

Area field burning season nears; no immediate solution in sight

BY DONNA GARDNER
Of the Emerald

Persons new to the Eugene-Springfield area unacquainted with the field burning controversy will undoubtedly be rudely initiated into understanding during late July and August.

Though the season for field burning opened on July 1 and lasts until October 31, most burning is done in the latter part of July through early part of September.

The explanation for all the smoke-filled days that will eventually come our way is that the Willamette Valley is an air shed, enclosed by mountains on three sides, with predominantly northwesterly winds during the summer.

Eugene happens to be right at the toe of the valley, so all the smoke and pollutants from the northern counties — Linn, Benton and Marion — where most of the burning is done, is blown into our end and trapped.

Eventually, all field burning will be banned by 1975 and farmers and agricultural researchers are attempting to find an alternative to the burning. They continue, however, to press for extension of the deadline — a move the city of Eugene intends to fight.

In the interim, strict legislation has evolved — including burning schedules based upon wind direction which are enforced by the Department of Environmental Quality. When there are northerly winds, burning is curtailed until the wind stops or changes direction so smoke will not blow into the

southern end of the valley. Eugene-area farmers must register for field burning by a quota system — depending on the wind, as only a certain amount of acreage may be burnt in a given area.

Perennial rye grass farmers have been burning their fields since 1947 when root diseases threatened crops with ruin. In order to save the following year's crop, a scientist from Oregon Agricultural College (now Oregon State University) suggested the farmers burn their fields after thrashing, so the land would be sanitized.

Marvelous results were attained.

By 1949, 40-50,000 acres of perennial rye grass were being burned.

Farmers growing other annual seed crops also needed a more efficient way to dispose of their waste straw and burning proved to be the cheapest method. With both perennial and annual seed crops being cast to the flames the total acreage being burnt rose to approximately 300,000. Of that, 100,000 acres are rye grass.

The Oregon grass seed industry supplies 90-100 percent of all seed used in the United States.

Its market extends beyond the United States into foreign countries, which can use the seeds for growing turf or meadow and pasture lands.

Since the Willamette Valley has one of the highest potentials for severe air pollution in the United States, an alternative needs to be found for field burning. Some of the alternatives which have been suggested include turning straw into cubes, which can be shipped inexpensively to Japan, and treating the straw for use as cattle feed.

Congressmen, economic adviser address educators at convention

By MIKE DOLAN
Of the Emerald

When the National Education Association (NEA) convention delegates sat down again after Senator Kennedy's speech Sunday in Portland the president of the Association, Catherine Barrett thanked him and introduced the first of the next three speakers on the agenda.

He was Albert Quie, Congressman from Minnesota and the ranking Republican member of the House Education and Labor Committee. Quie primarily addressed himself to the faulty statistics used by the Federal government to allot education funds, especially funds for disadvantaged children.

After taking note of the diminished size of the crowd, he pointed out that the recently passed Title Ten education bill is based on 1959 population figures and fails to take into account subsequent economic recessions or booms in particular local areas.

He cited the example of a Columbia, S.C. elementary school district which the 1960 census indicated had a high income level. Most of the high-income children who "lived in that area have either moved away or enrolled in private schools" according to Quie. Consequently, even though 64 per cent of the children in the local elementary school are from low income families, they were denied aid.

The Congressman also stressed the fallacy of basing educational aid on figures compiled from the Aid to Dependent Children Program (ADCP). The ADCP regulations vary from state to state. Twenty-six states have programs which deny aid to children whose father is present, regardless of their economic

condition.

Quie intends to add an amendment to the Title One Act which would immediately give more disgression in funding to local school boards and set up a long range research committee to determine the necessary criteria for Federal funding.

He insisted that "our first priority must be children" and that too often they are forgotten by administrators who are caught in a system of ossified formulae and legislators who seek only to increase money for their own states.

The third speaker, also a member of the House Committee on Education and Labor, was James O'Hara, a Democrat from Minnesota. O'Hara lamented that he was not on the so-called White House "enemy list" and said that he was jealous.

He also spoke about education funding. He severely criticized the Nixon Administration's Better Schools Revenue Sharing Act and insisted that educators themselves must enter into politics and help make the decisions of how money should be spent.

"It would be difficult to maintain an aura of professional respectability," he told the teachers, "while entering the political system to collect a fair share of the community's resources."

But he stressed that the argument teachers should not get involved in politics, because it is "dirty business," is the same argument which kept women out of politics. "And I think you know," he said when the crowd began to cheer, "just what I mean. I don't see anybody saying that politics are too dirty for oil millionaires or bank presidents."

Specifically, he urged the delegates to support his proposed amendment to the Title Ten Act

which includes "publicly-supported, tuition-free education from kindergarten to the 14th year." He said that every citizen had a right to such education "without the hint of a financial barrier."

Admitting his idea does have flaws—specifically funding—O'Hara said such a plan is rooted deeply in the American concept of public education.

Furthermore, he maintained that he would add amendments to break away from the idea that legislators should only "outline basic principles" and leave the details to experts. The experts, according to O'Hara, especially in the Nixon Administration, have used this power to divert Federal funding by means of executive regulations. He stated that the as-yet-undrafted amendment would "remove flexibility of decision from the Commissioner of Education, the Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare and the President of the United States."

The final speaker was on the well-known Nixon "enemy list." Walter Heller has been chief of the Council of Economic Advisors to both Presidents Kennedy and Johnson.

After making a few comments on Watergate, the University of Minnesota economics professor called for more money for education. As had all such calls that morning, this one also received loud applause. He said if the revenue could not be raised any other way, taxes should be increased. However, he asserted, that the taxes should come from corporations.

The fourth speaker of the day to address himself to the same issue, that is, raising money without any specific plans of what to do with it, Heller stated

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Patients to hike, birdwatch and relax in national forest

Promise of good times in the out-of-doors will lure selected patients from Eastern Oregon State Hospital to an unused Department of Forestry guard station this summer. Clarks Creek Guard Station, 15 miles southeast of Elgin, will be the campsite for week-long expeditions planned by hospital staff to last throughout the summer.

Hiking, birdwatching, relaxing, tree and plant identification will highlight the days of six to ten patients who visit the site each week accompanied by an equal number of hospital staff. A camp safety officer will school the campers in safety and fire prevention and organized activities will fill their schedules.

The Clarks Creek Guard Station has not been used since 1963 when the practice of keeping large fire crews at guard stations throughout the state was abandoned. The station has been kept up, however, and safety equipment and signs have been provided by the Department of Forestry. Area foresters spent one day earlier this year providing hospital staff members with mini-courses in fire prevention and tree and brush identification.

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