

More, Bigger Trucks Jam Already Crowded Highways

By BLUE BLOSSAT
WASHINGTON (NEA)—If you're driving your car much these days, you probably think there are more and bigger trucks on the roads than ever before. And the figures amass by the government and the trucking industry back up your general impression.

In 1947, last pre-war year, trucks registered in the United States totaled 8,110,000; in 1948 the number had soared to 7,553,000. What's more, total truck mileage was up 20 per cent in the same span, while passenger car mileage climbed a bit less than 10 per cent. And in 1948 trucks represented 18.4 per cent of all motor vehicle miles, an advance over 1941 when they were but 14.7 per cent of the total.

Then, too, the heavy tractor-trailer combinations are gaining on single-unit trucks in mileage traveled, although they still are outdistanced two to one. In the matter of tonnage, however, truck combinations in 1947 hauled double the volume handled by single-unit carriers, which had the upper hand in the mid-30s.

Roads Clogged
Together with an increase of some 4,000,000 in passenger cars from 1941 to 1945, this big boost in trucks is clogging the open roads and the key traffic arteries feeding our cities. About every fifth vehicle on the highway is a truck. If it's a heavy, on a straight, flat road it is equal to two passenger cars; in rolling terrain, to four cars; in hilly or mountainous country, to 15.

Perhaps you'd like to see trucks ruled right off the road. But some 75 large cities get all their milk by truck. Trucks haul 90 per cent of marketed farm products to initial markets, 70 per cent of the livestock received at stockyards, nearly a fourth of U.S. coal output from the mines. They carry 82 per cent of all freight hauled 25 to 100 miles.

Public Roads administration officials say the only solution to highway congestion is more and wider roads. Experts say a four-lane highway, for example, has a vehicle capacity four to five times greater than a two-lane road in open country. In city areas, an expressway can handle as much traffic as five ordinary streets each 40 feet wide (with parking banned).

But better highways cost huge sums and that usually means heavier motor fuel taxes or other charges. And wherever a state has come up with a big highway program involving higher gasoline taxes, the truckers invariably have opposed it.

They admit gas tax costs bear heavily on them. Yet they insist also that most plans being advanced are starry-eyed; they question the wisdom of elaborate engineering studies made in California, Michigan, Ohio and other states. The truckers complain they aren't consulted in the drafting of plans, and say they want planning commissions on which all highway users are well represented.

Government officials view the truckers' attitude as a reluctance to pay added burdens. PRA experts say truckers thus far are bearing their share of highway costs, if dam-

age caused to roads by overloading is ignored; but they believe truckers should stop fighting new highway taxes tooth and nail.

The issue of overloading is ticklish. Highway engineers say an axle load of 18,000 pounds is the maximum that most present roads can bear. They say long experience and tests prove that greater loads break up highway pavements. Public Roads Commissioner Thomas MacDonald points out, however, that 13 states permit axle loads in excess of 18,000 pounds, and that in 1947, some 35 trucks in every 1000 carried loads heavier than that.

Speaking for the truckers, the American Trucking associations deny trucks are ruining the roads. They say tests up to now have been inconclusive, and cite cases where highways barred to trucks have cracked up badly in spots.

Maybe this controversy will be settled for good by new engineering studies to be conducted under government sponsorship. An answer can't come too soon. For this year road repairs will cost the nation \$1,100,000,000 and a large share of the \$1,531,000,000 for new roads will actually go for rebuilding of highways battered beyond repair.

Vet's Mail Bag

As a service to veterans in the community, the newspaper will publish an occasional column of news items from the veterans administration. For further information, veterans should contact or write their nearest VA office.

Beginning soon after the first of the year the veterans administration will pay out \$2,800,000,000 in dividends to some sixteen million veterans of World War II who took out national service life insurance policies. The following questions and answers are designed to help eligible veterans in applying for the dividend:

1 - Q. Who is eligible for a dividend check?

A. Any veteran who took out national service life insurance before January 1, 1945, and kept it for three months or more.

2 - Q. When do dividend payments begin?

A. Dividend payments will begin during January, 1950, and be "substantially completed" during the first half of 1950.

3 - Q. What will be the amount of my dividend?

A. Amounts will vary depending on the length of time you paid on the policy, the amount you paid and other factors. It is not possible at this time to give an estimate of the amounts to be paid.

4 - Q. How do I apply for the dividend?

