

# Guarding Roads Against Trucks

State Highways Department  
and Troopers Enforcing Law

WITH the birth of the automobile dawned the era of tremendous highway improvements. With the gradual development of the motor truck, the life of the great roads throughout New York State, as well as other commonwealths, was threatened.

The demand of the motorist for smooth, well-engineered stretches of highway had brought about the expenditure of millions to better the roads of the State. When the railways became congested and freight rates began to soar, much of the internal commerce of New York left the rails and took by truck to the roads.

The truck-building business boomed; the trucks turned out became larger and larger. Beneath their ponderous wheels the roadbed was ground to powder or else ploughed into great ruts. Roads that would have lasted under lighter traffic for years, were destroyed in a few months by the enormous weight of the loaded trucks.

The complaints of motorists and dwellers in rural districts eventually became so violent that they reached the ears of the Legislature and the State Highways Department at Albany.

The former body recently added to the laws protecting State highways against the speeder, the reckless driver and similar pests, new legislation defending roads against what had come to be their worst enemy, the heavy trucks.

This legislation limits the weight of a truck to 800 pounds per inch of tire. Its enforcement was referred to Commissioner Frederick Stewart Greene.

He followed the maxim that has become a classic among the heads of the departments of the State's government:

"When in doubt, turn to the troopers."

## Troopers Appealed To

In conjunction with Major George F. Chandler, superintendent of the troopers, Major Greene evolved his offensive against the overweight trucks that were ruining roads throughout the State.

That offensive has got under way. It will continue throughout the summer and possibly permanently. Troopers are roaming the roads of the State, weighing trucks and arresting drivers of those that are overweight.

For a time after the passage of the bill there was some doubt in the minds of those in authority as to how it was to be enforced. It was obviously a clumsy and almost useless expedient to arrest drivers of trucks too heavy under the law, only where scales were available on which to prove the overweight.

The existence of an ingenious invention known as the Loadameter solved that problem. By means of this, a truck can be weighed accurately wherever it is met. The contrivances operate on the principle of a combined automobile jack and scale and register by being placed under an axle and lifting it off the ground.

One of these machines has been loaded into each of the four automobile ambulances obtained by Major Greene from the army. The

sides of these have been repainted and blazoned with the legend; "Truck Weighing Station, Department of State Highways and Department of State Police."

The fleet of erstwhile ambulances is under the command of Lieutenant O'Brien. Two troopers and two representatives of the highway department comprise the crew of each.

