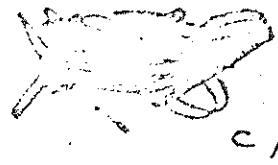


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LEGISLATIVE  
COMMISSION

Report  
OF THE  
VERMONT  
STATE LITTER COMMISSION  
TO  
GOVERNOR JOSEPH B. JOHNSON



DECEMBER 15, 1956

## THE COMMISSION

### NO. 133—AN ACT TO PROHIBIT THE SALE OF BEER OR ALE IN NONRETURNABLE GLASS CONTAINERS.

(H. 125)

It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont.

Section 1. Prohibitions. The sale of beer or ale in nonreturnable glass containers is hereby prohibited until March 1, 1957.

Sec. 2. Penalty. Any person or corporation found guilty of violating this act shall be fined not more than \$25.00 for each offense.

Sec. 3. The governor shall appoint two members of the House, two members of the Senate and one other citizen of the state, to constitute a commission to study the problem of highway litter and especially the relationship of disposable beer and ale containers thereto. The commission shall assemble all pertinent data relative to the causes of highway litter and the ways and means of eliminating such litter. The commission may cooperate with other public and semi-public agencies interested in litter and related problems, and shall report to the governor not later than December 15, 1956.

Sec. 4. The members of said commission shall receive their reasonable and necessary expenses.

Sec. 5. There is hereby appropriated the sum of one thousand dollars from the funds of the liquor control board for the purpose of carrying out the provisions of this act.

Sec. 6. This act shall take effect from its passage.

Approved April 20, 1955.

## AN OUTLINE OF THE PROBLEM

Litter along highways and other public areas in recent years has become a vexing problem not only in Vermont but throughout the United States. The quantity of such debris has kept pace with the increased use of motor vehicles as a common form of transportation.

The era of everyday use of the automobile for business and pleasure began during second decade of the twentieth century. Its growth was rapid and, despite the comparatively small population of Vermont, this State in 1920 had a passenger car registration of 28,442. Additionally, 2,865 buses and trucks were registered in the State during that year.

The total of all types of highways and roads in Vermont at that time was 15,000 miles. The figure remains today as it was 36 years ago. Use of these traffic arteries, however, has vastly increased. Registration figures on October 30, 1956 show that 120,538 passenger automobiles and 14,538 trucks were in operation by

residents of this State. In assessing the effects of this growth in the utilization of highways, the great increase in the number of transient and vacationing motorists should be taken into account.

Roadside litter usually is charged to the motorist who casually discards small items of debris as he moves from one point on a highway to another. The careless casual motorist, however, is not entirely to blame for highway litter. Here in Vermont, as well as in other States, a considerable quantity of household trash and other waste material is deliberately deposited in public roadsides by residents and visitors. In this type of littering, those causing it have deliberately set forth from one point to find a spot on or near a highway for use as a convenient dumping ground.

Such illicit dumping cannot be entirely attributed to the increased use of motor vehicles. It existed to a lesser extent than today in the pre-automobile era.

Today's litter problem is far more acute than it was half a century ago because (1) the quantity of debris along highways and other public areas is greater, and (2) the expanded mobility of Vermonters due to the automobile brought to their attention the unsightliness of littered roadsides.

Owners of property fronting the rights-of-way of highways and roads in rural areas made the initial demand for State action to correct a situation of which they were a principal victim. A majority of these land owners were farmers who contended that litter interfered with farming operations and could become a threat both to livestock and to farm machinery.

Another economic aspect posed by the growing litter problem involved the cost of its removal by State and municipal highway employees.

