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LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH COMMITTEE

July 27-29, 1942.

Testimony of STANTON S. WEED.

Re Registrations and operators' licenses.

Testimony of MR. STANTON S. WEED:

MR. WEBBER: I think it might be interesting to the committee, in view of the fact it has several times reported rather extensively on the problems in the Secretary of State's Department, to know what the program is for the following year, and I thought it might be a source of some satisfaction to the committee to know that some of these suggestions are apparently going to be carried out, with what we hope may be some saving of money, and I think Mr. Weed could rather informally give us an idea of what is in prospect.

MR. WEED: Well, we might as well take up the proposition of operators' licenses first as that will be our first problem that we have to contend with. You will notice by the samples here that we have devised a form in two parts, with a perforation down through the center, and in the instructions we say "Applicant must complete both sides of this form and face of form attached." So when an applicant for an operator's license comes in he takes one of these forms and fills out according to instructions the face and reverse of the form on the left and the face of the form on the right, and then he presents this to the rating clerk who applies the date and the number in the box provided for it, and he then proceeds to the cashier who validates the form on the right in the space for that validation, tears it off at the perforation, collects the two dollars fee and gives him

his permanent operator's license, doing away with all temporaries, giving the man what he pays for at the time he pays for it; and of course this particular form will be given the same treatment through the mail: when we receive any of these through the mail of course we date it and give it the number and then send it back to him. That makes for a very simple procedure in the matter of giving the operator his license. It is just a case where the applicant, we feel, will be more satisfied in making out the additional face and the second copy in order to get his license at the time he pays for it.

MR. WEBBER: Let us just briefly analyze that. That will represent a saving in manual labor, in the manual operation of making the license out?

MR. WEED: That is true.

MR. WEBBER: It will save all mailing costs on all window business?

MR. WEED: Correct.

MR. WEBBER: And it will save one operation of the Dexigraph?

MR. WEED: Correct.

MR. WEBBER: Anything else I have forgotten?

MR. WEED: It will also save considerable expense in mailing cost on those applications that come to us through the mail. Because of the way they have been handled in the past they have mailed them out a temporary until such time as the permanent was made through the

Dexigraph. If they found they didn't have time to make up a permanent, they just through a temporary in and envelope and mail it out. And then again, the speed with which we anticipate doing this by using a mail crew sitting at a mail table, in that way we will handle the mail as it comes in to us and send it out immediately, and that will relieve the situation where we have had cases of so much time being spent from the receipt of the application to sending out the final permanent license that some people have moved in that time and we do not know where they are, and of course we do not have their forwarding address and we have a lot of returned permanent licenses.

MR. LIBBY: May I inject this question right here, Mr. Weed. You plan, as in sometimes past, the Secretary of State's office has mailed prospective licensees blanks to be filled out later when they apply for their license -- do you plan to do that?

MR. WEED: I don't quite understand.

MR. LIBBY: In my case I have trucks to license and so forth. I am not sure they did it last year, but they mailed me blanks to fill out for my applicants for license.

MR. WEED: You are speaking of registration now, aren't you?

MR. LIBBY: I guess you never did on operators' licenses but you did in the case of registrations.

MR. WEED: That is right. Those will be made up in large enough quantity so that we can have them distributed to excise tax collectors.

MR. LIBBY: It would help to have those available, because in many cases you have people of different types of education, and some of them would have difficulty in making them out at the registrar's office.

MR. WEED: We feel we can get quite a bit of cooperation from the excise tax collectors or poll tax collectors. We will send them out a supply of these so that when people come in to pay their poll tax they can give them one of these forms, and the excise tax collectors as a rule are fairly well educated people and they will know just what the story is by looking at it and they can instruct these people and it will save us a good deal of difficulty.

MR. WEBBER: Any other questions on operators'?

MR. PELLETIER: On the court record, under the present system, if you are brought into court, your renewal stub is the one that is marked by the court official?

MR. WEED: That is right.

MR. PELLETIER: And when that is sent in a copy of your court record is right on the renewal stub?

MR. WEED: Yes.

MR. PELLETIER: But under this system here it will be left to the person to report that on their subsequent application?

MR. WEED: Of course we have records from the courts too, so that when we have anybody that has a court record -- supposing this went into effect and in 1944 a person has a court record and they make application on one of these white

forms -- we know they should not do it, but some probably will -- our check will be to locate those '44 applications through our court record division, and if they have filed on a white form undoubtedly their licensè will be suspended unless they can show cause why it should not be. And that is one reason why we developed this blue and red form, so that when a person makes application on one of these blue forms we will know he has had a court record of one instance and if he had more than one he should fill out the red form.

