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Legislators still adore soapbox

Sen. Hallock gives fine example

By GREG WASSON
Of the Emerald

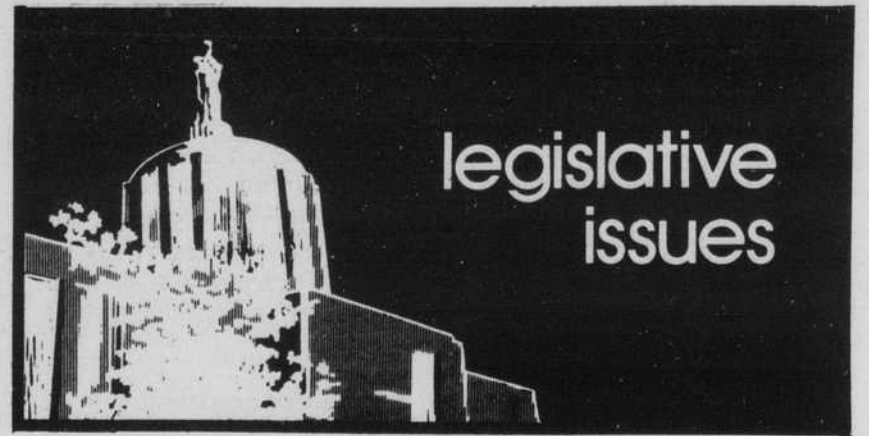
SALEM — Election to Salem provides a podium that legislators mount with varying relish. Sen. Ted Hallock, D-Portland, is a familiar example.

An 18-year legislative veteran, Hallock seems to feel comfortable in the spotlight.

The senator chairs the energy committee with an flamboyant style that sometimes gets nasty. At Tuesday's hearing, Hallock used his position to inform the committee and the audience of something he had read in the newspaper and heard from his staff.

He first directed his scorn at the eight-member team that is shepherding the Bonneville Power Administration until the Regional Energy Council is appointed. The transition team has two representatives from each of the Northwest states and Montana.

"The transition team met yesterday, and one agenda item was discussion of hiring the executive director. The team wanted to consider this in closed session and asked if there were any objections. Don Bundy of the Oregonian objected. The team then broke for lunch and Bundy asked if he



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could go. The moderator said no.

"I'm just appalled at the arrogance of the transition team and its desire to do its business in private," he said.

Hallock was just as appalled at Associated Oregon Industries, a large business lobby. Hallock expressed confusion over AOI's position on his bill to prevent construction of the Alumax Aluminum plant in northeast Oregon. The plant will consume 320 megawatts of electricity, two-thirds of the output of the Boardman coal plant.

Hallock referred to an interview in a Portland journal with Ken Canon of the AOI. Parts of the article, which ad-

ressed Hallock's bill, were read by the senator to his audience. In the article, Canon says "the bill doesn't mention Alumax but it's clearly the Alumax bill. No question about that."

"The theory is that if you can ban an aluminum plant, that's 320 extra megawatts of power for everyone else."

At that point, Hallock looked up.

"That's a pretty valid deduction, I would think."

Finally, Hallock described a dialogue his staff had had with a group of home builders that has complained violently of plans to curb electricity use by adding an extra charge to new residences heated with electricity. At most, the plan would save 170 megawatts, about half the consumption of the proposed Alumax facility.

Hallock thought his Alumax bill would bring kudos from the home builders and their lobbyist, Fred Van Natta.

"I'm really a fool," Hallock said. "And not only that, a naive fool. I assumed that the homebuilders would have lifted me to their shoulders and anointed me with fine oils and borne me into the city as a hero of the day. If you divide 320 megawatts by homes, that's a lot of power."

"But, oh no, Mr. Van Natta said. They're staying out of it. In fact, some of his people will testify against the Alumax ban. They're supportive of industrial development in northeast Oregon."

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