

# The News-Review

Published Daily Except Sunday by the

News-Review Company, Inc.

Entered as second class matter May 7, 1929, at the post office at Roseburg, Oregon, under act of March 2, 1925.

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Member of the Associated Press, Oregon Newspaper Publishers Association, the Audit Bureau of Circulations

Represented by WEST-HOLLIDAY CO., INC., offices in New York, Chicago, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Seattle, Portland, Denver

SUBSCRIPTION RATES—In Oregon—By Mail—Per Year, \$12.00; six months, \$6.50; three months, \$3.25. Outside Oregon—By Mail—Per Year, \$13.00; six months, \$7.00; three months, \$3.50.

By News-Review Carrier—Per Year, \$12.00 (in advance), less than one year, per month, \$1.25.

## GAS TAX INCREASE

Charles V. Stanton

The Oregon Highway Commission is proposing that gasoline be taxed an additional two cents. Revenue from this tax would be used to continue highway reconstruction and improvement.

It is our opinion that the proposal should be adopted by the legislature.

We are beginning to see the benefits of the reconstruction program achieved on Highway 99 and other state arterials through expenditure of \$72,000,000 in bonds. It is obvious that completion of the projects now scheduled, will increase and speed travel on these major routes.

Highway 99, rebuilt on a controlled access plan from Ashland to Portland, will equal any turnpike in the nation, we are told. Yet it will be free from tolls. The toll system is quite generally used in some states where superhighways receive widespread publicity.

A two-cent additional tax on each gallon of gasoline would cost motorists far less than toll charges on the famed Pennsylvania or New York turnpikes.

### Will Save Money

We believe improved highways will save the average motorist more than two cents per gallon.

When we drive crooked and congested roads we waste much gasoline. If we can drive at a steady speed, with little interference, we get more miles per gallon and less wear and tear on the vehicle.

The "catch" in this theory is that the motorist, stimulated by improved driving conditions, is apt to travel more miles.

Highway commissioners estimate that the two-cent boost in gasoline taxes would cost the average motorist around \$1 per month. The estimate is based on travel statistics showing the average driver puts about 10,000 miles per year on his car's speedometer.

Many other states, the commission says, impose a personal property tax on automobiles. If we add two cents to the gas tax and include the \$10 registration fee, Oregon motorists still would be getting by for only about one-half the amount charged in most other states as a property tax on cars, commissioners claim.

One argument in favor of high gasoline taxes is that the user of the road helps pay for its construction and upkeep. More than 20 per cent of the travel on our highways is by out-of-state traffic. A gasoline tax provides a method whereby visitors to the state contribute toward costs in proportion to use.

### More Revenue Required

Our highway mileage is expanding steadily. Traffic is increasing and is becoming more and more congested. We expect that by the time the rebuilt Pacific Highway is opened for travel it will be inadequate for traffic volume.

These conditions place a heavy burden upon the highway commission for maintenance and upkeep. Virtually all normal revenues are absorbed by maintenance costs, leaving very small amounts for new construction.

The federal government is proposing a \$50-billion highway construction program. States will need matching money to take advantage of federal aid and grants. If Oregon is to continue the fine work of highway reconstruction upon which it has embarked, it will be necessary to find more revenue for construction use. It is far better, we believe, to raise this money, if possible, on a pay-as-you-go basis rather than through issuance of bonds. But, whether we use bonds or additional gasoline taxes, continuation of the road construction program, we believe, is essential.

## Hal Boyle

VALLEJO, Calif. (AP)—Did you ever hear of a community raising \$200,000 to throw a birthday party for a naval shipyard?

It is a bit unusual. But the citizens here have chipped in that amount to celebrate next month the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Mare Island Naval Base by brusque David G. Farragut, later to become America's first admiral.

The long, low island the northern end of San Francisco Bay had been bought by the Navy for \$33,491, and was the first link in its chain of defenses of the Pacific Coast.

Farragut, who had joined the Navy at the age of 16, was 39 years old then. He had no way of knowing that within another decade he would become the hero of the Battle of Mobile Bay, eternally famous for his command, "Damn the torpedoes—full speed ahead."

But Mare Island—named after a lady horse that fell off a flatboat and swam ashore—has produced many another hero since Farragut in the last 100 years. Through five wars it has built 600 naval vessels, repaired thousands of others, served for a century as a major base of America's sea might.

Today it serves the same durable purpose. It is the home of a great portion of our "mothball fleet," carefully cocooned against rust and ready on short notice to prow the sea lanes again. The entire community is proud of Mare Island's long, proud record. It launched the dreadnaught battleship California—and also Elsa Maxwell. Elsa came here as a refugee from the 1906 San Francisco fire and earthquake, and, according to local legend, immediately organized a party.

Other Mare Island "firsts": The first aircraft landing deck in the Navy was built here on the U. S. Pennsylvania in 1911.