A move toward combating the litter problem was taken by the General Assembly in 1937 with the enactment of Vermont's anti-litter law. This statute was amended during the 1951 Legislative Session and is the law now in effect. This statute is entitled, "Dumping Rubbish Adjacent to Highways" and reads as follows: (VS 3772)

"A person shall not throw, dump or cause to be dumped, glass, crockery, cans, scrap metal, junk, paper, garbage, old automobiles or parts thereof, refuse of any nature or any noxious thing on the public highway or within the limits of the right-of-way, or on lands or waters adjoining a public highway without the consent of the owners of such lands or waters, or approaches of any bridge or culvert into any stream or watercourse. Violations will be subject to a fine not to exceed \$50, nor less than \$10."

Approximately 150 signs were installed along Vermont highways calling attention to the litter law and the penalty for its violation shortly after passage of the statute.

Neither the law nor the warning signs were entirely successful in the solution of the litter problem on the roadsides. Very few of those violating this statute did so in sight of other vehicles. There have been only a few arrests and convictions for littering and practically all law enforcement officers feel that the illegality of littering is not in itself a sufficient deterrent to those making a habit of throwing debris from moving vehicles.

In the minds of some, an additional approach to a possible solution to the litter problem involved the banning of the sale of nonreturnable containers for ale and beer. The use of such containers was a development of the late 1930's following the repeal of Prohibition. The original non-returnables were cans. Non-returnable bottles for malt beverages came into the market some months later.

The non-returnable container for beer and ale had such a tremendous consumer acceptance in Vermont and throughout the rest of the country that a large proportion of all malt beverage sales were made in these new packages. Glass and tin containers compete for these non-returnable sales except in Vermont where non-returnable glass containers are banned by legislation.

The first legislative step taken against the non-returnable beer bottles in Vermont was taken by No. 33 of the Acts of 1953, which was due to expire by its own provisions on February 1, 1955.

Renewal of the bottle ban was voted by the House during the 1955 Session in Act. No. 133 (H. 125) despite opposition to the measure.

An unfavorable report on H 125 came out of the Senate Committee. The Senate later voted 15 to 13 against the measure, two members being absent at the time of the vote on March 9. A motion to reconsider was made on the following day by a member of the Senate who had originally voted against the bill. This motion was carried and on April 12, after a third reading, H 125 with certain amendments was approved by the Senate. Acceptance of the Senate amendments was made in the House on April 14. Neither the 1953 nor the 1955 Act involved the tin container although its use was equally if not more important than bottles. The provisions of the re-enacted ban were:

"It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

"Section 1. Prohibitions. The sale of beer or ale in non-returnable glass containers is hereby prohibited until March 1, 1957.

"Section 2. Penalty. Any person or corporation found guilty of violating this Act shall be fined not more than \$25.00 for each offense.

"Section 3. The governor shall appoint two members of the House, two members of the Senate and one other citizen of the state, to constitute a commission to study the problem of highway litter and especially the relationship of disposable beer and ale containers thereto. The commission shall assemble all pertinent data relative to the causes of highway litter and the ways and means of eliminating such litter. The commission may cooperate with other public and semi-public agencies interested in litter and related problems, and shall report to the governor not later than December 15, 1956.

"Section 4. The members of said commission shall receive their reasonable and necessary expenses.

"Section 5. There is hereby appropriated the sum of one thousand dollars from the funds of the Liquor Control Board for the purpose of carrying out the provisions of this Act.

"Section 6. This Act shall take effect from its passage."

#### STUDIES CONDUCTED BY THE COMMISSION

This Commission is believed to be the first established by any State for the specific purpose of studying the litter problem, its causes, effects and the means by which it might be eliminated.

The enabling act is unique also in that it called for an investigation of the disposable beer and ale container as related to the problem of roadside debris.

Because each aspect of this Commission's objective represented a series of problems which could be both local and national in scope, the members agreed that expert and general experiences and opinions would be of value only if all reasonably available sources of information were contracted in Vermont and outside its borders.

Findings of the Commission that lead to its recommendations, therefore, represent maximum efforts to obtain all available data pertinent to the study requested by the General Assembly.

