

State Capitol News

Truckers Shout: 'Consumer's Tax'

LINCOLN—That the ton-mile tax proposal is becoming one of the most controversial issues of this session was becoming evident in the legislature this week.

It was threatening to have all the elements of struggle that surrounded the truck weight tolerance bill in the 1953 legislature.

This time the truckers are on the receiving end. The proposal, LB 362, would place a tax on trucks licensed to carry more than 10 tons, based on the weight they haul and the mileage they travel.

Proponents of the bill are the Better Nebraska association, a group of citizens working for better roads; the Nebraska Association of County Officials; and the League of Nebraska Municipalities.

The truckers' group, the Nebraska Motor Carriers association, is expected to get help from petroleum interests and from some of the farm groups in fighting.

The BNA contends that the proposed tax would bring \$6 million a year, badly needed for roads. And they contend that the big trucks make highway building expensive and should pay a greater share of the cost.

The Nebraska Motor Carriers reply that trucks are paying their share in Nebraska.

They point out that 10 states have adopted and later discarded the ton-mile tax. In nearby Kansas, the state Chamber of Commerce has gone on record favoring the repeal of their ton-mile tax, the association reports.

But the biggest ammunition they hope to use in the contention that the ton-mile tax would actually be a "consumer tax".

The motor carriers say that any increase in their expenses will only mean higher rates they will charge their customers and the public eventually will have a higher cost of living.

Also, they point out that if they get a freight rate increase under present regulations the railroads will get an automatic increase on rates for hauling general commodities. That includes most items except bulk goods such as iron and steel and oil. They estimate a total "cost" to the public of \$8 or \$9 million.

Skirmishing— Since the bill has not yet been given a public hearing, all the activity thus far has been on the warming up scale.

First, the truckers criticized the use of the names of the Nebraska Association of County Officials and the League of Nebraska Municipalities on pamphlets put on LB 362 by the Better Nebraska association.

The motor carriers asserted that members of the organizations had never been polled. In an Association letter it was asserted that "the legislative committee of the League (of Municipalities) had not met nor acted on LB 362 prior to the sending of the pamphlets to you in spite of the fact that the transmittal letter signed by C. E. Beals, executive secretary treasurer of the league, read at the very beginning: "The legislative committee of the league unanimously agreed x x x x x!"

The association sent around a letter in his letter Herrington said it "would be dangerous to assume that the railroads, automobiles, real estate and personal property are assessed on the same levels."

Herrington noted that "in the matter of railroads the formula established have been based on figures submitted by the railroads themselves and have varied from year to year."

In every 10 years there was a change in the span of years used to arrive at average values, the report showed.

From 1942 through 1952 the assessments of railroad property in Nebraska was computed on the basis of earned income and value of stocks and bonds. In 1953 when the state's 50 per cent valuation law went into effect, a third factor—investment—was added.

Trading Stamps— The power of the angry housewife was shown as the legislature judiciary committee held a public hearing on three measures to regulate trading stamps. More than

representative to hold meetings in Nebraska towns to try to persuade citizens that the proposal is unsound.

At such a meeting at Grand Island the truckers' representative, Attorney Jack Devoe of Lincoln, accused the railroads of being bent on the effort.

"This is the real thing. The railroads have been working on this scheme for the past two years and they have gained momentum," Devoe said.

The box score at the end of the week had Alliance, Ashland and the Jefferson county board on record favoring the ton-mile tax measure. The League of Municipalities was running a poll which reportedly showed a majority favoring the bill.

On the other side arrayed against the proposal were resolutions by Dodge county, Burt county, Custer county, Otoe county, Washington county, and the cities of Ord, Herman, Bent, Rice, York, Blair and Friend. The cities of Kearney, Seward and Loup City announced they had not authorized the League of Municipalities to support the bill.

Sen. Lester Anderson of Aurora, sponsor of the ton-mile measure, released a statement in which he implied that the Dodge county board had bowed to pressure from truckers who threatened to move to another state, thus causing a loss of their license fees and taxes in Dodge county.

