The purpose of this file is to furnish a means of identification for the recovery of stolen cars. The service would be a valuable one if the file could be kept up to date. It would probably be necessary to have two or three file clerks for the filing, and in addition, at least one clerk to do look-up work and correspond from the files. Attention should be called to the fact that the preparation of the cards for this file, whether done by Dextigraph or manual system, is a substantial item of expense, and unless a sufficient crew can be assigned to the maintenance of this file, the Legislature should remove the requirement from the law, so as to save the expense of preparing the material for the file. Under the present system, every cent spent on the preparation of this material is absolutely wasted.

Separate indexes are maintained for the court record cases, financial responsibility after court record cases, and for accident financial responsibility cases. Since it is necessary to check the court record index for all accident cases, and the accident index for previous accident cases, it would save time to combine in one record the court record index, the court insurance financial responsibility index and the accident index. References to one index for all adverse information reduces labor and results in better control. One expiration file and one follow-up file would also reduce labor, save file cabinet space and floor space. There should be one file for all court and accident cases, whether under fifty dollars, or over. The plan of filing accident cases by number, court cases by number, and a separate alphabetical file for accident cases of under fifty dollars, results in having three places to look for papers on one driver or owner. At the request of the Committee a survey of the entire filing system was made without cost to the state by an expert from the Remington-Rand Company. The foregoing suggestions are in accordance with recommendations made to the Committee by this expert.



The Committee investigated the hold file situation and found here a file in which all material is temporarily lodged when because of a mistake made by the customer, or for some other reason, the transaction cannot be immediately cleared and terminated. The Committee found that checks, money orders and cash were attached to the material in this file with paper clips and remained in the file until the transaction cleared. The material was kept in a small steel lock-drawer cabinet. There being no control on this file, it was admitted upon inquiry that if any amount of material and cash should be removed from the file it would be impossible to trace it. The clerks were unable to give any accurate estimate of the cash in this file at any one time. The Committee immediately called the attention of the Controller to the existence of this file and the situation as regarded the deposit of cash in the file. The Controller had never known of the existence of this file before. The Controller immediately established a system to cover hold file transactions, whereby all cash, checks and money orders are deposited daily.

After Remington-Rand conducted its survey in 1940, it recommended that the State of Maine install in the Department of State the Dexigraph system on registrations, but not on operators' licenses, and the so-called Soundex system on filing. It guaranteed substantial savings in this department if these suggestions should be followed. Only one-third of the suggestions were followed—namely, the installation of Dexigraph for registrations. Contrary to the recommendations, Dexigraph was used to make operators' licenses, and Soundex was not installed. It seemed advisable, therefore, that Remington-Rand be given an opportunity to make a further survey within the department to see what its present recommendations would be. The report to the Committee points out that there is about five percent misfiling in the master file which is caused by using the alphabetical system. The report contains five typewritten pages of illustrations of such misfiling. It must be noted that this misfiling is in practically all cases not the fault of the file clerk. It arises from the fact that either through ignorance or design, many people spell their names in several different ways. The result is that there may be as many as three separate files on the same identical person. In several instances applicants either failed a test or had some conviction or other reason for non-issuance of the license under one name, but secured it under another. In practically all of the instances shown, the names sound exactly alike, but are spelled differently. These errors give rise to a large volume of unnecessary correspondence.

The principle of Soundex is that each name is coded with a code number by the sound of the name, and all names which sound alike will be filed

together. The Committee has no doubt that there may be other non-alphabetical systems which are as good as Soundex, and it holds no brief for this particular system. The Committee feels, however, that the advantages of a non-alphabetical system which would eliminate multiple filing are numerous, and it is recommended that the Department of State give serious consideration to the installation of a non-alphabetical system which would enable the same number of clerks to file more rapidly and more efficiently.

It is contended that only highly skilled file clerks could be trusted to do the coding, but the fact that the system has been successfully handled by WPA employees indicates that highly skilled file clerks are not required. It is also contended that the code number system would make it impossible for employees in any part of the department to go to the files to look up material. The Committee, however, is not satisfied that it is efficient practice to allow such indiscriminate use of the files by any and all employees. It is natural that only those employees who are specifically entrusted with the making up of the files and keeping them in good order would be very particular and careful about putting material back into the files in the proper place.

The Committee noted that there is no person who can be said to be directly in charge of the filing system and nothing else. The Committee feels strongly that there should be one supervisor in charge of the entire filing system and responsible for it, and that employees doing work outside the filing department should bring their inquiries to the supervisor to be assigned for a look-up and report.