A series of requests for information were mailed to each of the New England States and to five other States in the northeastern area. Purpose of these queries was to learn (1) what legislation or regulation had been enacted to prevent litter, (2) costs of cleaning roadside litter to the State, and (3) moves inaugurated by the State to cut down littering other than through legislation or regulation.

Private groups dedicated to litter prevention were contacted and a series of conversations were held with Keep America Beautiful, Inc., the national organization which acts as a clearing house and information center for local movements concerned with the litter problem.

Our principal efforts were directed toward the acquisition of material relating directly to litter within the borders of Vermont.

Public hearings appeared to the Commission as the most effective means by which the greatest number of persons could take an active part in the realization of the Commission's objectives.

A series of five such hearings were set up in geographically diverse sections of the State. All publicity outlets were utilized to give adequate warnings of each hearing so that all those interested would have ample opportunity to attend and express their views.

Necessary for the success of the hearings was a gathering at each of all residents with information of any kind on the extent of litter, how it is caused and the means by which the problem might be eliminated.

First of the public hearings was in Rutland on November 19, 1955. It was followed on February 16, 1956, by a similar meeting in St. Johnsbury. The third hearing was at Brattleboro on April 22 and the fourth at Montpelier on June 26.

The fifth and final hearing was in Montpelier on October 18 and was designated by the Commission for a discussion on the non-returnable beer and ale container as related to the litter problem. This latter hearing was held in two sessions, in the afternoon and evening, to enable all proponents and opponents of the non-returnable bottle law to voice their opinions or to introduce evidence supporting their contentions.

Every effort was made through letters, telephone conversations and personal contacts by each member of the Commission to all organizations, which had evidenced interest during the 1953 and 1955 legislative hearings on the no-deposit bottle law, to send one or more representatives to that final hearing of the Vermont Litter Commission.

To the best of our knowledge the opinions voiced at each hearing constituted each facet of the litter problem, methods by which it might be corrected and the relationship of the non-returnable containers to roadside litter.

## FINDINGS

### I. Highway Litter and its Causes

The Commission has studied reports made by the Department of Highways in which it was estimated that, prior to 1953 and initial passage of legislation banning the non-returnable beer and ale bottle, about 20 percent of the litter on roadside of the State was made up of various types of beer containers.

Estimates made by the same department indicate that the actual number of beer containers — principally cans — thrown to the roadsides has not depreciated during the nearly four years of the no-deposit bottle ban.

From its surveys over the past year and through questioning district commissioners throughout the State, the Commission has come to the conclusion that highway litter is composed of the following categories of objects, listed in the order of their quantity:

Paper and paper products, (newspapers, magazines, cups, plates, cleaning tissues, cartons, cigarette packages, six-pack beer cartons, etc.).

Household trash (usually in paper bags or boxes).

Metal containers (principally beer cans but including a large number of oil cans and some food containers).

Luncheon remnants.

Junked automobiles and parts.

Lawn clippings, leaves, limbs and other yard debris.

Glass containers (soda bottles, milk bottles, a small number of deposit-type beer bottles and some no-deposit bottles on roads near the Massachusetts and New Hampshire borders).

It appears that highway litter results from the careless actions of a majority of motorists in the case of the vast quantity of paper and paper products dumped annually from moving automobiles.

In the case of other litter components, there seems little doubt that it results from deliberate violations of the law. More than 150 metal signs warning against dumping along the highways of the State have been in place for many years. It appears that most adult residents of Vermont should be aware of the illegality of placing or throwing debris on or along highways.

The number of arrests made for such violations has been negligible through the almost 20 years since the anti-litter law has been in effect. This cannot be blamed on a lack of interest in its enforcement by either local or State police.

The difficulty in enforcing this law rests on the fact that the deliberate violator does not commit his act unless he can do so without being seen. Most of the few arrests made of those who have flaunted this statute resulted from an examination of a pile of debris in which there were letters or other writings containing a name and address.

