

# The News-Review

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 CHARLES V. STANTON Editor  
 EDWIN L. KNAPP Manager  
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## TREASURY GRAB BAG

By CHARLES V. STANTON

The decision by the Oregon Supreme Court that income tax surpluses may be placed in the general fund opens the way for a merry free-for-all. We may be certain that the next legislature will suffer extreme pressure from various groups to appropriate funds from the surplus for many purposes. Schools, highways, counties, municipalities, state institutions all will be attempting to grab a handful of cash.

In the split decision by the Supreme Court, it is interesting to note that the majority opinion was based upon strict interpretation of law, while the minority opinion was more concerned with expediency—fears of a collapse in the tax system and opening of the treasury gates to free spending. In other words, the minority opinion—and the position is well founded—fears the power of pressure groups to dissipate tax funds.

The decision points very clearly to the necessity of complete revision of Oregon's antiquated, patch-work tax structure by the legislature. The legislature also must be adamant in resistance to the money grabbers, using extreme caution in disposing of the surplus in such manner that it will go into projects or activities normally supported by taxes, thus serving its intended purpose, indirectly, that of reducing taxes in the future.

### Correspondent Shows Prejudice

It is not the usual practice of *The News-Review* to permit its news writers to express opinions on controversial issues. We endeavor to make our news reporting strictly factual, leaving comment and opinion to the editorial columns.

An exception was made in Friday's issue, however, in a report from Reedsport by our correspondent, Fred M. Wright, in which he voiced criticism of Reedsport's retiring mayor, John Skaaluren, claiming the mayor gave more of his influence to a successful tax issue to finance a community center building than to the work of a committee, of which he is chairman, organized to promote a community hospital.

The criticism was used in a by-lined article because our correspondent doubtless was expressing the sentiments of a segment of Reedsport's population who should have the right to make their views known.

It should be understood that the sentiment expressed by our correspondent did not necessarily reflect the opinions of *The News-Review*.

In our association with Mayor Skaaluren we have found him one of Douglas County's most civic-minded men, an indefatigable worker for the best interests of his own community, with a wide vision for the county as a whole.

### Illumination Planned At Drain

The progressive City of Drain is requesting residents to keep porch lights burning, which, with normal street illumination, should serve to give the approaching tourist a favorable impression of the community. Traveling the highways at night, it is always a pleasure to come into a town in which the streets and store windows are lighted, while the residential districts furnish evidence of life and activity. The project has only one drawback, and that is the current shortage of electric power in the Pacific Northwest; but we doubt if the increased consumption in Drain would place enough additional load on the Bonneville system, from which the city is supplied, to be noticeable. If other cities should follow suit, however, the load might become too great.

## In the Day's News

(Continued From Page One)

to the Pacific in the space of a few short decades.

If we cease to be that kind of people, God help us. We'll be sunk.

WITH the convention fun over, we must turn back to grimmer affairs. They're plenty grim.

A Berlin dispatch by Wes Gallagher (another good reporter) says: "Only two courses of action have any hope of breaking the Soviet blockade which is strangling this city and bringing Europe closer to war than at any time since Munich."

"The first is the use of western power military forces to crash the land blockade. The second is retaliatory action by the West in other parts of the world which would make it too costly for the Soviet Union to continue its Berlin policy."

WHAT is Russia's Berlin policy? Gallagher answers that one. He says Moscow has two major aims:

1. Establishment of a strong German government ON THE SOVIET MODEL, dominated by the Communists.
2. A Soviet voice in the economic life of Germany, principally the industrial Ruhr (where the coal and the steel come from).

WHY does Russia want Germany in the hollow of her hand? The answer is brutally

simple. Here it is:

The Germans are workers and producers—as we are. They INVENT things. They MAKE things. They are engineers. They are scientists. They have KNOW-HOW.

Without Germany and the Germans, RUSSIA CAN'T AFFORD TO TACKLE US. With Germany and the Germans, she can afford to tackle us.

