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THE BATTLE FOR WATER

Charles V. Stanton

Every attempt to curtail unlimited use of a natural resource runs into trouble.

National forests, for instance, were established only after a bitter fight with timber interests. Control over public domain grazing lands has been fought for years by cattlemen, who have exerted all kinds of pressures to get back usage of the lands they once grazed to depletion. Deer pelters fought game laws. Commercial fishermen in Oregon have consistently defeated every move to conserve dwindling migratory fish populations. And so it goes. Whenever a public body endeavors to protect a natural resource from exploitation by a private interest, a fight ensues.

History is repeating itself at the Oregon Legislature where a battle now is raging over legislation to set up a Water Resources Board.

No one can question the need for water conservation. Interim committee hearings throughout the state during the past year revealed almost unanimous sentiment for creation of the proposed Water Resources Board and inauguration of a program of water control and conservation. The catch is that no special interest group wants to surrender any of its present privileges and each such group hopes to tighten its hold by inserting saving clauses in the legislation. Thus each group hopes to gain benefits for itself at the expense of other water users.

Amendments Cripple Bill

The water legislation, as originally submitted, was carefully studied and prepared. It was a fair bill, one which would have given the state a start on a water conservation program.

But crippling amendments have been brought into the picture.

Irrigationists have moved to prevent any interference with existing irrigation district functions, thus preventing redistribution of water usage in affected areas. River commissions, which would have been abolished, their duties consolidated under the Water Resources Board, are fighting for preservation.

Currently at issue is a proposed "intent" amendment which would require fishways at dams only "when it is practicable and economically feasible to do so." The amendment is sponsored by the power interests. Dam builders do not want to be saddled with the expense or bother of maintaining fish runs in the state's rivers. Inasmuch as the proposed legislation would remove veto powers now held by the Fish Commission relative to dams, the amendment, if adopted, would permit power companies to block all our rivers with their dams, completely destroying populations of migratory fish.

On the other side of the picture, the State Game Commission is trying to have a provision written into the bill preserving minimum flows to the state and prohibiting withdrawals in excess of such minimums. This provision is designed to keep enough water in all streams to maintain fish life. Currently some streams in Oregon are so overappropriated that they run nearly or completely dry in summer months.

Review Rights Needed

By inserting "intent" clauses in the bill, special interests can handcuff the Water Resources Board in producing an effective conservation program. Innumerable factors must be weighed in any allocation and distribution of water privileges. The Water Resources Board cannot properly balance its findings if artificial weights are applied on one side. It must have a free hand in making its decisions.

I believe there should be some right of veto or review over decisions by the Board. Someone will be hurt by every redistribution of water usage. The damaged party should have the right of appeal. No Board or Commission, in my opinion, should have autocratic powers.

The Legislature, I believe, should exclude "intent" clauses sponsored by private interests. It should leave the Water Resources Board a free hand in formulating policies. At the same time it should set up some sort of appeal board where decisions of the Resources Board could be publicly reviewed. Such provision not only would give a measure of protection from unwarranted damage, but, through publicity, would help educate the general public in water problems.

Hal Boyle

GIZA, Egypt (AP) — The sphinx did everything but turn on its haunches in surprise.

Behind it under mellow moonlight in the shadow of an ancient pyramid the other night echoed the weird noises of a 20th century desert party.

Believe me, dear friend of the Western world, if you haven't been on a desert party, you don't know what a party is. The mere sounds of one are enough to wake a sleeping pharoah in his tomb and cause him to grab an oar of his solar boat and row madly toward Mars.

The ingredients of this particular desert party were rather complex. They included 100 guests, 50 camels, 25 trained Arabian horses, 22 donkeys, 14 horse drawn sand carts, a troupe of whirling dervishes, 34 musicians, a mutterers' chorus of 48 men, 112 donkey and camel boys, an unknown number of cooks and servants and 14 belly dancers.

Desert parties of this kind are maybe 5,000 years old here, but they certainly are an eye opener to a guy from out of town. As best I could figure it out, here is what happened:

At twilight the guests grabbed the nearest mount available and set out across the sand. Turning down the hostile leer of a camel called "California, Here I come," I climbed up on a sorrel horse named "Ginger."

