# State Fee **Schedules** Discussed

By VINCENT THOMAS

Assemblyman, 68th District Rhyme and reason seem to have been pretty well ig-nored while California's crazy-quilt system of state-collected fees and licenses was being tacked together, if a recent legislative report is any criterion.

The report, the first com-The report, the first complete study of such charges ever made, was compiled for the Assembly Committee on Revenue and Taxation by an aconomist on the staff of the University of California at Los Angeles.

The report has been printed and released by the committee in advance of its own consideration of the informa-tion and recommendations in it because of the vast amount of material collected, and the wide range of personal, business, and social interested af ness, and social interested at fected. In order to compile the basic data, it was necessary to send a 10 point questionnaire to every state agency. Only a few stated that they collect no fees at all.

APART FROM the possibility of raising additional revenues for state government purposes, the primary aims of the report were two: first, how to improve the structure and administration of our state system of fees and licenses; and second, to determine the probable impact of this system on the well-being and growth of the state's

Four broad clases of state functions supported by fees and licenses are identified, general government, provi-sion of social wants, regula-tion of particular types of business, and provision of business, and provision of services which compete wan private enterprise. Each class has a number of subdivisions, ranging from vehicle fees to fees for harvesting help. State agencies license and State agencies license and regulate about a million persons engaged in more than 50 occupations, scores of types of businesses, and even in many governmental activities such as teaching.

The study reveals that there is an infinite variety of different methods for assessing business and occupation-al fees and licenses. The y vary from straight fees for a time period — year, bienni-um — to those based on volume of business, or even inume of business, or even in-come. In a very few instances, they are based on cost of the function performed, such as testing seed. A single agency may use a dozen or more methods of measuring the fee . . .

ONE SIGNIFICANT fact was highlighted by the report. Almost no agencies, except the Public Health Department and the Fire Marshal, know much about the direct cost of collecting their fees and licenses. Frequently, fees and licenses. Frequently, such cost is lumped in the budget with other activities, so that it is impossible to find out if collection is self-sup-porting. In the Department of Motor Vehicles, for in-stance, \$93 million in reve-nues from 23 different fees are thrown into one figure, because that department and the Department of Finance have "decided that the infor-mation would not be worth the cost of obtaining it."

The specific recommendaout if collection is self-sup

The specific recommendations in the report are extremely interesting, but many example, after pointing arouse controversy. As out that our vehicle operaand motor vehicle registra-tion fee, \$8 per year, are eighth lowest in the nation, raises to meet actual costs are suggested. Then the report continues to emphasize that increased highways user cial purpose of limiting highway congestion by encour-aging use of compact cars, and penalizing use of second cars in one family.

#### Youngster Writes Letter to Editor

Lora Lee Johnson, 12, of 3240 Danaha St., is a contributor to the August number of Jack and Jill magazine.

Miss Johnson's contribution is a letter in News Notes,

a special department of the magazine. The letter tells of a club and library started by Lora and her girlfriend for summer time.



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