

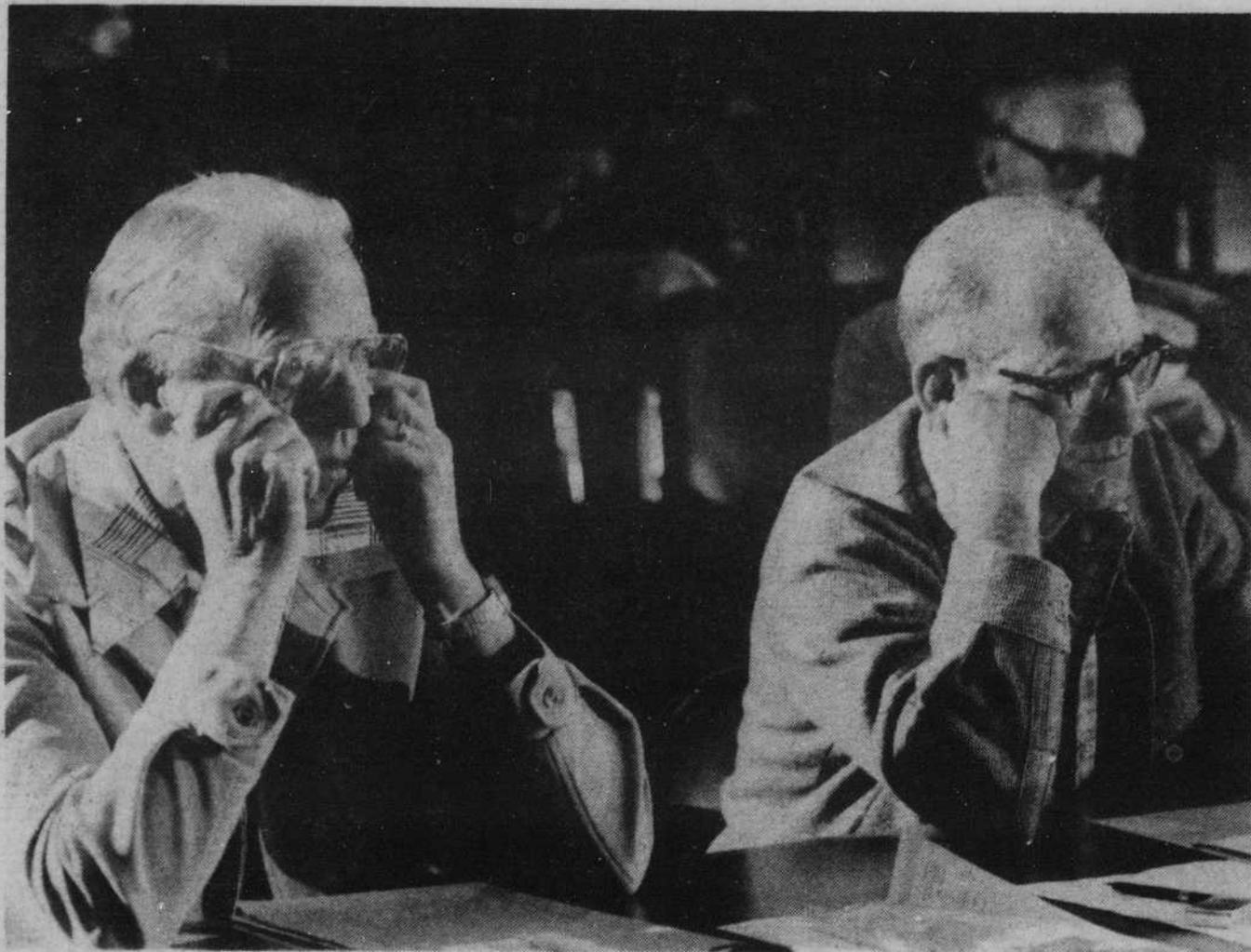


Photo by Keith Allen

Official reactions aren't in, but Mayors Bob Kaizer of Coburg and Jim Shirley of Cottage Grove gave occasional indication of immediate reactions to a meeting sponsored by opponents of Ballot Measure 22. The measure would provide a public utility district for areas surrounding Eugene.

Foes of utility redistricting privately address mayors

By CATHERINE SIEGNER
Of the Emerald

The mayors of Lowell, Cottage Grove, Junction City, Coburg, Creswell and Veneta heard the other side of the Emerald People's Utility District argument last week when proponents of the measure held an information session at Lane Community College.

The Emerald PUD proposal, Ballot Measure 22 on the Nov. 7 ballot, would set up a publicly owned utility district in Eugene's outlying areas.

Under Oregon law, such a proposal must pass two elections — the first to set up the boundaries and elect a board of directors, and the second to grant the board authorization to issue revenue bonds to buy out the existing system.

Opponents of the measure, chiefly employees of Pacific Power & Light Co., which currently supplies electricity to the proposed Emerald PUD area, presented their objections to the mayors in a meeting Sept. 13.

Neither the local news media nor the public was invited.

Lowell Mayor Bob Smith subsequently volunteered as an ad hoc coordinator to set up a meeting between the mayors and PUD backers.

"We have a commitment to our constituents," Smith said. "They deserve to hear both sides of the issue."

Lionel Topaz, former Oregon State Department of Energy director, attended the meeting and attempted to answer questions the mayors had about effects of the PUD measure.

Topaz wrote the feasibility study published in June, 1976, which examined the advisability of creating an Emerald PUD. The report, required by law, addressed questions on power availability, cost to local taxpayers of acquiring PP&L facilities and continuing cost of PUD operation.

Topaz concluded that power would be available to the new PUD at rates lower than PP&L currently pays, and says ratepayers in the proposed district

would almost certainly enjoy lower electric bills should the measure pass.

PP&L employees have recently

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