



MOTORS and MOTORING



Local Conditions Require Varied Traffic Regulations

Impossibility of Providing Unified Rules Indicated by Survey of Problems in Many Cities, Both Large and Small.

BY WILLIAM ULLMAN.

Variations in traffic regulations for the most part are the result of variations in local conditions, not a result of the failure of local authorities to recognize the value of a more standardized system of motor regulations. This is the conclusion reached by many traffic experts and officials who have toured the country with a view to discovering why all cities, towns and States do not follow the same traffic pattern.

According to the investigators, local authorities, and even the motorists and pedestrians themselves, are defending their peculiar methods of traffic direction as being most logical for the particular conditions to be met with. In almost every case where investigators have studied conditions the local authorities were found to be doing the best they could under the circumstances. Only in a very few instances was it possible to effect the adoption of another city's methods without serious complications.

Criticism is Answered.

Considerable criticism is made of the rule in Philadelphia whereby traffic that desires to make a left turn must pull up to the right curb to wait instructions. Motorists reaching Philadelphia from other cities where the rule is to keep to the center of the street when about to turn left loudly condemn the strange practice and accuse the Philadelphia authorities of blocking the progress of standardization.

Any one who drives around Philadelphia for a few days, however, will discover that the rule is rather logical for the conditions and the keeping to the center of the street would not do at all.

Philadelphia is a city of street car lines. Trucks are everywhere, on the narrow streets as well as on the wide ones, Broad street excepted. To keep to the center, therefore, would mean to keep in the way of street cars. This would tie up traffic into a serious tangle.

Because it is necessary for a city to be somewhat consistent in its traffic rules, the "right curb" preliminaries to the left turn are required even though street car lines are not found. Again, logic is found.

Philadelphia may adopt the rather universal practice of keeping to the center when about to turn left. But this would replace surface street car lines, because then the center of the street will be free and the buses will be making their stops at the right-hand curb.

Some Use Bell System.

Some cities are using a bell system at the centers. When the alarm rings every motor vehicle stops, pedestrians then going any way they please in safety. This seems like a strange process to the newcomer, and many tourists and traffic students want to rule it out instantly. But what are the facts?

Many of these towns or small cities have regular bus lines. Traffic is heavy, and it is impossible to control traffic with lights or semaphores. Placing several traffic directors at the various points of the circle seems to complicate matters still more. Thus there is only one answer: All vehicular traffic or all pedestrian traffic alternately are warned by the sounding of a bell alarm.

Local conditions dictate local traffic regulations, experts are finding. Los Angeles is not a Washington. The Washington traffic regulations applicable to Los Angeles. True, there are certain traffic features which any city which could well be adopted by the traffic authorities of every other city, but local regulations, no matter how peculiar, cannot be dropped until the peculiarities of local conditions are removed.

Complain at Wait.

A number of motorists who have taken their cars to Atlantic City have been annoyed at what they first feel to be an error in the method of directing

traffic. The playground of the world is using a three-light signal system on the two main avenues, Pacific and Atlantic, which run the length of the city parallel with the beach. In aiming for the beach-front hotels travel-weary motorists wonder why they have to wait so long before the lights permit them to cross these two arteries of travel, and almost every tourist who meets this situation for the first time wants to tell the authorities how the lights are handled in Detroit or in their own home town.

After they have been at the shore for a few days they discover that most of the traffic piles up and down the two main streets and that it is only logical to allow the majority of motorists to have the benefit of the longer "go" period.

New York City has been widely praised for its self-operating intersections where painted posts, ropes and keep-to-the-right signs manage to handle thousands of units of traffic without so much as a hitch. This plan has been widely recommended for every city and town in the country, but many are beginning to find that it "works" in New York because New York is different.

Step Lively in New York.

Pedestrians step lively in New York than in smaller cities. The best drivers in the world are in Manhattan. With so many drivers public opinion acts as a guardian of the city's safety, and a prompt reprimand from the fellow.