A. Application blanks are available at all postoffices, VA offices and from veterans service organizations.

5 - Q. I do not know my insurance number. Shall I write the VA for it so that I may enter it on the application?

A. No. Do not write the VA in connection with the application. If you do not know your insurance



Veteran Finances College By Spray-As-You-Go Plan

STATE COLLEGE, Pa. (NEA) There are more ways than one of working your way through college, and a 25-year-old ex-navy pilot has found a new way to do it.

Harry J. Moore, of Philadelphia, sophomore at Pennsylvania State college, likes planes, and came up with a plan which permits him to go on flying and still earn his degree.

When the good weather comes, Moore flies a plane to the campus and each week-end takes off on a spraying assignment. His assignment may take him anywhere from South Carolina to New England, but he never fails to report for classes Monday morning.

number leave that part of the form blank.

6 - Q. I used a different name in the service than I do now. Which name shall I use on the application blank?

A. Unless you have notified the VA of the change, use the exact name and spelling that you used in the service. This is important because your policy records are under that name. Use it again when making application for the dividend.

7 - Q. If my name is entered on the application in line 1, why do I have to enter it again in line 9?

A. In line 1 your name should be typed or printed. In line 9 you should write it in long hand just as you sign a check.

8 - Q. I have two insurance policies. Shall I fill out two forms?

A. No, one form is all that is required. If you know them, however, enter all our policy numbers in line 7.

9 - Q. Will a letter serve the same purpose as an application form?

A. No. The application blanks are designed so that they can be quickly and accurately processed in Washington. Plenty of application blanks are available and it is to your advantage to use one in applying for the dividend.

10 - Q. I am not certain that I will be at my present address next year. Shall I notify the VA if I change my address?

A. No. To the best of your

ability, use an address at which mail will reach you for the next six months. Notify your postmaster of any address change. Do not write the VA.

11 - Q. Is the form simple enough so that I can fill it out at the postoffice and mail it immediately?

A. It is a simple form. The VA advises, however, that you take it home where you can fill it out carefully and legibly and where you probably have papers with your policy and serial numbers. Don't guess! The information you give must be exact and it must be readable if your application is to be handled efficiently.

12 - Q. Must I keep any records of my application?

A. Yes. When you receive from the VA the acknowledgment portion of the form, keep it until you receive your check. The form returned to you will contain your dividend identification number. This number identifies your dividend case and is important until the case is closed by your receipt of your check. It does not refer to any other claim you may have with the VA.

13 - Q. If I do not receive my check by January 15, 1950, what shall I do?

A. Delay action until you are informed through the newspapers that you should follow up your application by letter. Above all, the VA advises, do not check during the early months of 1950. Any letter writing will only delay the job of computing and making payment.

How To Play Canasta: 9

No 'Split Melds' In Canasta

By WILLIAM E. MCKENNEY
Today we'll discuss "going out," and special rules of canasta.

Stock Pile Exhausted: When a player draws the last card of the stock pile, various procedures of play follow:

(1) If the card drawn is a red trey, he places it face up on the table, melds any of his cards that he desires, but does not discard, and the hand is over.

(2) If he draws the last card of the stock pile and discards a black trey, a deuce or a joker, the hand is ended.

(3) If he makes a regular discard (other than a wild card or a black trey), the next player may take the discard pile if he can meld the up-card with two cards from his hand.

If the pack is frozen, the rules governing the frozen pack prevail.

If the pack is not frozen, and the up-card can be added to one of his side's melds, he must take the pack. Play continues in this manner until a player legally refuses to take the up-card.

If no player melds out, the scores are tabulated in the regular manner, but neither side receives the bonus.

Special Rules: A player may always combine two or more melds of the same rank made by his side, but may not withdraw any card from the meld. In other words, there is no "splitting a meld."

When a deuce or a joker is once played, it cannot be taken up again.

In other words, there is no trading for the joker or deuce. No meld can contain more than three wild cards unless it is a completed canasta. You may continue adding cards to a completed canasta in-

definitely, even if there are then more than three wild cards in it.

Two and Three-handed Canasta: The best two-handed game of canasta is to deal each player 15 cards. The rules of four-handed canasta apply, except that it takes two canastas to go out. In two-handed, the deal alternates.

For three-handed canasta, deal 13 cards to each. Only one canasta is required to go out, as in the four-handed game.

It is customary at the end of each game to figure each side's score to the nearest hundred, 50 points or more counting as 100.

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