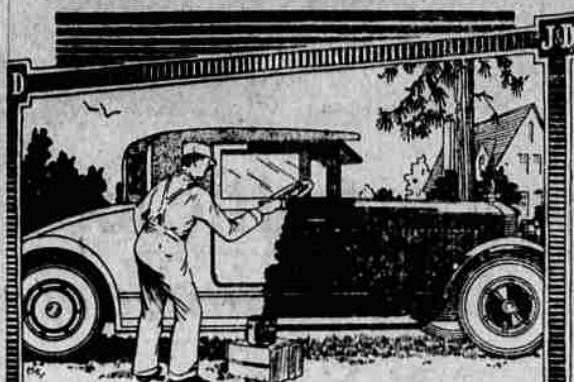


Highway and Auto Scope

# AUTOMOBILE NEWS

Traffic and Transit News

simple test for wear in the gears or broken teeth will cause the gear shift lever to vibrate, and can be felt by the driver by placing his hand on the lever while the car is in motion.



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Noah's Paint Store

## Oregon State License Act Called Unfair Legislation

(By Seward D. Allen)  
EUGENE, Ore. (Special)—In a previous communication I spoke of the governor's proposal of a state income tax and a severance tax on timber. I wish now to speak of the secretary of state's proposal for a reduction of the license fees on automobiles. A Mr. Carter, a candidate for governor, has also suggested the propriety of a change in the license fees but he is not very explicit on the changes to be made. If the secretary of state means simply to reduce the amount of the fees and leave the method of computing them as it now is, his suggestion of change is entirely without merit. The effect of his proposal would be not only to perpetuate the present unfairness of fees, but to make that unfairness more shocking.

I assert without fear of successful contradiction that there never was a more unfair piece of legislation than the Oregon act for the licensing of motor cars. If it was simply a licensing act, it could be defended, though its rates are excessive for such purpose. It is also a taxing act. In terms, it exempts the automobile from ordinary taxation. If the license fee there provided is paid.

### Costly Cars Favored.

Let me illustrate how the present automobile law works out on cars used for ordinary family purposes. The price of the Lincoln sedan is \$5350 in Eugene. It is a high priced car. It is also a heavy car. If there were no license act and it was taxed as other property in Lane county, it would be assessed at \$2960, 55 per cent of its actual value. The total tax rate in Eugene is 57.4 mills. And this car

owned by a Eugene resident, taxed only on its value, would pay \$147.95.

This \$167.95 would be divided as follows: to the state \$21.06, to the county \$44.74, to the city \$50.02, to the school district \$52.05. In lieu of these payments, which it should certainly make when new, it pays a license fee based on its weight of \$70. Of this state takes \$52.50 and gives Lane county \$17.50. The county loses by the transaction \$27.50. The county's loss will be less as the car decreases in value, but the loss of the city and school district will always be under this license system, total. The owner gains through the license system \$97.50.

Take a less valuable car, one that sells for about \$2000 and whose license fee is \$40. It should go on the tax roll for \$1100. If owned in Eugene and taxed as ordinary property it should pay \$63.14. This would be divided, to the state \$7.92, to the county \$16.82, to the city \$18.81, to schools \$19.68. Through the license fee the owner gains \$23.14, the county loses \$6.83 and the city and schools lose respectively \$18.81 and \$19.88.

### Old Cars Hard Hit.

Take now a car of some old date but of the same weight as the car last mentioned. It would pay the same license fee of \$40. It is worth say \$200. It would go on the tax roll at \$110, and it taxed as other property in Eugene would pay \$6.33. By paying this \$40 license fee the owner secures an exemption of this \$6.33, while the owner of the \$2000 car gets an exemption of \$23.14, and the owner of the Lincoln an exemption

of \$97.50. The richer you are the more exemption you get. "God bless the rich, the poor can beg," is an adage not entirely out of date.

Let us see what the owners of these cars would pay in the neighboring state of California, assuming they were owner in a city where the tax rates were the same as here, and the assessments proportioned as here as to actual value: The Lincoln car would pay yearly \$170.95. The \$2000 car paying here a \$40 fee would pay there \$66.14, and the old boat, valued at \$200 and paying here \$40, would pay \$3.32. Some difference, isn't it? And yet a difference having justice and right as its basis. Every pleasure car in California pays a license fee of \$3 and is taxed the same as other property. In the very nature of things, if our license fee is to be in lieu of general taxes, it must in part at least be based on value. Anything else is rank injustice.