The Egyptian army fired a volley of welcome. Then the vast menagerie of men, women and animals began marching across the sands to the accompaniment of flutes, drums and tambourines.

If you saw it in a Hollywood movie, you would swear it was a lie. In the midst of this Bedouin bedlam camels growled, horses neighed, women screamed, strong men paled — and the stern silent sons of the desert cased the guests, figuring which would be likely to give the best tips.

One camel floundered. No one worried about the guest. The bed-sheet-clad natives began fighting among themselves over who would pay for the camel's hospital bill. Finally both camel and guest came back up on their feet, the fight stopped, the march continued.

A mile farther on we came to a huge tent. It was spread with the finest of Oriental carpets and pillows. The guests knelt or sprawled in comfort, some wondering who would peel the next grape, and the party was on.

The dervishes came in and with hair as long as Lady Godiva's twirled and twirled until he had twisted his head enough times to wind a 400-day clock through the next century, bowed to applause, then went outside the tent to be unwound.

Native lackeys rushed amid the lolling guests with wine.

Then in came the 14 belly dancers in one of the greatest navel operations in Egyptian history.

By and large the chief difference between a pyramid and a belly dancer here is one of movement. The proportions are about the same.

None of the Egyptian belly dancers at the party had a thing on Gypsy Rose Lee, however, they were here.

Personally, I thought the most interesting was a middle-aged lady who performed her dance wearing atop her head a giant candelabra bearing 15 lighted candles. Her dance was a victory of art over age.

Then everybody rose and piled into the food—freshly-killed lambs roasted whole on spits, ground mutton broiled on steel spikes, artichokes, a casserole dish of okra, rice rolled in grape leaves, sweet thick Oriental coffee.

Suddenly a desert wind, the "khamseen," began to blow, lifting great sand clouds. The party ended. We headed back from the desert.

One guest, who got lost, showed up later and said:

"I went by the sphinx. Guess what it looked like in the moonlight — Elsa Maxwell!"

Well, it was kind of an Elsa Maxwell evening.

The Meeting Could Break Up Any Minute

NEA Service, Inc.

Tired Oregon Legislators Consider Means Of Cutting Down Length Of Sessions

By PAUL W. HARVEY JR.

SALEM (AP) — Having been in session for 95 days and getting sick and tired of the whole business, Oregon's 90 legislators are wishing they had worked faster so they could have been through by now.

They want to go home. But they can't because they are caught in a jam of legislation.

Which brings to mind this question: Can't the sessions be shortened?

The answer is that they can. But they won't be as long as the present system is maintained.

The speaker of the House and the president of the Senate have no authority to do anything that could speed things up. There is nothing that can be done to make committees finish their jobs.

The result is that each committee chairman won't hurry because the other chairmen don't.

A few years ago, a legislative interim committee studied this question, and came up with some ideas. These were ignored.

Legislators admit that if the Washington State Legislature can get through in 60 days or thereabouts, Oregon should be able to do its job in far less than 100 days. They point out that Washington has more problems because it's a bigger state.

The Oregon Legislature just runs on and on, and never quits until it has run out of gas.

Here are some of the ideas on how the session could be shortened.

Many states have a powerful rules committee in each House. This committee screens all legislation before it gets to the floor. Thus a lot of trivia is eliminated.

Oregon doesn't have rules committees, so any bill approved by a committee reaches the floor. The argument against having a rules committee is that it places too much power in the hands of a few.

Nevertheless, the Washington Legislature this year passed only 405 new laws, while Oregon probably will hit the 600 mark. In 1953, the Oregon Legislature passed 723 bills.

Other proposals for cutting down the length of Oregons biennial lawmaking marathon include having a fixed deadline for introduction of bills.

Both houses now have deadlines, but they don't mean much. The rule doesn't apply to bills for which drafting requests have been filed with the legislative counsel.

This means that many legislators file requests for bills to be drafted on the last day of the introduction period.