Atlanta has 250 silent cops, but investigators find that there are peculiar local conditions there which make this a logical move. Many cities have made serious blunders through being the blind plea for uniformity of regulations. Because left turns are a source of complication in some cities, by reason of their peculiar layout, other cities have prohibited left turns where such turns would actually speed up traffic.

Because Seattle, Wash., has only one traffic officer to each 4,165 motor vehicles many other cities have been led to believe that fewer traffic officers can handle traffic with greater safety, particularly since Seattle had no motor fatalities for January and February of 1925 as well as 1924. But these other cities do not take into consideration the quality of the police direction of Seattle.

Some of the Western States have very low limits for operators, but too many uniformity advocates forget that a Western boy of 14 on a ranch is better fitted for handling a motor vehicle than an Eastern schoolboy of the same age.

There is more logic in local traffic regulations than appears on the surface to the outsider. It may be positive danger in urging cities to adopt regulations that do not belong to it, for its traffic rules are largely dictated by local needs.

JARDINE TO DISCUSS TRANSPORT BY TRUCK

Roads as Avenues of Commerce Subject at Midwest Conference.

The place of the highways as avenues of commerce will be discussed by Secretary of Agriculture William Jardine before the Midwest Motor Transport Conference to be held in Chicago May 27 and 28.

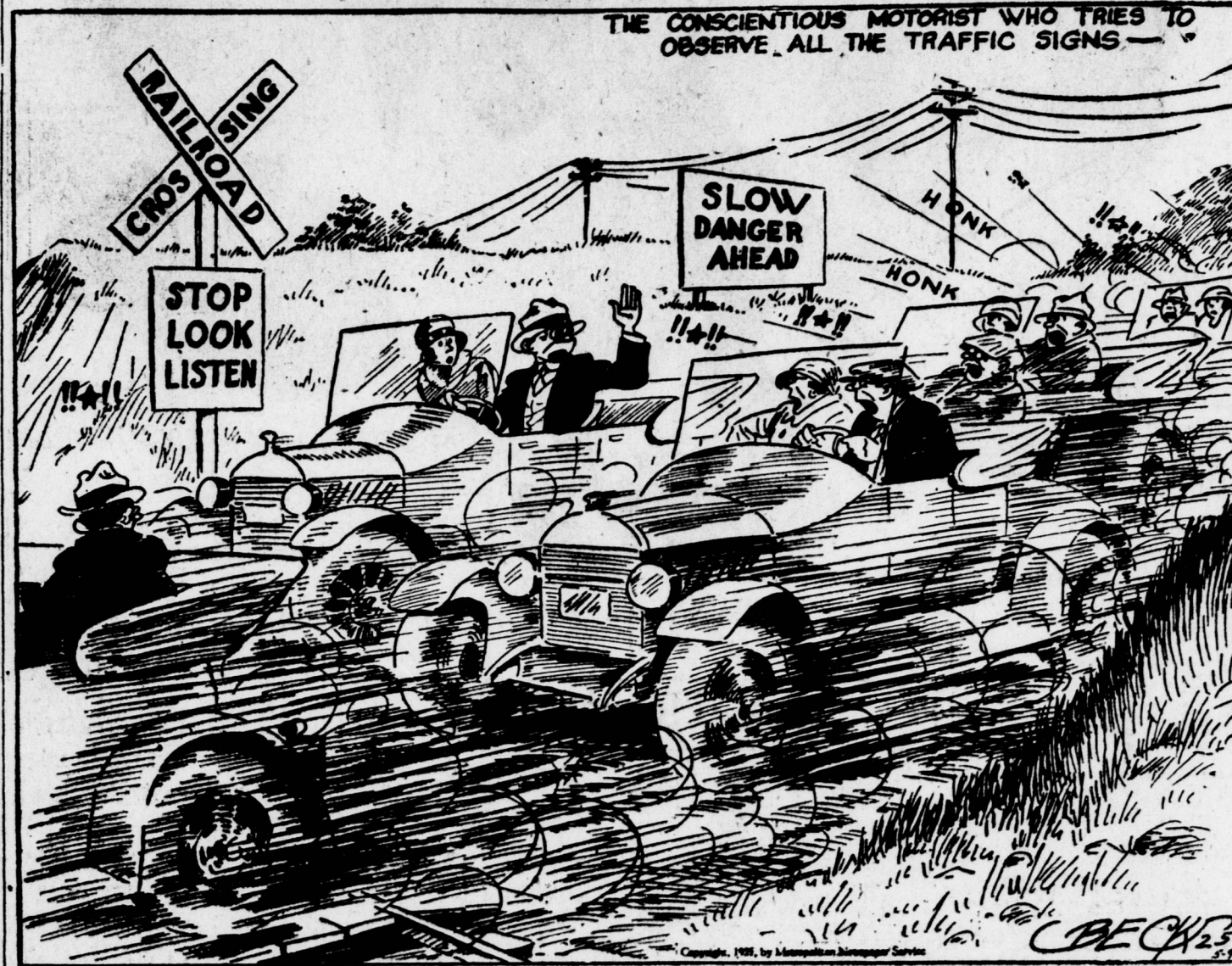
Secretary Jardine and the United States Bureau of Public Roads have been paying particular attention to the commercial relationship of highways to farm prosperity and general use by the public. Several economic studies by the bureau already have been published, others are under way, and it is expected some new important facts resulting from these studies will be announced by the Secretary at the conference.

