

Report Shows Need for Strict Motorcycle Laws

By BURTON CHACE
County Supervisor

Just as necessity is the mother of invention, need is the spawning ground for new laws.

And in today's modern times when circumstances and conditions change almost daily, lawmakers must be alert and act quickly if they are to enact meaningful laws when they are first needed.

A good example is the need for stronger laws regulating the operation of motorcycles in Los Angeles County. Five years ago, this was not a problem area—today it is.

MOTORCYCLE registrations in the past five years have increased 173 per cent, compared to a 13 per cent jump in other vehicle registrations.

Correspondingly, the increase of accident involving motorcycles has increased alarmingly.

From 1962-66, according to a study of motorcycle accidents conducted by the County Road Department, motorcycle mishaps increased by 127 per cent. If this trend continues, 1 out of every 15 vehicle accidents will involve a motorcycle by 1970.

The issue takes on added significance when you realize that motorcycle accidents are more severe than mishaps involving other types of vehicles.

WHILE motorcycles are involved in 3.8 per cent of all accidents, they are involved in 7.7 per cent of all injury

accidents; and they are involved in 9.5 per cent of all fatal accidents.

This statistic stands despite the fact that motorcycles represent only 1.9 per cent of the registered vehicles in the county.

The conclusion of the report is that the people who make and enforce laws must come up with some remedies for this problem, which can only get worse, not better.

STRICTER licensing procedures—perhaps a special license for operating a motorcycle—certainly are indicated. In addition, perhaps high school driver's education classes might widen the scope of their curriculum to include motorcycle operating.

In addition, it would seem that laws which would make the motorcycle and its driver more visible to other motorists would be in order. Because of the severity of motorcycle accidents, perhaps protective clothing such as helmets, goggles, and boots might be made mandatory.

Bills encompassing these possible laws are under consideration now by the State Legislature. While caution and knowledge of good safety practices certainly should be the responsibility of the motorcycle operator, such legislation would appear to be necessary to check this growing problem.

IN AN EFFORT to eliminate any possible confusion at

the June 4 primary, an additional clerk will be on duty at each large precinct to explain the new IBM votomatic devices.

The primary marks the first time the votomatic devices will be in widespread operation in this county.

At many precincts, the regular election officials will be able to explain the procedures to voters who are not familiar with the votomatic. But at precincts where the registration exceeds 350 voters, an added clerk will be on duty.

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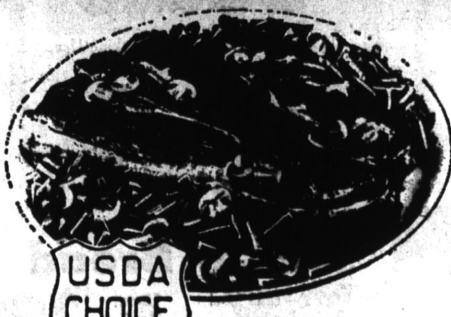
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2/37¢

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