The Motor Carriers sent a letter to all city councils and county boards urging them to talk over the question with shippers and businessmen before deciding.

All of these led observers to predict the roughest battle of the session might be over this issue.

Railroad Assessment— The railroads were given something of their own to worry about as State Tax Commissioner Fred Herrington answered a query written him by four young state senators.

The senators had asked him to give them data on assessment of railroads in Nebraska and also to give his opinion on present formulas. The request was made by Sens. Monroe Bixler of Harrison, Joseph Metzger of Cedar creek, William Martin of Grand Island, and Don McGinley of Ogallala.

Herrington recommended a thorough investigation of whether railroad property is assessed equitably in relation to other property. But he stressed to reporters that he does not believe railroad property is in any more need of being equalized than any other class.

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Trading Stamps— The power of the angry housewife was shown as the legislature judiciary committee held a public hearing on three measures to regulate trading stamps. More than

400 persons, mostly women, attended.

Proponents of the measures said the women had been misled in thinking the bills would outlaw trading stamps. They contend the purpose was to keep the trading stamp companies from making such large profits at the expense of Nebraska retailers. Fred White of Omaha, speaking for the regulation bills, said that one large trading stamp company has a \$33 million redemption fund which it never has to use.

But opponents of the measures played heavily on the idea that they would be hampering free enterprise and would be taking the stamps away from the women. The committee took one look at the crowded galleries and killed two of the measures, leaving the third only at the request of the sponsor, who said he wanted to draw up some amendments on it.

'Origin of Legion' Told by Officer District Commander Speaks at Ewing

EWING—Harry Decker, district American Legion commander, was the main speaker at the Legion birthday anniversary party held last Thursday evening at the Sanders post 214 club rooms. He spoke on the "Origin of the American Legion." Stanley Huffman, state vice-commander, chose "Veterans' Hospitals" as his topic. He urged all members of the Legion and auxiliary to write to their congressman pertaining to the recommended closing of these hospitals.

There was a good attendance at the 7:30 o'clock covered dish dinner served by the auxiliary. The anniversary cake, decorated in blue and gold, and topped with candles, was baked by Mrs. M. B. Huffman and was cut by the commander of post 214, M. B. Huffman.

Short business sessions were held by both groups.

Mrs. L. M. Carter presided at the auxiliary session. A girl was selected to attend Cornhusker girls' state, name to be revealed upon acceptance of application. The selection has been mailed to headquarters.

Mrs. C. C. Hahlbeck invited the members of the auxiliary to her home on Tuesday evening, March 15, for a carpet rag bee. A good attendance is desired. Plans were also discussed for serving the dinner for the Ewing fire department in April.

M. B. Huffman presided at the session for the Legion.

Later entertainment included dancing and games.

Other Ewing News

Mrs. Marie Beelaert celebrated her 74th birthday anniversary on Saturday, March 12. Members of her family, who were her guests, were Mr. and Mrs. Frank Behn of Ewing, their daughter and son-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. Fred Prellwitz and daughter of Omaha; Mr. and Mrs. Joe Beelaert and family, Mrs. Frank Beelaert and family, all of Page; Mrs. Gordon Harper and family of O'Neill, Mr. and Mrs. A. Beelaert and family of Orchard. Many friends also called during the day.

Pfc. Marcus Pierson is located at Ft. Leonard Wood, Mo., for his basic training. Private Pierson has attended the Wayne State Teachers college at Wayne for three years and has spent several months in the national guards. He is the only son of Mr. and Mrs. Earl Pierson of Ewing. His address: Pfc. Marcus Pierson, NG 27713050, Co. B 3rd Plt., 5th Hvy. Tnk. B.M., 6th Armored Div., Ft. Leonard Wood, Mo.

The box social sponsored by the sophomore class of the Ewing high school was postponed from Tuesday, March 15, until Tuesday, March 22. It will begin at 6:30 p.m. Prizes will be given for the largest, smallest, prettiest and most original cakes.