DON'T try to laugh off Berlin and what is happening there. It's much too grisly to be laughed off.

IN a world where anything can happen but hasn't yet, SOMETHING HAPPENS at Lake Success.

The Security Council of United Nations ORDERS THE WAR IN PALESTINE STOPPED. It gives the Jews and the Arabs three days to quit shooting. It commits itself to back up its orders with force.

Britain, U. S. and France, with four minor nations, vote to back up the order. (There are 11 nations in the Security Council.) Russia, the Soviet Ukraine and Argentina abstain from voting. Thus Russia leaves herself free to do whatever she thinks the situation calls for later.

It would be nice if this United Nations order had soap on it. It hasn't. Frankly, it is a bluff. But it is an ORDER. United States, Britain and France line up back of it. Watch it. It's the stuff that showdowns are made of.

## OUT OUR WAY

By J. R. Williams



## Scrap From The Mending Basket

By VIAHNETT S. MARTIN

Greetings to the Readers of the Roseburg News-Review!

I hope you will like "The Mending Basket" which was, for many years, in California and New York State newspapers.

It was my habit, when I first began writing stories, verse, and other material, to keep a small notebook handy. In the basket where I kept mending. With two small boys enthusiastic about marbles, there was plenty of mending. When time for writing was available I'd use the ideas jotted down in the little book.

One day an editor asked me to contribute a "column". What to call it? How natural that it should become "Scrap from the Mending Basket!"

The scraps included about everything that came into my experience. I dipped into my memory as my neighbor fished out pieces of bright material from her piece bag for her quilts; I

snipped bits of interesting letters from reader-friends; I shared ideas that came through Parent-Teacher work and a long and enjoyable contact with schools and teachers; sometimes I "talked" about a book I particularly liked.

Then came the War. With two sons, seventeen then, in the Navy I found much to write about. A. W. V. S., Red Cross—you know—all the things we worked in during the War years.

But there came a day when I decided to give up writing, every kind of writing, for the writing seemed like a spring that had stopped welling up. Then we amid the Douglas County where amid the green hills, the sound of a creek singing past our home, the quiet of the canyon, the friendly people, the urge to write came welling up again. And I suddenly missed "The Mending Basket."

I am glad to be writing it again!

## Computation of Dividends on More Than 20 Million Insurance Policies Held by Veterans Poses Huge Task

WASHINGTON, July 19.—The massive machinery for the payment of dividends of war veterans life insurance policies will start whirring faintly Aug. 1.

That's graduation day for 26 Veterans Administration specialists—two from each of the 13 branch offices—who've been taking a sort of dividends course at the Washington headquarters for several weeks.

The 26 "students," their heads crammed with information about the National Service Life Insurance (NSLI) program, in turn will instruct VA employees throughout the country.

And some time early in 1950, if all goes well, the dividend checks will start rolling out, to all veterans—or heirs of veterans—who have or once had NSLI policies in force for three months or more.

Some VA officials estimated that of \$6,735,000,000 in the NSLI fund, a surplus of as much as \$2,000,000,000 may be available for distribution as dividends.

The amount of each check will vary according to the age of the insured, the amount of the policy and the period in which premiums have been paid upon it.

The average payment? Some would-be experts say \$100. The VA says it's impossible to estimate with any degree of accuracy. Colossal Task Faced.

Getting back to the machinery—it's massive because it has to compute individual records for more than 20,000,000 policies, many of which were allowed to lapse months ago.

The Veterans Administration asked for \$7,364,000 with which to start an auditing and allotting job expected eventually to cost \$23,000,000. With that start, the agency estimated it could hire an additional 2,700 employees for a year—or 3,400 for six months—to get the tabulations going.

Congress appropriated only \$2,851,000, forcing VA to readjust its goals and postpone possibly until 1950 the starting date for payment of dividends.

VA insurance heads, in training the 26 prospective experts, employed film strips showing typical premium account cards from every part of the United States.

Cards were selected to illustrate every imaginable type of entry that might be encountered in the millions of insurance file cases.