CHAIRMAN DOW: Then when an application comes in on a white and he walks right down to the window and puts it in he will receive his white back and a check will be made later after the rush is over and you will take your court record division and check back?

MR. WEED: Yes.

MR. PELLETIER: This court record division does that work fairly fast, keeps up pretty well with the licenses as issued?

MR. WEED: Yes. It has been built up pretty well in the last year or two. There are about six clerks in that division now. At one time back along there were about two. So I think we have personnel enough to take care of this problem.

Then if we put in a Soundex system, which we have very carefully considered and we are on the ~~verge~~ verge of

putting that in pending any change in our situation down there as to location which is also in the air, the possibility that we may move out of this building and go into some other building, and at such time as we do that or know whether or not we are going to do it we will make our move towards Soundex; then these red and blue copies will undoubtedly be filled in a mass file where they will be altogether so that our court record cases can be kept separate from those not court record cases, and when one becomes a court record case it will be made on blue and placed in the file where it belongs. I think our idea would be to segregate those court record cases against the non-court cases.

(Off record)

MR. WEBBER: Now do you want to tell us a little something about the registration situation? This operators' set-up of course is pretty much right in line with our suggestion.

MR. WEED: That is right.

These are Dexigraph copies of our proposed plan for registration set-up. There have been some changes made since these were prepared but I can give you the story on it. You will notice that these are made up in four-part form, and at the present time we contemplate using a fifty-part form for this reason: the second form which you find here which on the side says "For owner of vehicle," we had devised a scheme of course dating

back to our first idea on this thing in preparing for the applicant a combination of excise tax receipt and registration certificate, and by having that form forwarded to us for the endorsement or validation of it with the date and number applied it then became the permanent registration certificate and excise tax receipt for the applicant. Now the situation has been brought to our attention that there are undoubtedly a number of people who won't feel much like sending those in to us where it is their only evidence of payment of excise tax, so we have in mind now making up these either in four or five parts so that the customer will have two of these copies and he will forward to us one which of course will be designated by some further instruction on here, such as "This form to be accompanied with application to Secretary of State" and the other customer's copy will say, "To be retained by customer." Therefore he will have in his possession at all times his excise tax receipt and forward to us this form which we will validate and send back to him for a registration certificate. It is also another receipt, but being prenumbered there is no chance for misrepresentation of one against the other.

Now I have in mind -- let us go back to the first form -- this will be made up as ~~the~~ excise tax collector's desire, either in books of fifty copies to the book or five to a sheet or a continuous roll, which is 200 copies

in a roll, or individual snapout forms, and of course the number of copies will be dependent upon the towns, as to whether they require the auditor's copy. Those cities which have city auditors will want a copy for their auditors, therefore there will be five copies. One is the copy for the Secretary of State, No. 2 is the copy to be forwarded with No. 1 to the Secretary of State for validation and report and the application for registration certificate, No. 3 will be retained by the customer as his receipt for payment of excise tax, No. 4 is for the collector and No. 5 will be for the auditor. In all cases where no auditor copy is required we will then have four copies of the form.

MR. WEBBER: All carbonized and made in one operation?

MR. WEED: That is right.

MR. WEBBER: By the excise tax collector.

MR. WEED: Yes.

MR. PELLETIER: What is the attitude of the tax collectors?

MR. WEBBER: No more work involved for them.

MR. WEED: I have taken this proposition up with the superintendent of printing down here and he informs me enough carbons can be inserted in a book form so they can change them when they come to a point where they are not legible. Those are made up five to a sheet and will have interleaved carbons or one-time carbon, and those in the snap-out will have interleaved carbon.

CHAIRMAN DOW: Where are the excise tax collectors going to get those?

MR. WEED: Those are going to be presented to them with the compliments of the Secretary of State's Department. In other words, we feel to gain uniformity in size and grade of paper and desired color we want that we are going to supply them free of charge to tax collectors, and we feel the saving in the department will more than offset the cost to us.

CHAIRMAN DOW: So they haven't got to go out and find forms?

MR. WEED: No. At the present time I am receiving returns from a form letter I sent out to all excise tax collectors giving me their requisites for 1943 and the type they want, and I believe from the 500 odd I sent out I have approximately 300 returns. They all seem to be quite favorably impressed with the fact the State is going to supply them free of charge. And it is more than fair we should supply them because, after all, these are our records and where they are cooperating with us and performing this service for the public and others in order to collect their excise tax the who thing ties right in very nicely.