It appears from evidence presented to the Commission that the use of roadsides as dumping grounds for garbage, household trash, old cars and parts, yard debris, dead animals and other items may be due in a large measure to a lack of public dumping grounds.

A lack of such areas was stressed by several who appeared at the public hearings of the Commission. Cited as examples were those recreational areas to which hundreds of families move for periods of from one week to the entire summer. Cottagers quickly discover that there are no local provisions either for pickup service or for dumping in many of these vacation spots. Road patrolmen

have informed us that one of their most serious litter problems exists during the summer months on roads and highways near ponds and lakes.

There have been statements made that this form of littering is committed by out-of-state visitors who have selected Vermont for their vacations. It appears likely that residents of the State must share an equal, or greater, blame due to the fact they represent a large proportion of those making use of Vermont's vacation areas.

Only a very few communities in the State have a public pickup service for garbage and trash. Private collection services are available in some cities and towns but the majority of our residents must do their dumping either on their own property or at dumps maintained by their communities.

The matter of public dumps is a serious one due to the fact that a great many communities have none, nor are their residents permitted to use the facilities of a nearby town or village. We have observed that litter along the roadsides is far more serious in and near communities where no public dumps exist.

## 2. Litter Removal and its Costs

Most removal of debris from roads and highways of the State is done by repair and maintenance crews of the Department of Highways.

A Spring cleanup represents the biggest single period devoted to debris removal and, in many districts, requires an entire week of full crews and all equipment.

The Department of Highways has estimated that litter removal each year requires an expenditure of \$100,000 in man hours and the use of trucks and other equipment.

Total cost of such work throughout the nation by the various States has been estimated at more than \$50,000,000 yearly by the U. S. Bureau of Public Roads.

Eleven States in the northeast were contacted to determine cost factors of litter removal. The result of this survey indicates that accurate figures on such costs are not kept but the cost-per-mile per year, reported to the Commission as estimated ranged from \$20 to \$50.

## 3. Effects of the No-Deposit Beer Bottle Ban on Litter

Testimony was heard by the Commission on whether the law banning the use of the non-returnable bottle for beer and ale in this State had been helpful in decreasing the quantity of litter on roadsides since its inception four years ago.

Much of this testimony related to a possible decrease in the cost of litter removal as a result of this legislation.

The following report was made by the late Paul H. Gates, then Commissioner of Highways, on March 8, 1955, and was entitled, "Effects of the Non-Returnable Bottle Law on State Highway Department Refuse Collection Costs".

"Estimated savings to Highway Department, based upon information from several districts, will run from \$12,000 to \$15,000 a year over the State. One of 12 districts even believes the savings in that district will be over \$2,000 a year, not to mention almost complete lack of glass bottles and broken glass experienced before the law was passed.

"All districts report collection of bottles now is only from 10% to 20% of the amount collected before the law went into effect. Several districts report decrease in trash collection last year.

"Very little evidence of broken glass believed to be due to fact that youngsters collecting returnable bottles do not smash them as they used to smash non-returnables.

"Districts estimate that about 20% of trash collection is bottles and cans.

"On ten selected sections of the State Highway System, covering 123.05 miles, where costs of roadside cleanup were kept accurately for several years, the 1952 costs were \$16,712.40 or \$135 per mile. While traffic increased about 5% a year, the collection cost dropped several hundred dollars in 1954 to \$16,248.41, or about \$132 per mile. Based on traffic increase of 5% per year, the cost in 1954 on these sections could have been \$18,323.71 or \$149 per mile. On the 1,850-odd miles of the State Highway System this savings will have been \$27,900.

"It is impossible to ascertain exactly what the cost of collection of cans and bottles is as all refuse is collected at one time."

Mr. Walter W. Merrill, a Certified Accountant and Director of Management Advisory Service in the Boston office of Price Waterhouse & Co., a leading national accounting firm, appeared before the Commission at its final public hearing.