The purposes of the conference are to discuss how terminal costs may be lowered, trucks economically employed for short haul, cost accounting introduced in the truck field to eliminate unfair competition, and co-ordinated plans developed to save time and expense.

States with a well developed highway system provide the best farm-to-market roads.

DOWN THE ROAD—Much Easier Said Than Done.

—By BECK.



1925 Facts and Figures of the Automobile Industry

(Compiled by the National Automobile Chamber of Commerce.)

The average retail price of new cars sold in 1924 was \$825. Cars cost today 29 per cent less than before the war.

17,582,000 motor vehicles are registered in the United States.

Motor vehicle special taxes are paying 45 per cent of the total highway bill.

Foreign markets consume 12 per cent of the output of American automobile factories.

\$800,000,000 in Federal excise taxes has been paid by the automobile industry in seven years.

83 per cent of the cars and trucks in the world are in the United States; 90 per cent of the world's cars in 1924 were made in this country.

1,089,995 motor tourists visited the national parks in 1924; 10,300,000 visited the national forests.

There are 60,000 buses in operation in the United States. Of these 3,250 are owned by 200 electric railway companies.

Railroads received \$400,950,000 in freight revenues from automotive products in one year, and paid \$34,164,000 in taxes for highways.

The automobile manufacturing industry represents capital investment of \$1,091,000,112, an increase of approximately 66 per cent since 1919.

78 cities had fewer fatal motor accidents in 1924 than in 1923; there were 5 per cent fewer grade crossing fatalities in 1924 than in 1923.

The automobile industry ranks first among all United States manufactures, rated according to wholesale value of production—\$3,163,327,874 in 1923, according to figures of the Bureau of Census.

STUNT WORTH TRYING.

Hint for Those Who Lightly Estimate Car Ownership.

If you think car ownership has relieved itself into a few cut-and-dried rules, or that there is nothing new to learn, here is a little stunt in gasoline economy worth trying:

The next time you take a trip over the open road or through the city make no effort to coast nor to tamper with the carburetor. Instead, eliminate unnecessary stopping. Drive the car as though it had no brakes. Rather than take a chance, proceed cautiously.

You'll be surprised to find that your gas mileage will be the best you have ever obtained. It will convince you that stretching the gallons means to stop stopping. Killing momentum costs money.

BUSSES UNITING CHINA.

Operated Over Motor Roads Are Regarded Peace Promoter.

