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TITLE: A Cost Study of "Substitute License Plates" Vs "Duplicate License Plates"

DATE: July 1963

AUTHOR(S): Marvin B. Crabb

REPORT NUMBER: 14.2

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FUNDING SOURCE: Departmental Budget

PROTECT OBTECTIVE:

To determine the relative advantages of the Department of Motor Vehicles' present system of issuing substitute plates when a license plate is lost, stolen, or mutilated with a proposed system of issuing duplicate plates. In addition, a procedure for issuing duplicate plates is suggested and a cost comparison is made between the proposed system and the present system.

SUMMARY:

This study is the second of two reports. They are: (1) An Evaluation of "Plate to Owner" versus "Plate to Vehicle" Registration Methods, dealing with advantages and disadvantages of the two systems of issuing plates: and California's present system of "Plate to Vehicle" issuance. (2) A Cost Study of "Substitute License Plates" versus Duplicate License Plates". This 2nd report compares costs of the department's present system of issuing substitute plates with costs of a proposed system of issuing duplicate plates for lost, stolen, or mutilated plates.

These reports are designed to gather, analyze, and synthesize data and information on these two phases of the vehicle licensing problem in a clear, concise fashion. One objective of the authors is to gather in permanent form the existing research, opinions and recommendations of experts in these phases of vehicle licensing from the several sources in which they are published.

In discussing the relative advantages and disadvantages of the duplicate plate system, it was determined that the major factor to be considered was the cost of manufacturing and mailing the duplicate plates.

The major objection to duplicate plates was voiced by a number of the law enforcement officers who were consulted. They felt that there was some possibility that two vehicles could be operating while displaying the same license plate number. This objection was lessened when it was pointed out that the duplicate plate would be identified by a special "D" sticker. They were concerned further that an innocent party might be subjected to the inconvenience of frequent stops by police if stolen plates were attached to a vehicle that had been used in the commission of a crime.

On the other hand, certain other law enforcement officers felt that the duplicate plate system would simplify their record-keeping operations. They also felt that a vehicle owner would be more likely to remember the license number assigned to his vehicle if the number were more permanent.

The major advantage of the proposed system would be realized by the department in the form of simplified procedures and reduced handling costs at headquarters. These savings, however, cannot offset a rise in cost due to the increased price of 68¢ for manufacturing and mailing of the duplicate plate, as quoted by the California Correctional Industries. If the proposed duplicate license plates could be obtained at the present bulk cost of 22¢ per pair, the department could realize savings of approximately \$11,000 annually based on an average of 100,000 duplicate plates per year.

IMPLEMENTATION STATUS OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

If the cost of producing and mailing duplicate plates can be reduced to \$0.576 per pair, the duplicate plate system should be adopted. If the cost cannot be reduced below this level, then the present method of issuing substitute plates should be retained.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

For the first of these two reports, see the California DMV study, Crabb, Report #14.1.