Mr. Merrill said he had made a careful examination of the records of all files in the offices of the State Department of Highways and was unable to discover any figures which would indicate that a savings of \$12,000 to \$15,000, or of any real substantial amount, would result because of the non-returnable bottle law.

He stated that there was nothing in those files to show that accurate figures on the costs of roadside cleanup had been kept on any sections of the State Highway System. He was unable to find

any data which indicated a study of 123.05 miles or a cost of \$135 per mile.

Mr. Merrill concluded:

"Based on this prior survey which showed a variation of from \$4.76 a mile to \$50 a mile, it would seem that even though those figures may not be accurate that there is variation of a considerable amount. This 123.05 miles I don't know where they are, but based on the data I have here I can't see the justification for extending the cost of this 123 miles to the entire 1,850 miles.

"There is nothing in the files to indicate that they have obtained accurate figures. Such figures as are there appear to be in some cases simply estimates without anything to back them up and in other cases they are small samples of 30 or 40 miles by the District Engineer which he, in turn, has extended to the entire mileage of his district. I am told, although I didn't examine the Commissioner's accounting records, that they had not split the time of their maintenance crews between roadside clean-up and other maintenance jobs. I do not know that for a fact because I did not examine their books, but I am informed that that is the case and, if that is the case, there can be no real accounting basis for arriving at the cost of roadside cleanup."

Read to the Commission, during one of its hearings, was a copy of a letter written by L. W. Brownell, Maintenance Engineer of the State Highway Department, to a Maine legislator. The letter was written February 4, 1955, in response to a request for information on whether the no-deposit bottle law had accomplished any improvement in the litter problem. Mr. Brownell, in his letter, stated that the total litter picked up in truck loads in 1954 was "at least equal to or greater than 1952."

From the evidence given the Commission on this aspect of the studies through its public hearings, it appears that:

1. The ban on non-returnable bottles for beer and ale has resulted in an almost complete absence of such containers from highway litter, with the exception of those sections of the State adjoining Massachusetts and New Hampshire.
2. Tin cans are thrown in quantities equal to or greater than the number of non-returnable bottles formerly found along roadsides.
3. The ban has not helped to decrease the over-all quantity of litter along the highways of Vermont, to any appreciable extent.
4. It is questionable that any appreciable savings in litter removal costs has resulted from the ban on non-returnable beer bottles.

#### 4. Damage to Tractor Tires and Farm Equipment by Glass

A major contention of those favoring a continuation of the law banning non-returnable beer and ale bottles in Vermont has been that such bottles, when thrown and broken on roadsides and in pastures and hay fields, cause extensive damage to farm equipment and tractor tires.

Every possible effort was made by the Commission to secure accurate information relating to this phase of the litter problem. Statements on the subject were heard from farmers, representatives of farmer organizations, dealers in farm equipment and tractor tires, road patrolmen and others.

Mr. Paul Stevens, District Highway Engineer of the St. Johnsbury District, appeared at a public hearing and stated that broken glass was a threat both to tires of grading equipment and to workmen in his unit, who are required to clean up roadside debris. Mr. Stevens cited the case of one tire on grading equipment which, he stated, was ruined after it had run over a bottle. He was unable to identify the bottle as being either the returnable or the no-deposit type.

Testimony which indicates that the problem of tire damage might be less serious than indicated by Mr. Stevens was given, at another hearing, by Mr. Harold Muzzy, Jr., Road Commissioner for 12 years in Berlin. Mr. Muzzy stated that he has never suffered tire damage, through broken bottles, in the use of a grader and two trucks used in his maintenance work.

During the final public hearing of the Commission at Montpelier, when the issue of the non-returnable glass container was the theme, Mr. Allan McPherson, Jr., Sales Manager of the Marsh Allen Co. of Barre, asserted that he had never heard a customer complain of broken glass as a cause of tire damage. Mr. McPherson said he had been in the tractor sales business for the past eight years.

