

### Reviews Activity Of N. C. Highway Patrol For 1953

#### Decrease In Number Of Road Fatalities Noted In The Report

If last year seemed like a long one to employees of the State Department of Motor Vehicles, chances are it was due to the department's unprecedented attack on the state's number one traffic problem—accidents, injuries and deaths.

With final official reports in the department summarized its extensive activities. As has now become generally recognized, the second largest state agency concerned itself mainly with finding solutions to the accident specter. And for many employees the search called for longer hours on the job.

With six months of 1953 gone department workers greeted new commissioner Edward Scheidt, former G-man and prominent law enforcement officer. Scheidt received the oath of office on June 15 and set right to work to reduce the yearsome toll of automobile wrecks which up to that date had claimed 460 victims.

As the year ended, Motor Vehicles employees happily noted a

### Engagement Announced



Mr. and Mrs. Jesse Pritchard of Morganton announce the engagement and approaching marriage of their daughter, Miss Ruby Pritchard, to Mr. Jim Manning, son of Mr. B. R. Manning of Williamston, and the late Mrs. Manning. A February 14th wedding is planned.

distinct decrease in highway fatalities. Commissioner and clerk alike are hoping the trend will continue in 1954. Since the first, fatalities have been running from two to twenty three fewer than the corresponding period of 1953. Scientific speed recording equipment and stern enforcement has generally been credited with reducing the accident toll. In recent months, the State Highway

Patrol, an integral unit of the Motor Vehicle Department, has put into service 20 electronic instruments for determining vehicle speed. Worked in conjunction with five mobile radar cars, patrol officials feel the devices are invaluable in their attack on flagrant speeders. The psychological angle is to be considered too, patrolmen say. No one can be sure just where the instruments are set up.

The patrol, in its annual report to the commissioner, pointed to 145,959 arrests made during 1953. An impressive paper, the report went on to list 24,604 accidents investigated by troopers who rolled up 22,170,700 miles of travel on

routine patrols of the state's highways. In addition, the commissioner noted, patrolmen reported they inspected 945,851 vehicles, issued 70,490 warning tickets, weighed 7,757 vehicles with portable scales, investigated 95,942 complaints and recovered 793 stolen cars.

An administrative change-about in patrol high command occurred on November 1 when Scheidt reappointed Col. James R. Smith to the top patrol post. Former Col. W. B. Lentz took Smith's job at the Highway Patrol garage, with the new rank of major. And later in the year big Charlie Speed, a long time fixture in patrol ranks in Asheville was promoted from captain to major and assigned duties as head of the Highway Safety Division, a post left vacant since June 15, the day Commissioner Scheidt fired former Director H. D. Jones.

Highway Safety began to get a shot in the arm as Scheidt announced project after project to newsmen. He started hitting the civic club and banquet circuit with an average of three speeches (on highway safety) a week. He made impromptu speakers of nearly all highway patrolmen. Orders went out to troopers to accept all speaking engagements in their locale, with traffic safety as their topic. He issued an invitation to motorists to report in writing cases of flagrant motor violations. Called "Spotters for Safety" the project produced by the end of the year some 300 letters from citizens.

Later Scheidt appealed to business and industry to set up adult driver training and education courses for their employees. Pilot Freight Carriers, Inc., of Winston Salem was first in line. They accepted Scheidt's proposition and inaugurated regular classes for their non-professional employees.

He ordered the legend "Drive Safely" stamped on new license plates. A move that caused some criticism, it nonetheless will appear on more than 500,000 1954 auto tags.

He added 100 unmarked patrol cars to the patrol fleet, based on the idea if you're driving at legal speed you've nothing to worry about. Otherwise watch out!

As early as October definite signs indicated the intensive safety efforts were beginning to pay off. From a Highway Commission report of October figures revealed a general decline in average highway speeds, a definite reversal in an upward trend that began three years ago.

Of violations requiring the surrender of driving privileges the department announced over half of all convictions involved liquor. For driving drunk 12,148 Tar Heels were relieved of their operator's permit. Other violations resulted in a total of 23,547 con-

victions by year's end.

It was a good year for the Registration Division, too. Headed by career worker Foy Ingram, the unit reported 1,384,762 cars and trucks registered for the year, an all time high.

In the License and Theft Enforcement Division, workers reported they weighed inspectors stopped 1,773,320 trucks during the year and collected almost a half million dollars in overload penalties. The auto theft section was instrumental in the recovery of 75 per cent of the 2,369 vehicles reported stolen in North Carolina during 1953.

Since January 1 the expanded Financial Responsibility Section under veteran state employee Thomas Creekmore, has struggled with administrative details affecting everyone who drives. In essence the law makes every driver involved in an accident accountable for damages. Since the first of the year, Creekmore and his limited staff has been processing some 400 cases daily. In future weeks, the load will grow even heavier.

Space, or the lack of it, became acute in Motor Vehicle precincts as the year drew to a close. In a flurry of moving just after the first, a number of units were relocated to make slightly more room. The space problem continues, however. At present the Department of Motor Vehicles is housed in the Revenue Building and Annex. It employs approxi-

mately 1,275 persons including the 539 men of the State Highway Patrol.

The department again was the Post Office Department's biggest customer. Processed in 1953 were some 4,000,000 pieces of mail. Auto license renewal cards alone accounted for more than a million pieces.

A roster of key department personnel is as follows: Edward Scheidt, Commissioner; Joe W. Garrett, Assistant Commissioner; Miss Foy Ingram, Director, Registration Division; Col. James R. Smith, Patrol Commander; Major C. A. Speed, Director, Highway Safety Division; A. M. Gilbert, Director, License and Theft Enforcement Division (Theft Bureau).

#### NOT SO DUMB

Chorus girls are not so dumb as you think. Who else could skin a wolf and get a mink? (The Toledo Sea Blade)

### Producing Color Television Sets

Allen B. Du Mont, President of the Allen B. Du Mont Laboratories, Inc., recently speculated that perhaps 50,000 color TV sets would be produced in 1954. He noted that the limitation was the expensive color tube. This tube alone carries a retail price of about \$300.

The \$300 tube provides a picture comparable in size to a twelve and a half inch black and white television receiver. With such a tube, it is estimated that the cost of a color set would be between \$600 and \$1,000. Du Mont says the cost will be high because of a bottleneck arising from limitations on production.

He says that at least 30,000 of the prospective 50,000 color sets to be produced in 1954 will go to the nation's television dealers who will use them as floor samples.

Most of the other 20,000, he estimated, will be required by broadcasters and advertisers and people in sales and service trades.

In 1955, he predicts, the number of color sets will also be greatly limited, and he looks for the price of color TV sets to really start downward in 1956.

Du Mont estimates that a few hundred thousand people may be ready to buy color television by 1956.

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