MR. WEBBER: Now you will save on temporaries, which is a big operation?

MR. WEED: The temporaries will be eliminated.

MR. WEBBER: You will simply have one Dexigraph operation?

MR. WEED: No; we will have three: we are cutting out one.

We will have three Dexigraph operations on this in that we will prepare two copies for our files, namely the number file ~~an~~ of the number which is stamped on the application, and No. 2 will be for our motor serial file, and No. 3 will be prepared for the successful bidder on the motor lists, which in the past has been Hood's of Lewiston.

So we are cutting out the use of temporaries on registrations and we are cutting out the extra cost and time involved in making another copy to become the permanent registration certificate. Those persons applying personally for registration certificates will receive them at the time they make application and payment: those people who send in through the mail, we hope to get it out to them with the minimum amount of time in order to get that material cleared through.

MR. PAYSON: Do you expect any registrations next year?

MR. WEED: Along that line I will say this: This is a very opportune time to put in this change, due to the fact we expect a very great reduction; in fact we have at the end of June approximately a \$177,000 drop in revenue as compared to the same period last year, and that is naturally decreasing every month.

MR. PELLETIER: The ratio will increase as time goes on?

MR. WEED: Yes.

(Off record)

MR. WEBBER: What are the prospects for bringing to life the defunct motor serial number file?

MR. WEED: At the present time the WPA has a so-called outfit down in Portland who are working on our motor serial number file, but with the new year we are going to do that work ourselves, and we hope to have enough personnel to handle the motor serial number file along in conjunction with the numerical file.

MR. WEBBER: Now, Mr. Weed, everybody on the committee has a copy of these sheets which contain a study of mailing costs in your department. Have you seen that paper, anything like it?

MR. WEED: No, sir.

MR. WEBBER: What I hoped for -- and I don't know whether you can do it on such short notice -- I hoped you might be able to drop down through those figures and give the committee some idea of what you hope for in the way of savings against those figures. If that is too much to ask, don't hesitate to say so.

MR. WEED: Well, of course these figures at the top of the page which cover primary elections and so forth, those are out of the picture so far as I am concerned. This motor vehicle set-up shows a figure of \$4006.07 applied against operators' licenses. That means that is the charge for mailing out their permanent operators' licenses, and the proportionate number of permanents that we would have to mail out would drop that figure I should say offhand about

cut it in half anyway, due to the fact all temporaries will be done away with and people making personal application for operators' licenses will get their permanents at the time. It should reduce that figure very much.

Now the figure on auto plates, \$1928, is a charge where we have mailed out plates at a minimum cost of eight cents a set. With the use of the decalcomania sticker that we contemplate for 1943, mail cases can be handled where the decalcomania and the permanent certificate can be mailed out for three cents. In that way we are going to cut five cents on each case, so that is a reduction of fifty per cent and will make that roughly about a \$1200 cut.

I can't say too much on administration or general correspondence, but I can hope that with the clear-cut use of form letters and more thorough understanding of the problem we can reduce this figure. I am quite sure we can. The great amount of this postage charge here is due to the fact that so much correspondence is necessary between applicant and office trying to find out what the story is all about, but we have some form letters drawn up in such a way we can check off the necessary answers to their questions and we can mail those back to the customer just once and there will be no question as to any more correspondence on the thing. Nevils spoke to me yesterday -- I haven't seen the sample yet, but he says they have developed

a type of letter which can be made up in a form way whereby the customer upon receipt of this can fold it over and send it back to us as part of the envelope with the necessary information he wants, and we can use that in reverse manner, and those can be mailed for a cent and a half. I haven't seen it yet, so I don't know just what it is, but his idea is he can cut the cost for us by the adoption of this particular form. Of course we are going to take into consideration everything we can do to cut costs, particularly in the Motor Vehicle Department.

MR. WEBBER: To sum up: There is no question but with the carrying out of the suggestions which this committee made it is going to result in very substantial savings?

MR. WEED: That is right.

MR. WEBBER: Now do you want to tell them something more about the use of decalcomanias for plates? This suggestion we take no credit for: it is Mr. Weed's own work.