The session length also could be cut by adopting rules that bills couldn't be considered after a certain day. Many states have such rules.

For instance, after the 50th day, each house would not be allowed to consider its own bills. That would make the committees get on the ball. Then, say after the 75th day, no bills could be considered except on conference reports.

That would limit the session to about 80 days.

The public probably doesn't care how long the Legislature stays in session. But the problem is important, because it has a great deal to do with what kind of legislators we get.

The House is very inexperienced, and the reason is that so many legislators won't return because they can't stand the strain on their pocketbooks and physique. Many in this session say they won't come back.

These ideas for shortening the sessions aren't new. They've been kicking around here for a long time. But nobody does anything about it.

State officials, who have to worry about what the Legislature is doing to their departments and who tire of appearing before legislative committees, are under tension, too.

Bill Healy, assistant secretary of state, says he's drafting a bill that would solve the problem.

Instead of having the Legislature meet here every two years for 100 days, he'd have it meet here every 100 years for two days.

McNary Power Flows Smoothly Into NW Pool

PORTLAND (AP) — Power from McNary Dam flowed smoothly into the Northwest Power Pool Wednesday morning, and Bonneville officials said the troubles of the past two days apparently were over.

A faulty relay circuit was located in the Santiam substation 25 miles east of Albany. It actuated automatic switches which on Monday and Tuesday cut McNary power from one of the main transmission lines.

Bonneville officials had another cheery report in commenting on continued rains: If the trend continues another week or so, interruptible power probably can be started again to major Northwest industries from which it was withdrawn.

Although the Snake's flow has been reduced because of cold weather, the Grand Coulee reservoir has been rising and water is spilling at McNary Dam.

A Bonneville spokesman said it was hoped the general rise other than in the Snake meant the spring runoff was starting.

Mink Farms And Pet Food Industry Pose Threats

PORTLAND (AP) — Mink farms and the pet food industry pose threats to commercial supplies of some ocean bottom fish. As a result the Oregon Fish Commission may put a limit on sales for animal food.

Dover, English and petrale sole are the fish over which the commission is concerned. The mink industry bought 6,200,000 pounds of ocean caught fish last year, the commission reported, with small sole going to the mink breeders.

The number of sole caught has been declining.

Commission members said that if the pet food industry were to expand in Oregon, the drain on commercial supplies of sole would be serious.

The commission's proposal is to limit sale of the three species, for animal food, to 15 per cent of any boat's landing on any one trip. If adopted, the regulation would be effective June 1. Chairman John C. Veatch said.

Editorial Comment

From The Oregon Press

HAZARDS OF HOUSEKEEPING

Oregon City Enterprise Courier

Add hazards of housekeeping: Pressure cans in which whipped cream, deoderants, etc., are packed.

These containers are air tight, they are not punctured when used. A valve helps maintain pressure while contents are forced out as used. This valve is the little devil that creates the hazard. It prevents air from entering the can.

When heated, moisture in the can turns to steam and builds up terrific pressure and the can explodes.

Because many households burn cans preparatory to removing them from sight, and because youngsters have an irresistible urge to throw cans into a bonfire, these pressure containers are as dangerous as bombs. In fact, they become bombs when burned in an open fire.

As a safety measure, it is suggested that all cans be punctured before being removed from the kitchen. This is a simple, precautionary act, no matter what disposition is planned for the cans. If all are punctured, none will be overlooked to become a possible lethal weapon.

Salk Vaccine Stirs World Interest In Ending Scourge

LONDON (AP) — Spurred by American success with the Salk vaccine, governments from Africa's southern tip to Canada's Arctic reaches made plans Wednesday to shift their antipolio campaigns into high gear.

In Rome even the extreme left-wing press outdid itself with praise of the American accomplishment. "The magnificent conquest," the pro-Communist Il Paese headlined.

Canada's 10 provinces planned with federal government help to inoculate possibly a million children, most of them free of charge.

But some West European experts warned that the vaccine that worked in the United States might not also be effective across the Atlantic. Scientists in Britain, France and Sweden said they were pushing ahead on development of vaccines of their own.

