

The committee is hereby adjourned.

(Whereupon, at 12:20 p.m., the meeting was recessed, and reconvened at 2 p.m., the same day.)

AFTERNOON SESSION

Mr. ROBERTS. The subcommittee will come to order. We are pleased to have with us our distinguished colleague, member of the committee, member from California, Mr. Johnson.

Mr. JOHNSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee. This is the second time that I will have an entry in your record. The first one was in there pertaining to the forest roads and trails.

STATEMENT OF HON. HAROLD T. JOHNSON, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. Chairman, as a Member of Congress who was privileged to coauthor H.R. 14474, a bill drafted by the distinguished chairman of the Roads Subcommittee of the Committee on Public Works, I certainly am happy to appear here today to give my full support to the legislation which you have before you to amend section 127 of title 23 of the United States Code relating to vehicle weight and width limitations on the Interstate System, in order to make certain increases in such limitations.

It is, indeed, time for a change.

As the members of this committee well know, there has been little change in the allowable weight and size of trucks during the past 25 years, although the roads of today, I think we all agree, are much, much better than they were a quarter of a century ago.

The Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956 did impose certain limitations on trucks; namely, a restriction of 18,000 pounds for a single axle; 32,000 pounds for a tandem axle; 96 inches for vehicle width; and 73,280 pounds for maximum gross weight.

It should be emphasized that these weight restrictions were 10 years old at the time they were placed in the Federal law, for the limitations were taken directly from size and weight standards adopted by the American Association of State Highway officials in 1946, a year in which postwar highway development was just getting underway and the engineering and scientific vision and progress which had been stimulated by the 4 years war efforts was just being converted into civilian peacetime public works.

Highway construction has not stood still during the 22 years since these standards were adopted. There are none in Congress today more aware of the progress which has been made during the past two decades in this field than the fine members of this subcommittee. Today, with the expanded highway program we have provided, and are continuing to provide, modern highways capable of more efficient utilization are in existence. The time is overdue for a change in the Federal law to permit the States, in turn, to adapt their size and weight laws to the capabilities of today's modern highways.

Such a change as is proposed in the legislation we have before us today does not come as a result of speculation or guesswork, but is a