MR. WEED: Due to the fact that we have insufficient steel to manufacture plates for another year, and also due to the fact the government would not let us use it if we had it, we are forced to devise some manner for validating the use of the 1942 plates for 1943, and that ties along with the bill passed by the special session of the Legislature authorizing the Secretary of State to validate the use of plates by some device. So we have thought the proposition over and contemplated the use of a metal tab and contemplated the use of a decal windshield sticker

or combination of both, and we have come to the conclusion there is no need for having the metal tab, due to the fact these tabs can be easily removed and would cause us considerable headache, so we have come down to the point where we decided to use a windshield decal sticker to be applied on vehicles having windshields and those not having windshields will be given a decal with adhesive on the back which will be applied to the vehicle, either metal or wood. We have had samples presented to us by this particular company in Chicago who have tied in with us very nicely on this thing, and they have drawn up a sample for us to go by. I am sorry I have only got one copy of this, but I will hand it around. This is something we have taken from the sample, and we are going to send it out to the prospective bidders for them to prepare something similar. I have here one of their samples, just to show how it works out. It is a layer-built proposition of very thin paper and paint which is built one upon another until you get a tough, pliable sort of material which can be applied to either glass, wood or metal. Insofar as the decal we propose using for next year, we are going to have a three-way tie-in. You notice on the sample I am passing around that at the bottom of the decal there is to be a prenumbered control. That will be made in the office manually: they will be numbered from one up, and the top section of the decal will be left blank, and on the

bottom side over here there will be spaced used for motor vehicle serial number, and that will be left blank in the process of manufacture. We have our control prenumbered, and when a person makes application for registration on his application form he will state "My 1942 registration for this vehicle was such and such a number," and we will apply that number by the use of china marking pencil which is waterproof or some other defice which will serve the purpose, that number in this space here.

Now on passengers and commercials, on which our largest registrations come, the word "passenger" or the word "commercial" will be placed on that decal in the process of manufacture, so, in order to speed the thing along, having that as a designation of classification we will just have to fill in the number, and on the bottom we will fill in the motor serial number taken from the face of the application. Now we have our control here for stock and issuance, we have our control tieing into the number of the plate and our motor serial number tieing into the vehicle, so we have a three-way control on the issuance of windshield decals.

Now along with that too is the fact that on our specifications for bid we are bringing out forcefully the fact that the manufacturer will prepare these on material which cannot be duplicated or counterfeited and will have

some other protective features such as a series of holes put into the process, and if a person tried to get this decal off they would tear everything off except this information inside of the hole, so it wouldn't be of any possible use; and their experience in decals shows a decal properly manufactured and applied to a vehicle could not be taken off anyway: they would have to take some abrasive material or a razor blade to get it off; so for protection against counterfeiting we are going to be very careful as to who gets the job of manufacturing these decals for us.

MR. WEBBER: That raises the question in my mind: At the end of the year how is the customer going to get them off when he wants to?

MR. WEED: A razor blade. All he has got to do is scrape it off and when he scrapes it off he destroys it. Of course if this thing carries on beyond 1943 we will get different colors or a different style, something different from what we used in 1943.

Now you will notice the difference in these two here is the fact that on this sample is the name "Harold I. Goss, Secretary of State," but on this one there is no such information, simply "State of Maine, Department of State," identifies it as the issuing section, and not knowing whether Mr. Goss will be with us next year there is no need of having his name on there because they would not be any good if he was not successful in gaining

re-election to the office, so we are cutting that out entirely and justing just "State of Maine, Department of State" as the issuing division on these things, and of course we are going to have the State seal down in here.

MR. BOUCHER: I do not suppose you could reduce the size of them? Pretty soon we wont have any windshield.

MR. PAYSON: You have got to have two windshields.

MR. WEED: I think as far as we are concerned I can very safely say outside of our inspection sticker and the use stamp --

MR. BOUCHER: And the A gasoline ration.

MR. WEED: The A sticker could be put on the side window so far as that is concerned. Of course we can't lock horns with the Federal government too much, but naturally a windshield device other than specified by law we could enforce the removal of it. In your case, where you speak of reducing the size of it, we want to have something which is of large enough size to be easily identified and which will give us space enough to write in a fairly good-sized number.

MR. BOUCHER: I realize your numbers would have to be large, but couldn't you eliminate a lot of other stuff and have just those three salient things: motor number, license number and the rest of it very small or not at all?

MR. WEED: I think you have something there, but in looking this sample over we have got to have something stating this is a validation.

MR. BOUCHER: I am perfectly willing you should have that as large as you have got it, but the rest of it why so big?

MR. WEED: It may not have to be so big. We could cut "State of Maine, Department of State, '43" down, and this scroll which goes across it.