### Change Held Legal.

In the last legislature several bills were introduced to equalize automobile license fees, to make the good car pay its share and to relieve the old and poor cars of an unjust charge. Of course the usual objections were raised—the present method was quite simple, it would be difficult to take into consideration the value of the car, etc., etc. Injustice is always easy. That is one of the reasons why there is so much of it. And in the midst of the discussion there came an opinion, a suggestion, something of that kind, from the attorney general of the state that it might be unconstitutional to change the present schedule, as there were bonds issued on the faith of those rates. The rates were increased a few years ago, and the inequality for old cars made more glaring, but that was all right.

I don't take the least stock in the suggestion of the attorney general, but even if there was doubt, the injustice of the present rates is so glaring that he and every other official ought to make every possible effort to correct it. The present schedule does not collect a cent from the owner of any fine car but makes him annually a present while it continually robs the owner of the used car, especially if it has become of little value.

The automobile is a species of property that requires the protection of the law to an unusual extent because of the temptation to steal it, or to use it for a lark. The cost of this protection is on the county, the city and the school district. County and city officials enforce the law against theft or unlawful use, and the schools teach honesty and law observance.

### Gas Tax All Right.

When the secretary of state or candidates for office talk of a reduction in automobile fees, a pertinent question to ask them is, are motor vehicles as a whole paying more to the state than the same amount of value in other property? In answering this question I do not think we should consider the tax on gasoline. It seems to be that is eminently fair. The automobiles are hard on roads, and speaking generally the automobile that travels the most miles does the most damage. Weight of machines may properly be regarded in fixing license fees, though as to pleasure cars weight is so small a factor that in many states as in California, it is disregarded. But to the question, "Do motor cars as a whole pay more than they should?" There were in 1925 in Oregon 216,553 licensed pleasure cars, trucks and trailers. They paid as license fees \$5,207,650. If the passenger cars paid \$3 each as a license fee and the for hire vehicles and trucks paid an appropriate license fee, would the balance paid our state be more than this amount of taxable property

ought to pay to the government? I think not. We are not collecting too much. We are distributing the burden wrongly.

There are a considerable number of people who want a new car every year or two. They have the money to make the shift. It would be better if they did not send so much money away, but it is their right. However, the state should not give them a bonus for so doing. There are others who want the old cars. These people are not proud, or over particular. The used car answers their purpose very well. The state should not penalize them for being content with the old car. Property in old cars should be re-

spected and taxed only in just proportion.

If the dial of the speedometer vibrates, the instrument will not indicate correct speed. A noisy speedometer may be due to any one of the following causes: A loose union between the speedometer and the flexible shaft connection or between the driving shaft and the flexible shaft. Sometimes the flexible shaft is bent at too sharp an angle, causing it to bind. Or it may not be well lubricated, causing an erratic movement.

The hood should be the first

part of the car to dry with the chassis when bringing the car in out of the wet. It helps to make a good job of the car by turning on. Rub the body of the car with the chamois gently and as little as possible. Rock the car a few times before starting to work in order to obviate having water drip off the top when the body is dry. Use two chamois, one for windows and upper body and one for the fenders, bumpers, wheels and aprons.

She: "Can you drive with one hand?"  
He: "Ah—yes."  
She: "Then pick up my glove."

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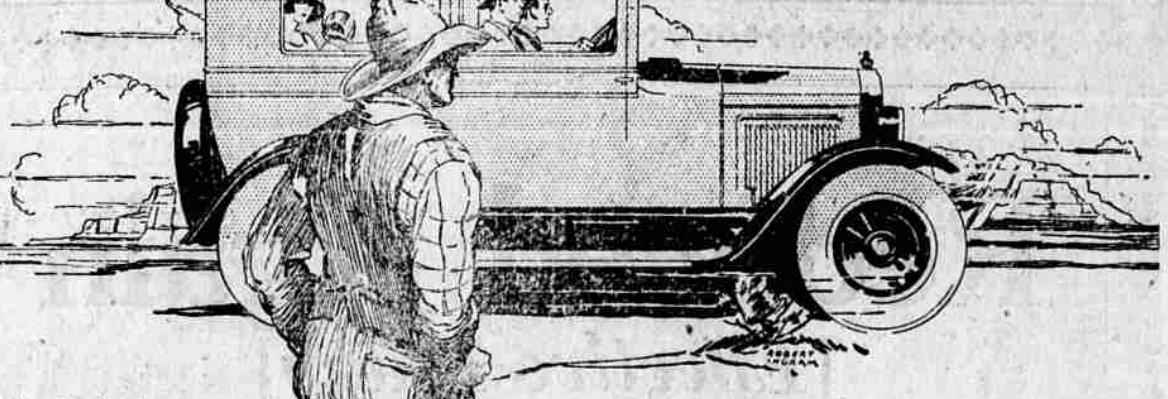
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