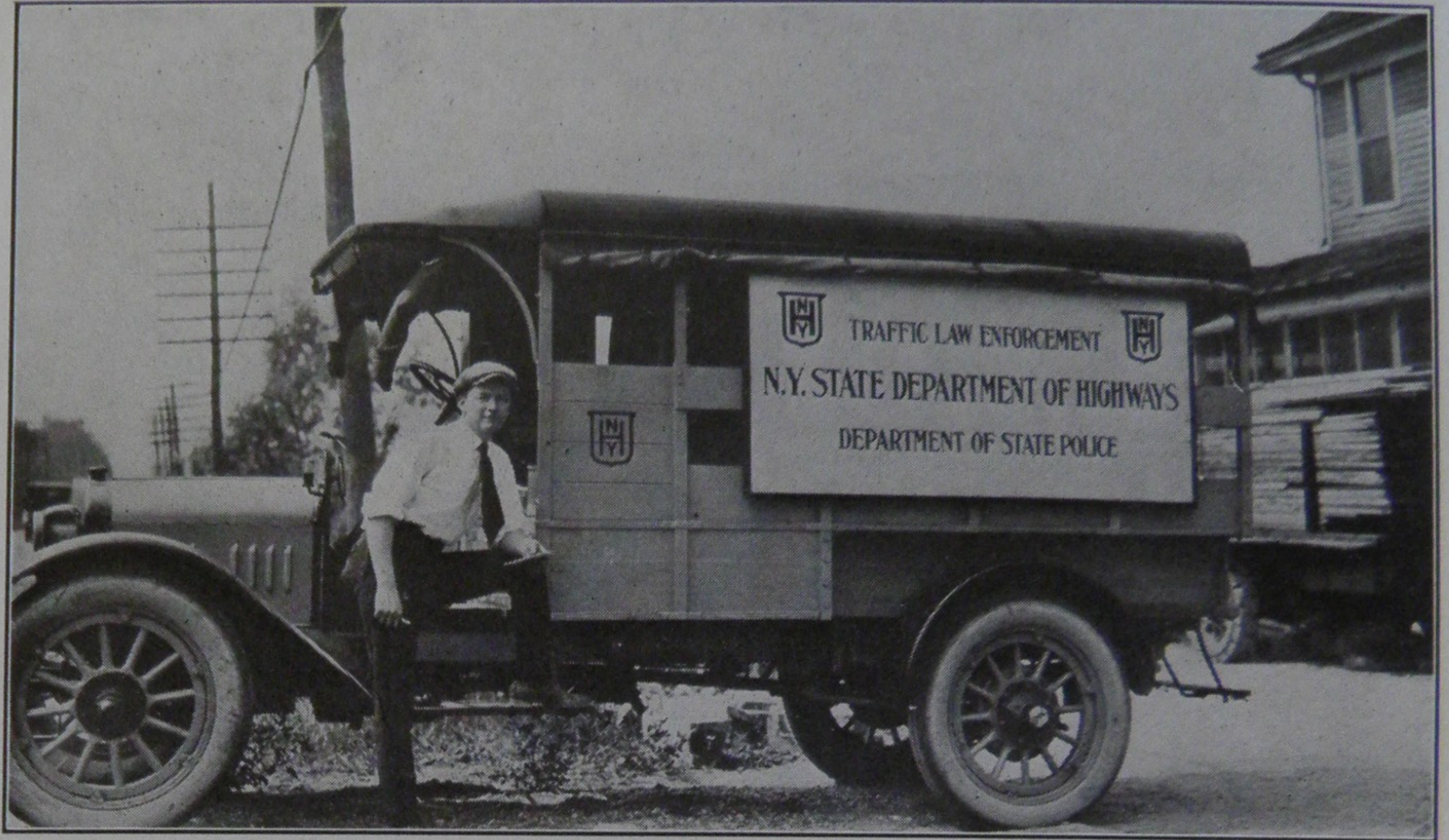
## The War Starts

Carrying, instead of wounded, an appliance guaranteed to lacerate the feelings and injure the bankroll of many a truck driver, the four transformed ambulances are now cruising about the main highways of the State, stopping trucks and weighing them where they stand.

When the troopers find that the weight per inch of tire is more than that allowed by law, the truck driver is haled before the nearest justice of the peace and straightway fined.

Other things beside the weight of the truck are considered. The bill which specifies the weight also sets forth the greatest dimensions permitted a truck. The vehicle cannot be more than 12 feet 6 inches in height or more than 8 feet wide. If these limits are exceeded, the driver is ordered to make adjustments, if possible, in his load, so that his truck will conform to the law. If he cannot or will not do this, he is arrested, whether or not his truck is over-weight.

Throughout the year, the reconstructed ambulances will operate in all localities where heavy trucking is carried on. Already the fines collected by the troopers are beginning to pour into the Department of State, and motor-truck drivers are beginning to consider the weight and dimensions of their machines before they fare forth. Likewise there are fewer ruts and bad spots in the State roads since the raiders started forth in their ambulances.



The Traveling Truck Weigher

## Motor Law Booklets Out

The 1920 motor vehicle law booklets were out about June 15th and copies were distributed to the State troopers without delay. This year's booklets are bound in a light blue cover and contain a list of the State approved lenses and light-controlling devices up to June 1st. The recent amendments to the State's motor vehicle law are of course included in the booklet. Secretary of State Hugo has planned to distribute these booklets in considerable numbers to all automobile clubs throughout the State.

## Motorists Buy New Lenses

A heavy call these days for lists of automobile lenses that have been approved by New York State serves to indicate that automobilists are realizing better than ever before that there is a law which requires them to equip their cars with non-glaring lights.

What is more, these motorists are recognizing the fact that the State Troopers are very much on the job, and doing their share by apprehending violators, in removing glaring headlights, the greatest menace that exists in night-driving.