March 31 and April 1 are the dates set for the presentation of the senior class play at the Ewing school auditorium. The cast of the three-act comedy, "Shy Guy," follows: "Fred Hastings"—Marvin Carl; "Cora Hastings"—Geraldine Rotherham; "Gilbert Hastings"—Walter Hand; "Nancy Graham"—Betty Ann Van Vleck; "Larry Madison"—Jerome Thoenel; "Julie Tucker"—Bonnie Jo Jeffers; "Patricia Stevens"—Rosalie Spittler; "Melinda Whipple"—Donna Minkaric; "Lois Corwin"—Bethel Daniels; "Mr. Danbury"—Franklin Bollwitt; "Bill Sterling"—Ronald Neisius.

Harry Stokley, assistant Holt county agent, showed the film, "The Great Gift," to the children at the county and state fair. The showing was at a recent meeting of the Happy Hollow 4-H club. They met at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Melvin Scheer. Seventeen members were in attendance. Group singing was included in the evening's program.

A March birthday anniversary dinner was held at the Leo Vandersnick home on Sunday, March 6, in honor of Harold Werkmeister, Vince Thiele, Don Vandersnick and Phil Vandersnick. The occasion was a cake baked and decorated by Mrs. Carl Thiele. Others present were Mr. and Mrs. Herman Starman of Elgin, Mr. and Mrs. Ronnie Hemenway and family of Orchard, Mr. and Mrs. Carl Thiele and family of Clearwater, Mr. and Mrs. Lyle Mittles, Mr. and Mrs. Harold Werkmeister and family and Miss Marcia Gibson, all of Ewing. Ice cream and cake were served.

Mr. and Mrs. Waldo Davis and family spent last Thursday evening with her mother, Mrs. Louise Beal, at Orchard. Elmer Bergstrom and William Spence accompanied them and attended a Masonic meeting.

Mr. and Mrs. Perry Saiser entertained Mr. and Mrs. Elmer Grim and Mr. and Mrs. Waldo Davis and Marie Friday evening at their home. Cards were played.

Sewing Attachments Studied at Meeting

EWING—Demonstrations of the use of sewing machine attachments was the last lesson of a series in the sewing class of adult education in an eight-week course of "Dressmaking Made Easy." Hemlines were also a part of the evening's lesson.

Held last Thursday evening at the Ewing public school, under the supervision of Miss Fern Pruden, vocational homemaker instructor, 36 of the 41 members were present.

Used during the series was the Bishop method of sewing which is built around a few basic techniques, necessary to all elementary garments and repeated on every following garment.

Finished blouses were on display and a few wore their completed dresses.

A quiz covering the course of instruction was given by Miss Pruden, followed by written comments on how "Dressmaking Made Easy" has helped each individual. Many varied were the opinions expressed but all went to prove that adult education courses would be of much value to the community.

Miss Pruden presided at a tea after the period of instruction, assisted by Miss Patricia Mullen. Miss Pruden was presented gifts of appreciation by each of the three groups.

Merlyn Anderson Gets Navy Discharge

REDBIRD—G.M.2 Merlyn Anderson, son of Mr. and Mrs. Merrill Anderson of Redbird received his discharge from the navy at San Francisco, Calif., on Tuesday, March 8, and has returned here.

He has served a period of four years in the navy, three years of which were spent on the destroyer USS Cook in foreign waters near Korea, Japan and Indo China.

His wife, the former Florence Walters, spent some time with her husband on the west coast but since November she has been staying with her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Henry Walters, while he was completing his last tour of duty. They plan to make their home on a farm north of O'Neill.

Star Club to Meet with Mrs. Tharnish

The Star Get-Together club met March 9 at the home of Mrs. Lysle Johnson. Roll call was answered by "What Your Family Does for Recreation." The lesson on broiler roasts (part 1) was given by Mrs. Lysle Johnson and Mrs. Bob Tomlinson.