### **CORRESPONDENCE**

It has already been pointed out that a great deal of unnecessary correspondence can be eliminated if the use of temporary certificates be done away with and errors in the filing system corrected. The Committee found that in a number of instances one clerk dictates to another. Since the clerks are all supposed to be skilled typists, this would seem to be an unnecessary operation, but the reason given was that some girls have an aptitude for creating a good letter, which others do not possess. It appears that progress can be made if a few more girls are trained as correspondence clerks, and these girls write all the letters without intervening dictation. These girls should be specially trained to write brief, pithy letters, and as much use of form letters should be made as possible. The Committee's examination of the correspondence files indicated a strong tendency of those writing letters in the department to be wordy. This is a very natural

fault, but every effort should be made to correct it. The Committee finds that the department is developing an excellent set of form letters, but it does not feel that these form letters are being used nearly as much as they should be. If there still remain instances where it appears to be absolutely essential that some dictating be done, the Committee recommends that the department consider the advisability of buying one or more dictating machines to save one intermediate operation.

## **PERSONNEL**

The Committee finds that considering the size of the staff of the Department of State, the personnel is cooperative and reasonably efficient. On the whole it appears that the employees are underpaid, and there are numerous instances of maladjustments in wage levels. These apparent inequalities tend to decrease staff morale and efficiency. In 1940 the Secretary of State prepared a complete readjustment of wages which was approved by the Personnel Board. It was submitted to the then Governor and Council and no action was taken. The work of the department is constantly impeded by the fact that clerks are accepting better paid positions in other departments or for private business. In view of the present rising cost of living and increase in wages in private business, this condition may be expected to grow steadily worse. The Committee recommends that the Secretary of State again prepare a wage and personnel readjustment plan and, after approval by the Personnel Board, present the same to the Governor and Council.

## **EXAMINATIONS**

Prior to this year examinations for drivers' licenses were given by the State Police who were assigned to the Secretary of State as inspectors, with the assistance of other State Police drawn from the regular force. The volume of State Police work at present has rendered it difficult to supply the necessary number of patrolmen to be present at the particular place in the state where examinations were to be given. In addition, the State Police Department has found it necessary to employ some civilians and to recall from the Secretary of State all of its officers. The Secretary of State has therefore been forced to substitute civilians as inspectors, and to give the examinations with inspectors assisted by deputy sheriffs and city police officers. Part of the difficulty has arisen from the fact that the examination fees, which produce approximately \$15,000 a year, have gone to the Secretary of State's Department and no part to the State Police. It is admitted that the inspectors alone cannot give the

examinations. It is also admitted that it is not good policy to have local police officers and deputy sheriffs giving examinations. The Committee feels that the State Police Department is much better equipped to give the examinations than is the Department of State, and it has secured an agreement from both departments that the examinations should be given by the State Police Department and all of the investigation work in the field should be done by the State Police Department, but in return, the proceeds from the examination fees should go to the State Police Department. The State Police Department has assured the Committee that with this money allocated to it, it can do this work efficiently and economically. The Committee therefore recommends that the Legislature assign the examination and field investigation work to the State Police Department and allocate to the State Police Department the proceeds from the examination fees. This will leave the inspectors free to supervise the work connected with their branches, will relieve them of the necessity of traveling all over the state to give tests, and will release the supervising examination clerk and several other clerks to financial responsibility, filing, or other work in the department where they may be needed.

### **FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**

The Financial Responsibility Law as passed in the State of New York included a provision that the insurance companies would have to underwrite the cost of the administration of the law, each carrier paying in proportion to the amount of business which it wrote. At present there is no provision for revenue to defray the cost of administration of the law in this state. Estimates given the Committee on the cost the first year run all the way from five to fifty thousand dollars. The Legislature should either provide for revenue, as was done in New York State, or should appropriate sufficient additional funds to defray the cost of administration.

Under the present law, enforcement is based upon an analysis of a report filed with the State Police in accordance with Section 128 of Chapter 29 of the Revised Statutes. This section provides, however, "Such reports shall be without prejudice, and the fact that such reports have been so made shall be admissible in evidence solely to prove a compliance with this section, but no such report or any part thereof, or statement contained therein, shall be admissible in evidence for any other purpose in any trial, civil or criminal, arising out of such accident." Under this provision it would be impossible for the Secretary of State to use the filed report as a basis of court action to enforce the Financial Responsibility Law. The Committee recommends that the Legislature amend the law to make the report ad-

missible in evidence, but only for purposes of the Financial Responsibility Law.

### MAINE MUNICIPAL OFFICERS

The Committee felt that criticisms and suggestions from the municipal officers in the various towns and cities and particularly from the tax collectors, might be helpful in suggesting possible method improvements in the Department of State. Maine Municipal Association was asked to cooperate and by an arrangement with its executive secretary, Mr. Johnson, a form letter was sent to seventy-three of the tax collectors in the larger towns and cities. A number of letters were received and a number of questions and criticisms were voiced. These were all considered by the Committee and were all taken up with the Secretary of State. The Committee wishes to express its appreciation to the Association and to those municipal officers who participated.

Dated at Augusta, Maine, this  
31st day of October, A. D. 1941.

Respectfully submitted,

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HORACE A. HILDRETH  
JEAN CHARLES BOUCHER

On the part of the Senate

W. MAYO PAYSON  
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On the part of the House.