

opinion

Sales tax ban an apt move

All those who object to the state instituting a sales tax must be pleased with the way Senate President Ed Fadeley, D-Eugene, has all but smothered the possibility of its passage. Fadeley, an adamant sales tax foe, has squeezed the life out of a House plan by proposing an amendment to the state constitution that permanently prohibits enactment of a statewide sales tax.

This proposed constitutional ban is admirable for many facets, including its aptness and sneakiness. Fadeley deserves a slap on the back for maneuvering the whole sales tax issue to a point where it becomes moot.

The phrase, a few words supplanting five months of work in the House, reads: "No general retail sales tax shall ever be levied for purposes of defraying the expenses of the state." The proposed constitutional amendment was passed by Fadeley's Senate Select Committee on Constitutional Revision of Finance and now goes to the full Senate this week.

The need for sales tax is not as desperate as it once appeared to be. In fact, at the present time a sales tax would cause more detriment than good. The economy of the state, while not booming, is steadily improving. The number of unemployed in the state is gradually declining. Timber sales and revenues are steadily increasing. An improved economic condition for the state is becoming apparent.

Objections to the sales tax lean toward its regressiveness, and its tendency to hit the less economically advantaged hardest. Families struggling with the bleak economy would have the added burden of a sales tax on consumer items. Well-to-do families would be more readily able to recover from the added expense of a sales tax.

Also there is the objection of yet another tax mechanism imposed on taxpayers in the state. The pundits for the sales tax claimed it would be rescinded in time, but how often have taxpayers seen temporary taxes suddenly become permanent?

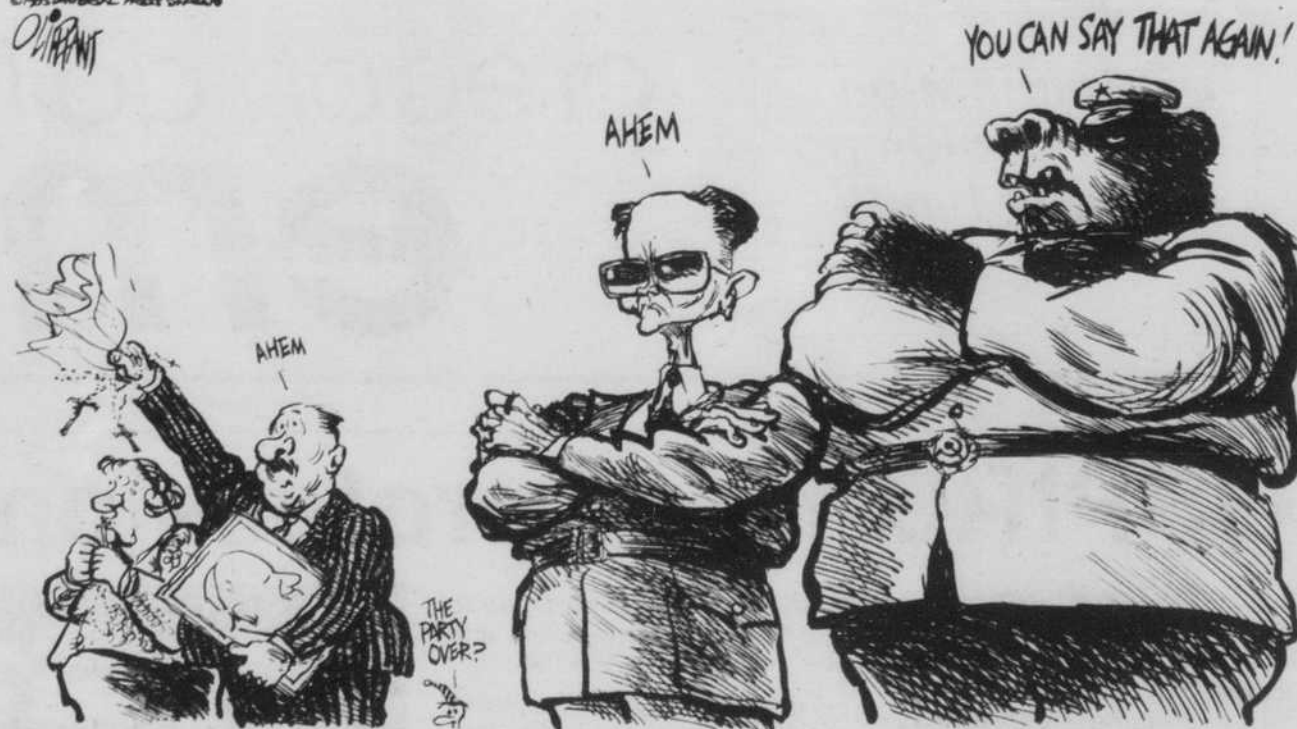
The present tax structure of the state — property tax and income tax — is progressive. The amount of tax is based on an assessment of income and valuable property. These two revenue sources ought to be sufficient to balance the state's budget. Fadeley thinks so.

