OSEA Says State Shouldn't Buy Sub-Compact Autos

OSEA doesn't want the State of Oregon to buy any more of the so-called "sub-compact" automobiles for use by its employes.

Executive Secretary Thomas C. Enright last month told a subcommittee of the legislature's Joint Ways and Means Committee that many employes have complained to OSEA that the small cars are hazardous and unsafe to drive.

"OSEA's Board of Directors last summer unanimously adopted a resolution asking the legislature to stop use of the sub-compacts because of their alleged unsafe driving characteristics," Enright said. That resolution was adopted by delegates at the Association's General Council last fall.

'Minor' Accident Cost Driver $2,597 in Hospital Bills

To emphasize its contention that the sub-compact automobiles purchased for state employe use are hazardous to drive, OSEA distributed copies of the above pictures to all members of the legislature recently. The car, pictured from four different angles, was traveling about 5 miles an hour when it was hit from behind by a larger car going some 15 miles an hour. The relatively minor accident cost the state employe driver 46 days of work and $2,597 in hospital bills.

The subcommittee voted to direct the Department of General Services to return to purchasing the larger intermediate size vehicles even though it would cost an additional $316,000 a biennium.

Several members of the full committee, however, raised questions about the subcommittee's action and voted to postpone the decision.

Following action by the full committee, OSEA mailed to every member of the legislature pictures of a heavily damaged sub-compact automobile which was involved in a relatively minor traffic accident. The pictures, which appear at left, were accompanied by the following message:

"Dear Legislator: These are pictures of one of the state's 'sub-compacts' involved in a minor traffic accident. This car, driving at about 5 miles per hour, was rear-ended by a car at about 15 miles per hour, and pushed into a slow-moving vehicle ahead of it. Damage to the two other, intermediate size vehicles, was barely noticeable."

"The state employe driver of this sub-compact car lost 46 days from work. His hospital bills totaled $2,597.00. Loss of the employe's services and the high cost of repairing this car as compared to an intermediate size vehicle do not, in our view, add up to 'economy' on the part of the state."

"This is why the Oregon State Employes Association asks you to support the action of Ways and Means Subcommittee No. 2, which voted unanimously to instruct the Department of General Services to stop buying sub-compacts and budgeted future purchases of intermediate size vehicles."

Rep. Harvey Akeson (D-Portland), chairman of the subcommittee, said the legislators decided against continuing to buy more sub-compact cars because the savings have not amounted to much and because of national studies that show the small cars are unsafe compared to larger autos.

The 1971 legislature directed General Services to purchase the small cars in hopes of saving money. A spokesman for the agency, however, said preliminary figures show the cost of operating the sub-compacts has averaged about 6.5 cents a mile. That compares to 6.7 to 6.9 cents a mile it costs to run the intermediate size cars.

Sen. Bill Sevenson (D-Portland) said the purchase of small cars ought to be continued and studies made during the next two years for examination by the 1975 legislature.

Akeson said General Services could undertake a detailed study on costs and safety factors to learn how the sub-compacts now in use were performing. State employes should not be endangered by driving sub-compacts when most automobiles on the road are larger, he said.

"If that's the case, maybe we should buy trucks," Rep. Keith Skelton (D-Portland) replied.

Congressional Delegation Warned About Union Bill

OSEA representatives met with Oregon's congressional delegation last month to warn the national legislators of harmful effects the National Public Employe Relations Act will have on state and local government if adopted by Congress.

The occasion was the first National Legislative Conference sponsored by the Assembly of Governmental Employes in Washington, D.C. The meeting drew 92 delegates from 25 states. President Richard F. Young and Assistant Executive Secretary Everett B. Stiles represented OSEA.

"The purpose of the meeting was twofold," Stiles said. "It gave delegates from the various states an opportunity to promote the AGE legislative program to their congressional delegation, and it gave all of us the chance to warn our senators and representatives of the danger posed by the National Public Employe Relations Act."

The act is proposed in a bill drafted by the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employes Union (AFL-CIO). It was introduced by Rep. Frank Thompson (D-New Jersey) and has been assigned to a House Education and Labor subcommittee headed by him. Rep. John Dellenback (R-Oregon) is a member of the subcommittee.

"If this bill passes Congress, all merit system and collective bargaining laws in state and local governments will be wiped out," Stiles said. "They will be replaced by the federal law and it would establish industrial-type collective bargaining for all state employes."

The bill also would establish a "union shop" in public employment, Stiles noted. "Such a provision would require membership in a labor organization before an individual could go to work for any public jurisdiction—be it state, county or city government, or a school district, water district, or other political subdivision."

Young and Stiles met with Sen. Bob Packwood (R-Oregon), Reps. Dellenback and Al Ullman (D-Oregon), and the administrative assistants for Reps. Wendell Wyatt (R-Oregon) and Edith Green (D-Oregon). Sen. Mark Hatfield (R-Oregon) did not respond to OSEA's request to meet with him or his representative.

"We told Oregon's congressional delegation that OSEA is unalterably opposed to the AFSC&ME bill," Stiles said. "We told them Oregon has a relatively good merit system and collective bargaining law which has allowed state employes to make some significant gains in employment relations during the past few years."

"We have been able to make these gains," Stiles said, "because we have been able to work with the Oregon legislature and the executive branch of state government. If the union bill is adopted, local control flies out the window, and no one has to be convinced how difficult it is to get the Congress or the federal bureaucracy to do anything."

The OSEA representatives urged Oregon's congressional delegation to support a bill drafted by AGE and introduced in the Senate by Sen. Gale McGee (D-Wyoming). It would guarantee collective bargaining for virtually all public employes and freeze the merit system for them into federal law.

AGE Bill Would Guarantee Merit System, Bargaining for Employes

A bill that would guarantee both a merit system and collective bargaining for virtually all public employes throughout the nation has been introduced in the 93rd Congress by Senator Gale McGee (D-Wyoming).

The bill, called the Public Employe Merit System and Representation Act of 1973, was drafted by the Assembly of Governmental Employes. It is a federation of various independent labor organizations who represent some 700,000 public employes throughout the nation. OSEA is a charter member of the group.

"It has been said that in the year 2000 the 1970's will be referred to as the 'decade of the public sector,' taking its place along with the 1880's and 1930's as one of the three most significant periods in labor relations in our nation," McGee said when he introduced the bill.

"Today, state and local government employment reflects one of the most dynamic growth patterns in our economy. In 1935, state and local government employment represented approximately eight per cent of the total civilian non-agriculture labor force. Today, approximately 12 per cent of our total civilian non-agriculture labor force is in the non-federal employment sector, totally over 13 million persons. Six out of every 10 new jobs created in our economy are in

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