A spokesman for the British Medical Research Council explained: "Viruses of the disease differ in various parts of the world, and the vaccines to combat them must naturally differ too."

Dr. James Gear, director of South Africa's Polio research foundation, said a locally developed vaccine similar to Dr. Jonas E. Salk's would be issued there soon. The issue had been delayed until the report from the United States, he added, but" research groups and health authorities in many parts of the world now will be able to determine their policy regarding inoculation."

Danish health authorities planned to begin free vaccination before May 1 of all children between the ages of 7 and 12 whose parents give permission. The Danish government has set aside almost $300,000 for the project, which will use a vaccine developed by scientists who studied the Salk method in the United States.

Export Controls Slapped On Salk Polio Vaccine

WASHINGTON (AP) — The government Wednesday slapped export controls on the Salk polio vaccine.

The Commerce Department said the controls will be maintained until production of the vaccine is sufficient to meet both anticipated domestic and foreign demands.

Under the control system, licenses would be required for any shipment abroad except to Canada.

Portland Woman Fights To Prevent Deporting Children

PORTLAND (AP) — Mrs. Sarah Venegas, 27, will open her fight at a deportation hearing here Thursday to keep her two little daughters from being sent to Mexico.

Mrs. Venegas, the former Sarah Caroline Morse of Salem, married a Mexican national and went with him to Mexico in 1945. The two daughters, Sarah Lucia, now 8, and Maria Elena, now 6, were born there.

The two girls are not U. S. citizens because Mrs. Venegas left the country before she was 21.

In 1949 she returned to Salem and a third daughter, Marie Del Carmen Venegas, now 5, was born there. Marie is an American citizen.

But the other two girls are here on visitors permits and have overstayed their time. A court awarded custody of the girls to Mrs. Venegas in a divorce action at Salem last year. The deportation would separate her from her daughters or force her to go to Mexico.

Sens. Morse and Neuberger have introduced a bill in Congress to permit the two girls to remain in this country.

Personal Fund Suggested For Dr. Jonas Salk

RICHMOND, Va. (AP) — A financial fund of gratitude for Dr. Jonas E. Salk, young developer of the vaccine which seems destined to blot out the polio terror, was suggested Wednesday by a Richmond sales engineer.

M. B. McReynolds said he was mailing to the University of Pittsburgh researcher $1 from each of the three members of the McReynolds family.

"I think," he said, "it's the least all Americans can do for a man who has made such a tremendous contribution and gotten out of it not a red cent besides his meager college pay."

North Carolina Threatens Abolishing Public Schools If Segregation Is Ended

By KARL R. BAUMAN

WASHINGTON (AP) — North Carolina told the Supreme Court Wednesday that a "forthwith decree" abruptly abolishing segregation in public schools might result in that state's abolishing its public schools system.

I. Beverly Lake, a North Carolina assistant attorney general, said the chance of North Carolina's mixing the races in schools in the near future "is extremely remote."

Lake made the statement in reply to a question by Justice Harlan. Harlan had asked whether the state was going ahead and trying to comply with the court's ruling that segregation is unconstitutional.

Lake said he could not say definitely what steps North Carolina will take but said the state has alternatives, including the closing of the schools.

As for making plans for integration, Lake said, North Carolina is in a position of a man who knows there is a possibility he will be executed within 24 hours. Such a man, he said, is in no position to make plans to remodel his home.

Lake opened the third day of argument before the court on the issue of how and when to end segregation. He had begun his argument Tuesday, shortly before the court recessed for the day.

As had attorneys for Virginia and South Carolina who preceded him, Lake pleaded that time was needed to work out problems locally and to win public acceptance of mixed schools.

Lake said that putting Negroes and white pupils together now would bring "turmoil and confusion from which only our enemies could derive any satisfaction."

REFORM BILL PASSED

SALEM (AP) — The key bill of the eight-bill package of property assessment reform measures was passed by the Senate Wednesday.

It defines true cash value as market value as of the assessment date. The definition now is what a property would sell for under normal conditions.

The bill goes back to the House for consideration of a Senate amendment delaying the effective date until Jan. 1, 1961.

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