So was the first Navy oil tanker, the Navy's first oil-burning vessel, its first all-welded hull, its first electrically propelled ship (later it became the Langley, our first aircraft carrier) and the largest submarine ever built, the old Nautilus. The destroyer Ward, built here in 17 record-breaking days

The residents of Greenland are attempting to grow trees in some sheltered locations on the island.

## "Your Cue, Amigo"



## Reader Opinions

### Retail Boosters Assn. Stresses City's Welcome

ROSEBURG — This letter is intended to clarify the feeling that is held by our Roseburg merchants toward the frequent visits to Roseburg made by residents of nearby communities. A letter recently appeared in your column from a Mrs. Young of Glendale relative to our "parking problem."

We feel that the continued cooperative efforts of city officials, city police and the merchants' association relative to parking should be made known to all residents and shoppers. First of all, we want every person to feel welcome in Roseburg whether to shop, attend a meeting, go to church or for other purpose. Lack of parking space is a continuous problem in a growing city and the efforts that have been made in the last year to alleviate the gravity of this situation include the installation of the one-way traffic grid, widening of three blocks of Kane Street to permit parking on both sides formerly restricted to one side only and now the strict enforcement of city ordinances pertaining to the length of time at one meter. These measures are for the best interests of all people.

We are now trying through our Roseburg Retail Boosters Association to acquaint all merchants with their civic responsibilities and engage in other joint ventures which will benefit both the shopper and merchants alike. One such venture is the Back-to-School Parade this Thursday. This program is an attempt on our part to make everyone welcome in Roseburg and provide all people with facilities, entertainment and good merchandise when they visit our city.

### Union County Directors Of PUD Vote To Dissolve

LA GRANDE (AP)—Union County People's Utility District directors Monday night moved to dissolve the PUD.

They voted to draft a resolution for action by the PUD at a meeting Monday night to put the question of dissolving the PUD on the November general election ballot.

Elmer Case, PUD president, said rejection by the voters twice a proposed \$4,500,000 bond issue to buy facilities of the California-Pacific Utilities Co. in this area eliminated the reason for existence of the PUD.

### Treasury Bonds Sales Show Climb During July

Sales of U. S. Treasury bonds in Douglas County totalled \$60,538 during July, showing a big boost over the \$49,731 total for July 1953, according to George Luoma, county sales chairman.

The total for the year is also running far ahead of a year ago. Luoma said. Last year, total of \$371,693 was recorded at the end of July. This year, the amount was \$485,228.

Sales throughout the state for the month of July showed a big rise, and far exceeded those of any other July since the late 1940s.

Total for the state during the month was \$3,777,126, compared to \$2,209,735 in July 1953.

## Bruce Biossat

It comes as a big surprise that Russia and Soviet Germany have now politely accepted President Eisenhower's offer of aid to areas recently devastated by Danube River floods.

The shock is the greater because shortly before the official Communist newspaper in East Germany had scoffed at the offer, charging the United States with trying to recruit spies and saboteurs through its proposed food aid program.

Last year, it will be recalled, the Communists scornfully rejected a similar offer for East Germany. But the United States set up aid stations in West Berlin and invited Germans from the eastern zone to come across.

By the thousands, they did. The food parcels they received were a tremendous embarrassment to the Reds. Seldom has the West made better propaganda.

Possibly the Russians have learned the lesson of this experience. Surely they could not have wished to court deliberately another setback in prestige such as they suffered in 1953.

If this is so, why then did the Red newspaper in Germany quickly deprecate this new offer? The answer probably is that the Communist propaganda mechanism is a cumbersome affair, featuring automatic responses in many situations. Sometimes, however, the reaction is too swift and does not reflect a shift in policy at the higher levels.

Russia may have had other purposes then simply desiring to avoid a new propaganda defeat. Communists currently are busy

trying to convince the world they are in a new mood of sweet reasonableness. Gullible France, facing a decision of importance on the European army project, might be impressed.

There is also the prospect the Reds may resort to some of their special tricks, gumming up the aid programs with administrative delays and other devices, or attempting to steal a large share of the credit.

Evidently this country already is on guard against trickery. It has asked the League of Red Cross Societies to distribute the food to the Danube area, thus minimizing contact with Communist authorities. Somehow, too, it must assure American identification on all aid parcels.

If possible trickery can thus be circumvented, the United States—and the free world—will get the credit owing for another demonstration that in human disasters the enslaved nations seldom can solve their own troubles. It is the humanitarianism of free men, plus their resources, which saves the day.

## Iran's Fatemi Indicted For Plotting Overthrow

TEHRAN, Iran (AP)—A military court Tuesday indicted ex-Foreign Minister Hossein Fatemi, former Premier Mohammed Mossadegh's right-hand man, on charges he plotted to overthrow the Shah.

Indicted on the same eight counts with the pint-sized firebrand politician were Ali Shavayan, his closest political adviser, and Ahmad Razavi, former deputy speaker in the lower house of parliament (the Majlis). No trial date was set.

If found guilty the three face death by hanging. Mossadegh, however, was sentenced to three years in solitary confinement on similar charges.

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