### Reds Hold 10,000 Germans In Notorious Nazi Camp

BERLIN, July 19.—The official German newspaper of the British Military Government charges that the Russians are holding more than 10,000 Germans in Buchenwald, former Nazi concentration camp.

The newspaper, Die Welt, declared that many of the prisoners were anti-Communist leaders.

Die Welt said it obtained its information from former inmates.

### From The Oregon Press

The Oregonian Statesman  
 We quote this paragraph from the Roseburg News-Review Editor Stanton's column:

The Oregon Highway Commission could perform a most valuable and needed service in Western Oregon's municipalities if it would determine the routes to be adopted either through towns, and buy the right of way, even though construction were left until a later date. At the rate land values are increasing, towns growing and improvements added, the State would save money by buying rights of way in advance of the population centers without further delay.

This is a sensible recommendation provided the commission has definitely decided what the new or altered location will be. If not, and a subsequent change is made, it might find itself owning strips of land quite worthless for its purposes.

The real reason why the highway department doesn't do more advance buying of right-of-way is lack of funds. Pressed as it is for money for construction it cannot tie up funds in highway locations that are not scheduled for improvement.

However the commission does more preliminary buying than is generally announced. It bought up the Sunset highway connection between Portland and Banks several years before work started. Right-of-way on the Wilsonville cutoff was purchased quite some time ago though the contract for construction from Tigard toward the river was let only a few months ago.

As far as land values go it is true they have been rising for the past dozen years, but they may recede as they have often in the past. The great advantage in forward buying for the highway department is that then they do not find improvements on lands they want, which run up the cost. To illustrate, planning authorities here have agreed that Fairgrounds road should be pushed on to join Broadway but a couple of years ago a concrete structure was built at the head of Fairgrounds road. Before that the cost of land acquisition would have been small; now it would

### 'Met' Opera Ends Season With \$220,000 Deficit

NEW YORK — Grand opera didn't make money for the "Met" last season, but directors think there was a profit anyway.

The Metropolitan Opera Association yesterday reported a deficit of about \$220,000 for the fiscal year ended May 31, 1948, and added:

"While the financial results of the past season are obviously unsatisfactory, they did not, of course, constitute the measure of results achieved."

### Common Stocks Pay Off Larger Dividends

NEW YORK — Holders of common stocks listed on the New York Stock Exchange got 14.4 per cent more in cash dividends in the first half of this year than in the same 1947 period, the Exchange reported.

However, distributions were far more uneven than last year, the Exchange said in its monthly publication.



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## Property Tax Base Not Wiped Out By Court's Decision

SALEM, Ore. — (AP) — The State of Oregon has not lost its property tax base, even though income tax receipts have wiped out the state property tax for the past several years.

State Supreme Court officials said this is the effect of last Thursday's Supreme Court decision, in which it was held that \$40,000,000 of surplus income tax revenues can be spent, instead of having to be saved up to offset future property tax levies.

The high court's decision also holds that the 6 per cent constitutional tax limitation applies only to raising of revenue, and not to the spending of it.

These two rulings settle questions which have been argued in the legislature for many years.

"The factor which has resulted in confusion and ambiguity in the tax system for years has been the anxiety of the legislature to avoid losing the tax base and the uncertainty as to what circumstances might result in its loss," the majority opinion said.

"Consequently, since the time when the income tax revenues have been sufficient to eliminate state property taxes, it has been

so large as to delay or make impossible the connection.

We hope the highway department makes up its mind regarding the location for a second bridge across the Willamette here and proceeds to acquire right-of-way. Otherwise it may run into heavy costs later on.

The two factors which prevent adoption of the policy Editor Stanton recommends still remain valid: Lack of funds and danger of route changes.

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thought necessary to levy such taxes to avoid losing the tax base, notwithstanding the fact that the six per cent limitation applies only to the raising of funds and not to the use of revenue already raised.

The provision that no levy can be made by a taxing body above the amount levied in any one of the three previous years, the court said, applies only to property taxes.

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