

Fifteen Corporations Agree to Abolish Poster Advertising.

New York, March 26.—Fifteen corporations have agreed to abolish highway billboard and poster advertising which has disfigured highways and marred scenery, it was announced last night by Mrs. W. L. Lawton, chairman of the National Committee for Restriction of Outdoor Advertising.

Among the fifteen are some of the largest users of outdoor advertising, the latest to agree being the Standard Oil Company of New York, which announced that it also will present architects' plans for model filling stations to concessionaries. President Herbert L. Pratt of the company, urged that unsightly refreshment stands also be removed.

Other companies include: Kirkman and Son, soap manufacturers; Kelly Springfield Tire; Pillsbury Flour Mills; Washburn Crosby Flour; Standard Oil of California; Champion Spark Plug; B. F. Goodrich Tire; Sun Oil; Hood Rubber; Ajax Rubber; Ward Baking; Dodge Brothers, Automobiles; Gulf Refining Oil, and Fleischmann Yeast.

The Texas Company has partially endorsed the proposal, said Mrs. Lawton, and Ernest Hopkinson, vice president of the United States Tire Company, is quoted as saying the action taken "might prove to be a good lead."

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department.

On that date the new

law became effective. Work has

progressed steadily on all of the

State's arterial roads by highway

patrolmen and it was announced Monday

that all of the offending bill-

boards have been removed.

Owners of the signs were notified

through the newspapers that they

might salvage their own property if

they desired. Many tons of metals

and lumber were removed by owners

as a result.

Text of the Law.

The billboard law was proposed to the Legislature by the various good roads association, State publicity bodies and the highway department of Minnesota. The law provides as follows:

"Sec. 11. Obstruction of or damage to highways. Any person who in any manner places any advertisement within the limits of a public highway, or who in any manner paints, prints, places, puts or affixes any advertisement on or to any stone, tree, fence, stump, pole, mile board, mile stone, danger sign, danger signal, guide sign, guide post, billboard, building or other object within the limits of a public highway, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor; provided, however, that none of the provisions of this act shall prohibit the placing of public notices on billboards erected to that purpose by authority of the governing body of a municipality. Any advertisement in or upon a public highway in violation of the provisions of this law may be taken down, removed or destroyed by direction or authority of the commissioner of highways in the case of State trunk highways, by the county board in the case of county and State aid roads and by the town board in the case of town roads."

Signs that have been torn down will remain in piles along the highways for two weeks at the end of which time they will be destroyed if still unclaimed by owners. Trail markings of registered trails or highways by associations formed to promote them have been permitted to remain in place where they do not conflict with

THE ADVERTISING SIGN

(Highway News)

No matter how good the road surface, the scenery cannot be considered enjoyable if interrupted and confused in the eye of the beholder by a succession of vividly painted advertising signs. The movement to beautify highways by elimination of sign advertising gathers force, but meets strenuous resistance from those who contend that a man has the right to rent the land he owns for the erection of a sign, the rent of which will pay his taxes.

Regulation, rather than elimination is the compromise favored by advertising companies which secure sign rights to roadside property and resell the space to advertisers. They contend that the signs cannot be eliminated legally but can be regulated as to size, color, distance and beauty.

In this connection, it is interesting to observe that Kansas City, Mo., in preparing for the convention of a hundred thousand Shriners next June, started an anti-sign movement sponsored by the Merchants' Association. Nearly all of its members signed the petition. Many other business men enlisted and some of the largest and most offensive signs already have been taken down voluntarily. The proposed ordinance may include street clocks, barber poles, news and shoeshine stands, and other sidewalk obstructions.

advertis the non are thus escaping the penalties of the law.

The idea to free State highways from walls of signs got its inception in the Minnesota State Highway Department and momentum for its materialization grew by leaps and bounds throughout the State. Aside from the aesthetic value of the law it is pointed out by highway department officials that it embodies a safety provision.

"In various sections of the State," said Ted Richter of the Highway Department, "it was found that signs had been placed on curves, screening the view of motorists. In some places signs obscured railroad tracks and represented a real hazard to the motorist, who was not familiar with the road."

"Although there is no direct evidence of the billboards being the cause of accidents, it is the opinion of many that they did not add to the safety of driving over Minnesota roads."

Few Signs Repaired.

The danger of collision with other automobiles and railroad trains on curves was accompanied by the danger of high winds blowing the signs onto automobiles or into their paths. The Highway Department could find but little evidence of the signs having been repaired during the last 10 years.

Following a campaign against the billboards by newspapers of the State, Herbert U. Nelson, secretary of the Minneapolis Real Estate Board, who is now secretary of the National Real Estate Association, waged war against the practice of blotting out the scenic sights of the State.

It was brought out by Mr. Nelson

Taxing Billboards

Massachusetts will hereafter put a tax on the highway signs even though erected on private property. The contention is that the value of the sign is derived from the public highway, not from the private property on which it is located and that the first obligation is to the public who owns the highway and gives the sign an advertising value. Permission from the land-owners is a secondary matter. It would be well for other Legislatures to extend the Massachusetts idea and give the highway authorities some control over all signs erected on private property that in any way derive their value from their location as regards a public highway. This is the only way that the highway officials can keep any control over the sign and billboard nuisances along the public highways.—Good Roads Magazine.

PANDELL, COMMERCIAL
ADVERTISING ACTION
BILLBOARD

Similar laws had been enacted by Massachusetts and Michigan.

"In the last analysis," said Mr. Nelson, "it is a business proposition. We have spent millions of dollars annually for the last decade in the building of a great system of highways and one of the things we expect to accomplish is the bringing into the State of hundreds of thousands of tourists every year for the scenic attractions we have to offer.

"These scenic attractions would cease to attract, as they ought, if they were not protected by some such regulation as the States of Massachusetts and Michigan have found it necessary and profitable to adopt."

No Billboards in 10 Miles.

Mr. Nelson declared that before the law became operative there were nearly 100 billboards and signs on Minnetonka Boulevard on a stretch of 10 miles as an example of the abuse. This boulevard is one of several that connects Minneapolis with Lake Minnetonka.

"The time simply came," he continued, "when the people of Minnesota grew so resentful to those who spattered our landscapes with advertisements, big and little, that legislation had to follow."

A Minnesita newspaper, before enactment of the law, said editorially: "Some of us already have acquired a vigorous and permanent determination never to patronize those institutions which have so little regard for the interests of the community and the preservation of the natural beauties of our scenic highways as to thrust into the foreground continually some impertinent and generally unsightly reminder of somebody's wares."

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