

prosecutions goes to the State officers operating under authority of the Commissioner, where these officers make the arrests.

The system of licensing all pleasure vehicles on a horse-power basis, commercial vehicles and trucks on a tonnage basis, and public service lines, both freight and passenger, on ton-mile or passenger-mile basis, which had obtained for years in arriving at licensing charges, was changed by the Legislature in 1922. Under this new system, a gasoline tax became operative in Maryland on January 1st, 1924. This tax is in addition to a reduced horsepower fee and adjustments under the other types of fees.

Administration of the detail of collecting the gasoline tax is vested in the State comptroller, the Motor Vehicles Commissioner retaining, however, his former duties in the issuance, at a nominal cost, covering cost of tags and clerical work, of the licensing and registration of cars. The gasoline tax is imposed as an additional charge upon public service vehicles. Their ton-mile and passenger-mile ratings and charges will continue to be computed and enforced by the Commissioner.

All fine and fee income collected by the Commissioner, above the costs of administration of his office and field forces, goes into the State Highway Maintenance fund of the State, thus putting back into the highways built by other means by the State what the motorist is assumed to have taken out in depreciation of surface and base.

In addition to the headquarters supervision of titling all motor vehicles purchased new or changing ownership in the State, and registering and licensing the automobiles, and registering and licensing all drivers of motor vehicles, there operates under the Commissioner's appointment and jurisdiction a corps of motor vehicle enforcement officers. This force of approximately 75 uniformed motorcycle-mounted officers operates largely over the rural highways and in the smaller towns, but has full jurisdiction within Baltimore City. Created originally as an exclusively motor vehicle regulator force, the State officers are now, through arrangements whereby the County Sheriffs vest them with authority as deputies, given jurisdiction under the State Criminal Code. They thereby have the power of arrest in all criminal cases. The Commissioner's field force includes, too, a plain-clothes investigation department, operating in the case of accidents, thefts and similar violations. He also has the appointment of civilian deputies.

While trials, with either dismissals or convictions, carrying fines or jail sentences before magistrates furnish a part of the machinery of the enforcement of the motor vehicle statutes, control of all drivers' permits to operate cars or motorcycles is vested solely in the Commissioner. He not only controls issuance of licenses and can refuse to permit an unfit applicant to operate a car in the State, but in addition he holds the power of suspension for a stated period or the absolute revocation of a driver's permit. This without regard to the action of the Courts in cases tried before them.

Appeal to the Courts from the action of the Commissioner, in suspending, refusing or revoking licenses, is provided in the law, however.