

ROADS AND HIGHWAYS COMMITTEE MEETING -- FEBRUARY 1, 1971

The Roads and Highways Committee met in room 535 at 2:45 P. M. on February 1, 1971. Chairman Dierdorff called the meeting to order and all members were present except Bush, Davis, and Jacobs.

Guests were: Annie Attwood and Jackie Rush, Smith Center, Pages; M. W. Rhea, Yates Center, Kansas Contractors Association; Bud Grant, Topeka, Kansas State Chamber of Commerce; Jim Clark, Topeka, Kansas Optometric Association, Inc.

Conferees were: Fred Linde and Jim Maag, Representatives; H. J. Ulrich and John Gehr, State Highway Department; Ray Orłowski, Topeka, Kansas Highway Safety Coordinating Office.

House Bills 1016 and 1126 were considered.

HOUSE BILL 1126 - AN ACT relating to the renewal of operator's and chauffeur's licenses; requiring a vision examination prior thereto; amending KSA 1970 Supp. 8-247, and repealing the existing section.

Mr. Maag explained that this is a simple bill - it calls for visual re-examination and was based on the Wisconsin law. There are some 29 states that require a test. This could be given by the department or one's own doctor. There is a provision for appeal. He feels that if people are going to drive that they should be able to see.

Mr. Dierdorff told the committee that this is a part of the recommendation in the Safety Act and he asked Mr. Gehr and Mr. Orłowski how soon do we have to have this legislation and do we start with a program fairly easy and not very strong. Also, what is the timing on implementing this?

Mr. Gehr said there isn't a certain date - as long as we

are doing something right now they won't pressure us into full compliance. There is no definite date now but there are several things we have to do to comply. This is one step but the written test would also be necessary for full compliance.

Mr. Dierdorff said he understood we just have three years to do this and if that is the case he thinks we should do this or the motor vehicle inspection.

Mr. Orłowski said the Bureau has never stated a time but we are about to be reviewed again.

Mr. Dierdorff asked Mr. Orłowski what is the recommendation of the department - do they recommend doing nothing or that we make a start?

Mr. Orłowski recommended that we make a start - that the visual and written would be advisable.

Mr. Ulrich said with the written and visual - you could administer both with about the same amount of money. We could initiate the visual and then bring in the other.

Mr. Ratner asked how much it would cost.

Mr. Ulrich said it would be about \$750,000 the first year and between \$500 and \$600 thousand after that. Most of the money could be generated by charging a nominal fee.

Mr. Dierdorff said that if we go into it, it should pay its own way but he would not want it clear out of proportion.

Mr. Hayes asked how many examinations are being given now.

Mr. Ulrich said 177,000 new ones were given this year.

Mr. Allison stated that he understands there are three tests, visual, written and driving, when you get an examination. Which

do people most generally not pass?

Mr. Ulrich said that with the visual and written people can usually make some correction. They can study and come back. About 30% fail in the driving test. They have three opportunities in six months to comply.

Mr. Allison asked which he would recommend now.

Mr. Ulrich said looking at the standards, the visual and written are the only two required and the driving is a matter of option. If there is some obvious impairment, the whole test is used.

Mr. Ossmann said that if you rate these 1, 2, 3, which would be the best for safety? Which test would be most likely to eliminate the unsafe driver?

Mr. Ulrich said that is Mr. McCammet Department as far as having the statistics. From a realistic standpoint, you would have to include the driving test, but from the economic standpoint, it is the most difficult.

Dr. Hughes observed that each year we say we would like to comply. He said that he would like to see us do something.

Mr. Lady said that we thinks we have been making steps in compliance - alcohol, four-year renewals, staggered registrations. His question is, if it were decided to implement the visual and written, is there any additional study that needs to be made so we could ease into this without a catastrophe.

Mr. Ulrich said that any legislation where we require tests at renewal time does have effects. From the legislative standpoint it might be good to research it more by a study by the

Legislative Council or some other committee.

Mr. Lady asked "probably", or are you ready to make a statement?

Mr. Ulrich said if he were making a statement he would say we need to research it more.

Mr. Ratner said "I first detected a recommendation from the Motor Vehicle Department, a recommendation to give you time to get ready for this. Now you are talking about a study".

Mr. Ulrich said that his personal feeling is he is not trying to get out of something. He feels they are happy to administer and he is pleased to tell what they can do, but he refrains from giving any recommendation.

Mr. Ratner said "you feel it would be better to do it every four years for everybody? You do not feel there would be no measurable difference between the visual and written? You are talking about 400,000 a year. About how many people would your office have to add to handle this?"

Mr. Ulrich said that he would have to provide us with the fiscal note.

Mr. Ratner asked Mr. Ulrich how much time it would take him and his office to analyze this so we could get an accurate fiscal note.

Mr. Ulrich said they could get it down on the number of people but the places would be a different matter.

Mr. Ratner told Mr. Orlowski that we are wondering about loss of funds and when does he feel we should implement this, or does he think it should be studied and implemented during

another legislature.

Mr. Orlowski said that he could not tell us when the federal government would penalize us - that he thinks we have been doing a good job in Kansas and have been satisfying them, but he would not like to be pinned down.

Mr. Ratner asked how much time would we have before we get the red pencil, and Mr. Orlowski said there would be ample time.

Mr. Lady asked Mr. Orlowski if we should do this.

Mr. Orlowski replied "if you so desire I would use both the written and visual".

Mr. Lady said the Department is in a better position to make a study than we, but it would seem to him that if we made this effective January 1972, that this has not been considered in the budget this year, so if we are going to do something, we should make it in compliance with the fiscal budget.

Mr. Ossmann said if we go into this it would behoove us to make this budget a one-time deal -- to make the cost sufficient in the beginning. He said he is more interested in what is going down the highway than in a federal program.

Mr. Dierdorff appointed a sub-committee consisting of Ratner, Chairman; Hayes, Jacobs, Dempsey and Wilson to study the two bills on re-examination of drivers and to make their recommendations to the committee.

Mr. Dierdorff asked "what about motor vehicle inspections?"

Mr. Ulrich said that it is presently handled by the Highway Patrol. He said he is not too well versed on motor vehicle

inspections except that they have been very unsuccessful in many states.


Mr. Gehr said that eleven states do not have inspections. He said they are not working well anywhere.

Mr. Lady suggested to Mr. Orlowski that the members of the committee be furnished with the booklet "Kansas Traffic and Highway Safety". Mr. Orlowski said there are no up-dated copies but that he would be happy to furnish the members with the booklet.

The meeting was adjourned.

Fran Stafford, Recording Secretary

APPROVED:

  
ARDEN DIERDORFF, CHAIRMAN

February 2, 1971