Evidence presented to the Commission indicates that farm equipment damage, as a result of broken glass, is largely confined to mowing blades. Testimony also indicates that tin cans, stones, bottle caps, stumps, large saplings and other hard objects can and do cause similar damage to these blades.

It is apparent to the Commission that broken glass, as a hazard to tractor tires and farm equipment, must be considered very limited in extent.

#### 5. Broken Glass and Hardware Disease

We are informed that charges were made during legislative hearings, prior to passage of the non-returnable beer bottle law, that broken glass frequently is ingested by dairy cattle and this was said

to result in hardware disease (traumatic gastritis) to cows which swallowed glass fragments.

Every possible effort was made by the Commission to determine whether or not such charges were based on accurate information.

As a result of the public hearings and through questioning farmers, veterinarians, and others, the Commission was unable to discover a single verified instance where hardware disease was caused by the ingestion of glass.

Mr. Leland Beebe, Vice President and Organizational Director of the Vermont Farm Bureau, told the Commission, at its final public hearing, that his organization had passed a resolution in November of 1955, supporting the bottle ban. He said the resolution called for inclusion of soft drink bottles of the non-returnable type in the ban.

Mr. Beebe described broken glass as a menace to dairy cattle, in his opinion. He did not set forth any specific instances of injuries which have resulted to cows in the State from broken glass, but indicated that broken glass had been a source of danger to the feet and hooves of dairy cattle.

Dr. Clarence Jordan, a Newport veterinarian, stated that he has never found particles of glass in the rumen of any of approximately 800 dairy cows on which he has performed surgery for hardware disease over a period of 15 years.

He estimated that 60 percent of the rumenotomies he has performed to correct hardware disease led to the discovery of small sections of baling or fence wire. Thirty-five percent of the victims had swallowed nails, Dr. Jordan asserted, and the remaining five percent were stricken after swallowing needles, pins, knife blades or other sharp-pointed metal objects. He found no glass in any of them.

A second expert on hardware disease who appeared before the Commission, was Dr. Donald Delahanty, Professor of Large Animal Surgery at the New York State Veterinary College at Cornell. Dr. Delahanty said he has performed more than 500 rumenotomies at Cornell's Veterinary Hospital. In addition, he has conducted an equal number of autopsies on dairy cows fatally stricken by hardware disease. Wire, nails and miscellaneous metal objects invariably were found in the victims, according to Dr. Delahanty, but he stated that he has never known of glass fragments to be recovered from a cow's rumen.

The only national survey on hardware disease and its causes, of which the Commission has any information, was conducted two years ago by the American Veterinary Medical Association. A report of this survey was published in the Association's Journal in October, 1954. It was introduced in evidence at the hearings.

Twelve clinics of the leading State veterinary colleges in this country replied to a questionnaire. Their responses involved a total of 1,406 animal victims of the ailment.

The published report of the survey includes this paragraph:

"The penetrating foreign body was identified as a wire in about 58 percent of the cases, some variety of nail in 36 percent, and as miscellaneous metal in 6 percent."

Dr. W. A. Aiken, Editor-in-Chief of the Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association, was queried by letter regarding glass as a cause of hardware disease.

In his reply, introduced in evidence before the Commission, written on September 15, 1956, Dr. Aitken said:

"Glass injury is probably a negligible factor."

Two witnesses, including Mr. Beebe of the Vermont Farm Bureau, charged that hoof injuries were caused by broken glass.

Dr. Delahanty testified that such injuries were frequently the result from stepping on stumps, nails, frozen earth, sharp stones and other objects, and said he had never found glass in a cow's hoof.

The Commission believes, from all evidence it has heard, that broken glass is not a serious threat to Vermont's dairy industry.

#### 6. The Legislative Ban as Viewed by Business, Farm Groups, etc.

Support of a continuance of the ban on no-deposit bottles was voiced to the Commission by several highway patrolmen, the Vermont Farm Bureau and a total of 14 individuals, at the various public hearings.