Buses operated over newly built motor roads will within the next decade bring about unification of China, which 10 years of fighting has failed to accomplish, predicts a writer in a recent issue of Asiatic Motor.

In the three years since Red Cross engineers first built famine roads in that country the mileage of improved highways, privately built for the most part, has more than doubled. In the 4,000 miles of motor roads now in use or under construction and in the hundreds of buses already in operation the writer sees at work forces that will wipe out tribal animosities and make for friendly, progressive rivalry among cities and sections thus brought together.

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Pictures Help in Impressing Safety Lessons on Children

Details of Plan Explained for Which Highway Education Board Gave \$500 Prize—Award Made Here.

A lesson on safety for school children recently brought Mrs. Myrtle A. Roe, school teacher, of Sterling, Colo., to Washington, where she was honored by the President and Mrs. Coolidge and awarded a \$500 prize by the Highway Education Board. Mrs. Roe was the winner in a national contest conducted by the board, and her lesson was chosen from among a large number of contestants. Miss Edith B. Whitney of Virginia, Minn., and Miss Hazel I. Leland of Burlington, Vt., were awarded second and third prizes, \$300 and \$200, respectively.

Mrs. Roe explained the objects of the safety lesson were to help the children become familiar with highway safety habits through classroom instruction; to stimulate a desire to practice in everyday life these correct habits; and to provide through school activities an opportunity to "learn by doing."

Plan Is Outlined.

She described the preparation and presentation of her lesson as follows: "In preparation for this lesson, safety books, magazines and bulletins were obtained. The children were given easy access to this material.

The safety bulletins were hung about the classroom. The "Do" slogans, giving the children positive suggestions for constructive thinking, were selected. By this means a single picture told a specific story more vividly than did pages of type. The children studied these pictures at every opportunity.

"The topic 'How the Community Aids the Citizen to Protect His Life' was discussed by the class. The principal thought of this lesson was that the citizen's life and safety depend upon the careful observance of laws and regulations made by the community.

"In the development of this lesson it was found that constant violation and lax enforcement of highway laws and regulations cause many accidents.

Price of Laxity Stressed.

"It was impressed upon the pupils' mind that the individual who disregards the regulations imposed by the community, even in such slight matters as the speed of his bicycle, is helping to make his city an unsafe and unpleasant place in which to live; that the individual who obeys the regulations and traffic rules is helping

to make his city a safe and desirable place in which to live.

"A large graph was then presented showing the seriousness of the accident hazard resulting from the tremendous increase in automobile traffic during the past 10 years.

"The graph was plotted from available yearly records of automobile fatalities and the total number of automobiles registered, showing how the number of accidents had increased in direct ratio with the number of automobiles in use. In 1912, with 1,000,000 registered cars in use, there were 3,000 automobile fatalities. In 1922, with 12,000,000 automobiles registered, approximately 14,000 persons were killed in traffic accidents. Approximately each increase of a million automobiles in use added 1,000 to the death toll.

Mortality Rate High.

"A second chart was then presented. Perhaps the most alarming feature of the automobile accident is the high mortality among children. The data used in this graph had been compiled from the publications of the United States Bureau of the Census. The distribution of fatalities from 1913 to 1922 by age groups was fairly uniform from year to year. One-third of all persons killed by automobile accidents in 1922 were children under 15 years. The least number of fatal accidents occur to children under 5 years. The greatest number of fatalities among children under 15 occur between the ages of 5 and 9 years.

"The pupils began to realize the seriousness of the automobile hazard resulting from the tremendous increase in traffic. They felt a sense of their responsibility.

Get Copies of Code.

"Copies of the Council of National Defense Code of General Highway Traffic Regulations for motorists and pedestrians were handed out. The class was instructed with these questions: What traffic rules must you know to help the citizen protect his life? If you interested in civic affairs, what will you want to do? What organizations within our school and city will help you?

"The next day the pupils returned with many suggestions. After some discussion the following traffic rules were selected as the ones to be practiced until they become daily habits.

(Continued on Eleventh Page.)

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