MR. BOUCHER: I am just getting worried about looking out through our windshield.

MR. PELLETIER: Mr. Weed, has anything been done, or have you looked into the matter of plastic plates?

MR. WEED: Yes. (Off record)

We have considered various types of plates including plastics, and we find that the cost for producing plastics would be approximately 25 cents a set, and that of course would bring in another problem about how you are going to get the number on there. You get the plastic material from the manufacturer; he sends it to the prison; the prison has got to put on a base color and then they have got to put on a number, and the only way I could see was by use of a stencil, and when you get up in the six-figure numbers you have either got to have an individual stencil for each number or a combination of individual numbers, single digits, and keep changing those on each plastic form, paint it on; and then there has got to be another coat over that, a binder or weather-protecting coat, so when you get all done it costs you twenty-five cents.

CHAIRMAN DOW: As against what for a steel plate?

MR. WEED: As against 9 cents for a steel plate. The plastic plate sells, the size we would require, for \$65 a thousand, but then on top of that you have got to figure in your other production methods of getting it to the finished product, painting and the binding coat and stencils. (Off record)

Then again the problem in using a plastic, it might be better than steel in that it had giving qualities, but that pain on there if you had much back and forth movement of the plastic would be liable to crack the paint off and you are going to lose some of your identification. Now I haven't a definite price on the use of the decal, but the representative of the company said that their price would probably be \$31 a thousand, or approximately 3 cents apiece. Now that is going to bring about a drastic reduction in the cost in the use of decals against steel, going to cut it two-thirds. The information I have from various other states is the fact they are going on the decal plan, and if you think our decal is very large you ought to see some of these that other states have.

MR. BOUGHER: What would happen to the fellow who lost a plate off his car?

MR. WEED: A man that loses a plate will make evidence of his lost plate, and we have enough steel on hand to prepare replacements, and we will give him a new set of plates and a corresponding decal.

CHAIRMAN DOW: He would make application for a plate just

as he does now and send in 75 cents?

MR. WEED: Yes; and we would give him a new set of plates and a new decal.

MR. WEBBER: Mr. Weed, I judge from what you have already said that the department thinks fairly favorably of Soundex, although it has not made any commitments yet?

MR. WEED: Very true. Mr. Goss and I are both sold on the idea of Soundex and during our trip to Concord, New Hampshire and Boston sometime in the month of June we looked over the Soundex situation in Boston. They use it solely on operators': due to some political move they are not allowed to use it on their registrations because of the fact they are public records and people coming in there if they wanted to find something by Soundex they would be lost but where they come in there and find it by name they are taken care of; but we plan to adopt Soundex for our total filing system, both registrations and operators.

CHAIRMAN DOW: And the motor serial number file too?

MR. WEED: No; the motor serial number file could not be used on Soundex. Under Soundex all names sounding alike will be filed together. Of course Soundex is used only on a name basis and cannot be used on a number basis.

MR. WEBBER: Is there any Deputy Secretary of State at the present time?

MR. WEED: No.

MR. WEBBER: The division of labor, as I understand it, Mr. Goss is supervising the elections and corporations and work that he formerly did and you are given sole supervision of motor vehicles?

MR. WEED: I do all the detailed work and take up my decisions with him, and of course he makes the final decision on all these things. He, of course, has been tied down with the election matters. You were speaking about the division of work: of course Mr. Goss has been tied up ever since he has been given the acting Secretary of State's position by the Governor and Council with election matters wholly or mostly. He has held some hearings, but most of his work so far has been election material.

MR. DOW: What is your official title, Mr. Weed?

MR. WEED: Chief Clerk. I don't like it. At the time they proposed the job to me I spoke to Mr. Robie -- that is before he left -- and I told him what I thought the job should be worth to me, and I also made mention of the fact I did not like the expression of "Chief Clerk," but he had apparently taken up the matter with the personnel board, and he did the best he could under the circumstances, but where my experience has been more or less along accounting and auditing lines I personally feel the title should be chief accountant or something like that. I know the man down in Massachusetts, Mr. Campbell, who has about the same type of job I do -- of course his is much larger because of the larger population, but his title is chief accountant. I would like to build myself up to a little something along that line. I do not think that Chief Clerk gives the proper description of the job. Of course as it was handled by my predecessor

that might have been all right, but I feel I have more problems to contend with than she did.

CHAIRMAN DOW: After all, the whole responsibility is yours at the present time.

MR. WEED: I should say so.

(Off record)