The next meeting will be April 13 at the home of Mrs. Ed Tharnish.

Memorial Baptist Team Again Wins Church League 2d Straight Year

CHAMBERS—The Memorial Baptist basketball team for the second year in a row came out on top in the Chambers church league standings with a nine won-one loss season. The runner-up, the Chambers Methodists, had a 7-3 record.

At the final game of the season, the coaches of the two teams were presented the winner and runner-up American Legion trophies. In addition, the Baptist team won the Leo Tomjack travelling trophy for the second time. That trophy is now in their permanent possession.

The church league, under the sponsorship of the Chambers American Legion post, in addition to the two top teams, also includes Bethany Presbyterian, St. Paul's Lutheran, Amelie Catholic and Amelia Methodist teams. Two men deserve special mention for their overwhelming success of this church league sporting event—one is Sheriff Leo Tomjack of O'Neill, who, in addition to providing a trophy, refereed most of the games without charge; the other is E. R. Carpenter, the Legion's promoter, who has had charge of scheduling and running of these games. "Carp," as he is known, also promoted several basketball games for the town and county youngsters as a part of the Legion's child welfare program.

John Black Serves Aboard Kearsarge— INMAN—John R. Black, fireman, USN, son of Mr. and Mrs. Lloyd W. Black of Inman, is serving aboard the attack aircraft carrier USS Kearsarge.

The Kearsarge was one of the carriers providing air coverage for the evacuating forces.

The carriers operated as part of the US 7th Fleet under the command of Vice Admiral Alfred Pride, USN.

Mrs. Ruben Magstadt of Parkston, S.D., arrived Thursday and is spending the week with her mother, Mrs. Vannie Newman.

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Chambers News

The Kellar Ladies met Wednesday, March 9, with Elma Bell, Myrtle Bell being co-hostesses. Fourteen members, three visitors and five children were present. Roll call was answered by naming favorite hymns. Following the routine business, a brief program was enjoyed, after which the hostesses served a lunch. The main feature being homemade ice cream. The next meeting will be Wednesday, March 23, at the home of Anna Alderson.

Mr. and Mrs. Louis Neilson spent Friday in Grand Island. Mrs. Holloway staying with Mrs. J. W. Wintermute.

The Louis Neilson family drove to Park Center, near Elgin, Sunday, going from there to Grand Island Monday where Mr. Neilson had an appointment with an oculist.

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Booth Member of 80-Piece 'U' Band

Duane Booth of O'Neill will be a member of the 80-piece University of Nebraska Symphonic band when it presents Sunday, March 20, its annual spring concert at the coliseum.

His musical instrument is the trumpet.

Numbers on the program include: "Phedre," by Massenet; "Brunnhilde's Awakening," by Wagner; "Cimarron," by Roy Harris; "Symphony for Band," by Gillis; "Apologue," by Lentz, and "American Plantation Dances," by Arnold.

The band will be under the direction of Conductor Donald A. Lentz.

Knights of Columbus Plan Service— Plans for the day of recollection services to be held Sunday, March 27, at St. Patrick's Catholic church were made Thursday evening at the Knights of Columbus meeting.

A Jesuit priest, Rev. John Markoe, of Creighton university, Omaha, will be the speaker. Although the day is primarily a KC function, anyone interested is invited to attend.

Make Weekend Trip— Mr. and Mrs. Frank Froelich visited from Friday until Monday in Omaha with their daughter, Mrs. William Montgomery. Monday they drove to Hartington to visit for several days with their son-in-law and daughter, Mr. and Mrs. Bid Wanser, and family.

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Chambers News

Two members of the religious education team conducting a daily vacation Bible school institute in O'Neill Wednesday, March 16, are former friends of Mrs. Louis Neilson and her mother. The Louis Neilson family drove to O'Neill Wednesday to visit with these two ladies, Miss Gertrude Hanford and Mrs. C. C. McCaw, both of Lincoln.

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