Former Governor Harold Arthur, Master of the State Grange, appeared and stated that, although the Grange had not taken any official position, he individually thought that beer cans caused most of the present difficulty. Governor Arthur also praised the work of Keep Vermont Beautiful.

The highway patrolmen contended that broken glass is difficult to pick up from roadsides; that it is a hazard to the tires of their grading equipment and that it represents another element in the litter problem.

The Vermont Farm Bureau has adopted a resolution, calling for continuance of the ban on these bottles, together with a similar restriction on the sale of non-returnable soft drink bottles. The Bureau contends that broken glass is a threat to farm equipment tires and to dairy cattle.

The individual proponents of the ban, in their comments, voiced at the public hearings, stressed the litter aspects of glass and the fact that, in banning non-returnable beer and ale bottles, the State has made a forward step toward eliminating the debris on our roadsides.

A number of officials of business firms and business associations operating in Vermont appeared before the Commission. All strongly opposed retention of the ban on no-deposit bottles.

Mr. James R. Mereness, Executive Secretary of Associated Industries of Vermont, contended that restrictive discriminatory legislation of this type might adversely affect plans for industrial development of Vermont.

Mr. John Morris, Treasurer of Fonda Container Company at St. Albans, declared that all manufacturers are disturbed when legislation prohibits the use of a particular item which is otherwise lawful and legitimate even when such an item is not manufactured by any of these companies. He further stated that manufacturers should not be penalized because an item they produce might eventually be thrown to a roadside. Restrictive legislation of this type was seen by Mr. Morris as one establishing a precedent which might some day affect all industry and could, perhaps, deter some manufacturer from locating in Vermont.

A spokesman for Owens-Illinois Plywood Company, with plants located at Hancock and North Troy, told the Commission that the parent organization was a maker of glass containers.

He said the firm considers the legislative act banning non-returnable bottles as one discriminating against one of its products. Local employment of the two Owens-Illinois plants was given as 373, with a 1955 payroll of \$1,175,000. State and municipal taxes paid by the Company in Vermont were reported as totaling about \$70,000.

Mr. George Cummings, Vice President of the Vermont Retail Grocers Association, said the legislative ban has resulted in a loss of thousands of dollars in beer tax revenue to Vermont. His opinion was shared by Frank Napolitano of White River Junction, Vice President of the Twin State Fruit Corporation, who said this revenue has been picked up by the State of New Hampshire.

Both men declared that many Vermonters, who prefer to purchase beer in non-returnable glass containers, go to New Hampshire to make their purchase of beer and ale.

Support for the ban was voiced by Donald Osborne, Executive Secretary of the Citizen Temperance League, who charged that non-returnable bottles encourage greater consumption of beer and ale.

## **7. Public Education and the Litter Problem**

An important result of the Commission's studies and its public hearings was the discovery that many Vermonters believe that an effective inroad on the litter problem can be accomplished only through a sense of individual responsibility, cultivated through public education.

The need for public education to correct the litter situation is generally accepted throughout the United States by state and national leaders in Government. The Governors' Conference in 1954, and again in 1955, saw the adoption of a resolution calling for support of public education campaigns to combat litter. Governor Johnson of Vermont and Governor Herter of Massachusetts were among the first State leaders to activate State programs.

The Vermont program was instituted in 1955, through the creation by Governor Johnson of a Citizens Committee called Keep Vermont Beautiful. This group was constituted with the Governor's approval in March of 1956 as a non-profit organization with headquarters in Montpelier.

It has been a source of great satisfaction to the members of this Commission to report that Keep Vermont Beautiful, Inc. and the Vermont Litter Commission have worked together very closely in recent months in an effort to determine possible results of a campaign to lessen litter.

It was readily discernible to the Commission, after its first public hearing, that one reason for the amount of casual litter strewn on roadsides was a lack of proper disposal facilities.

A remedy for this was seen by the Commission in placing trash receptacles along the highway. This was suggested to Theodore F. Kane, Executive Director of Keep Vermont Beautiful, Inc.

Mr. Kane discussed this point with the Department of Highways and, as a result, 55-gallon drums were installed at convenient spots — usually turnout areas and picnic grounds — throughout the State. A total of 2,000 such receptacles were in use with the beginning of the Summer of 1956.

Stencils were furnished to the Highway Department by Keep Vermont Beautiful, Inc., so that the drums were readily identifiable to motorists. The drums were painted a bright orange or green. The stencilled lettering on the cans read, "Travel Trash" and "Keep Vermont Beautiful".

The educational program of Keep Vermont Beautiful, Inc. has a comparatively brief history but we feel it has been an effective beginning toward creating an interest on the part of a vast majority of Vermonters in the litter problem and its correction.

At the first public hearing of the Commission, the members urged that a program to educate the public begin with school-age residents. Keep Vermont Beautiful, Inc., acted upon this suggestion and such a program is under way in many of the primary schools throughout the State. We are informed that this will be extended to secondary and parochial schools in 1957.

It is interesting to note that a national organization is in action to combat littering. This group is Keep America Beautiful, Inc.,

with headquarters in New York City. It is designed to act as "the co-ordinating center of State and local litter prevention groups". Keep America Beautiful, Inc., is financed by business organizations, including all firms engaged in the manufacture and distribution of all forms of containers and packaging materials. Its Advisory Council consists of such organizations as Girl and Boy Scouts, the U. S. Junior Chamber of Commerce, Outdoor Writers of America, the Federation of Women's Clubs, the Garden Clubs of America, Audubon Society, National Education Association, Farm Bureau, National Grange and similar groups.

The Commission is convinced that roadsides of Vermont, during the past Summer, appeared more free of litter than in previous years, due to public cooperation with the efforts of the litter prevention campaign.

### CONCLUSIONS

The Vermont Litter Commission, over a period of approximately one year, has made every effort to secure all possible evidence relating to the litter problem and to non-returnable malt beverage containers so far as such containers concern the litter problem.

It is the opinion of the Commission that the throwing and/or dumping of debris on roadsides and other public areas represents a problem of some magnitude.

Our studies have made it apparent that highway litter, its causes and possible methods for its elimination are matters on which considerable thought and action are being devoted in virtually every State in the Country.

The following conclusions have been reached by the Commission after careful consideration and all available evidence has been studied:

That the highways of Vermont are public facilities whose usage has resulted in an increasing litter problem, due to the unawareness or irresponsibility of residents and non-residents.

That public education offers the source through which the bad habit of littering can be solved, so far as the majority of highway users is concerned.

That a program of public education, as conducted in recent months by Keep Vermont Beautiful, with the cooperation of the Department of Highways and other State agencies, has resulted in the first inroads against litter.

That the ban on non-returnable glass containers has not lessened the quantity of roadside litter.

That much of the litter along highways and other public areas is due to a lack of dumping facilities throughout the State.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

The Commission recommends:

That the program started by Keep Vermont Beautiful, with the cooperation of the Department of Highways and other State agencies be continued, with the cooperation of all individuals and civic organizations throughout the State.

That stricter enforcement of the anti-litter law is required for the comparatively few motorists and others who will not yield to persuasion.

That legislation be enacted, requiring that all trucks which are used for the transportation of materials that might be scattered along the highways, shall have such materials covered at all times during such transportation.

That legislation be enacted, requiring each town, or a combination of adjoining towns, to maintain a public dump.

That the ban on non-returnable glass containers should not be re-enacted. However, if the Legislature feels the legislation against non-returnable containers is an effective means of combatting the litter problem, then all non-returnable containers should be banned, rather than a small portion thereof.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Milford K. Smith

/s/ Graham S. Newell

/s/ Hugh Agnew

/s/ Herman L. Allen

/s/ Clifton C. Stafford

Commissioners, Vermont State  
Litter Commission