Oregon is among a few of the states in the U.S. that function without a sales tax. Most states use a three-pronged approach to revenue building — an income tax, a property tax and a sales tax. Oregon has always resisted a sales tax. In bad economic times the loss of that third revenue source makes for drastic budget measures. A sales tax has been bandied about during most of the special sessions the past few years. Depending on who was talking, the sales tax was either imperative to the economic health of the state, or an unnecessary move that would create problems.

It is enjoyable to stand back and watch the maneuverings of Salem politics. Fadeley and House Speaker Grat-tan Kerans, D-Eugene have been masterful in their efforts to throttle the unnecessary sales tax-property tax relief measure. Kerans, also a sales tax foe, was especially astute to pass off the whole sales tax package to the Senate.

Fadeley's select committee's motion to make a retail sales tax unconstitutional is the best move. The pro-sales tax forces appeared to be on the verge of a successful campaign in the Senate. The coalition of local government, education, high technology and business lobbyists pushing for the sales tax are now unsure of what to use to defeat Fadeley's proposal. Perhaps they don't realize the fight is over?

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cort fernald sidelong glances

Perhaps it's Eugene's grey, balmy, summer days. Perhaps it's the leisurely pace of summer activity — tubing on the wily Willamette by the bike bridge, tanning marathons in Alton Baker Park, playing 18 holes of frisbee golf, taste-testing various brewskis until the world grows woozy, getting the cat spayed or neutered, or sitting on the bench in front of the bookstore watching all the latest in *nouvelle vague* attire trounce up and down 13th Avenue. Whatever the reason it seems that University students, some of the same students who don't idle their pens all year, have neglected writing letters to this newspaper.

Hello? Is there anybody out there?

Letter writing is an oft abused, much misunderstood art form. Some of the best writers of prose — well, like Marcel Proust, were masters of letter writing. Imagine Marcel, in bed, with a tray of coffee and croissants and petulant caller at the door, writing a letter to the Emerald.

To the esteemed Editor —

The article of 23 June concerning the canoes on the silty green waters of the Millrace piques my conscience. The long slow summer mornings with the sinuous strands of spiroid fog above the waters are embellished with more favor in my recollection than by your journal. When I drift through the tenor of my memory I envision more texture to the instant than seems certain in the grey tones of your photograph. Please, as my mind pitches, desist from this unwarranted tribute.

Yours, MP

Imagine Ernie Hemingway sitting in a smoking shellhole in Spain, with a black battered Smith-Corona manual balanced on his knees, writing a letter to the Emerald.

Sirs,

It's a shame. I mean the article. The one about the boats. A man needs more informa-

tion. You should listen in cafes. A boat takes to the water. The water goes until forever. Rivers don't need words. Stop it.

Ernie

Picture stately plump Samuel Taylor Coleridge, head in hand, seated at his writing desk penning a letter to the Emerald.

Worthy Editor:

Upon perusal of your tabloid leaves I perceived a spare and delicate pictorial pertaining to the punters on the Millrace. Here in Xanadu we ZZZZZZZZZZZZ.

Imagine if the reclusive Thomas Pynchon wrote a letter the Emerald. He would probably sign it B. Traven. Maybe Emily Dickinson would write something about this newspaper being as public as a frog.

For some unfathomable reason there have been but few letters submitted to the Emerald since we began summer publication. Yow — this is an odd occurrence. Usually we have a surplus of letters on everything from "The Proliferation of Radical Sudanese Backgammon Players" to "Why's't Nob'y Ral'es, Huh?" Where are the arch lefties and dyed-in-the-wool righties? What complacency has benumbed journalism and English majors?

The letters section is a forum for Emerald readers — for their cares and worries on any topic. We don't take letters to the editor lightly. A letter that chastises us for a grammatical gulf or complements us on a good job is read with interest. Some of us take lumps from letter writers. I've been personally attacked as well as praised on different occasions. A letter will tell a writer if he is addressing an audience or missing them by a mile.

Summer term is a sedate time, sometimes it's tough enough to write your Mom let alone write the Emerald. But remember you don't have to be guilty about writing to the Emerald — and we can't send you money either.

letters

Automation

In the June 6 edition of the Emerald, Editorial Page Editor Joan Nyland moaned about

her pessimism. In doing so, she made the incorrect and time-worn generalization that "...Automation, with the parallel move to manufacturing in Third World countries where labor is cheaper, means fewer jobs, more unemployment and more wealth for the few here."

Automation and cheaper labor mean lower prices for consumers because of lower costs of production. This leaves consumers with more disposable income than before. They will choose to spend that additional money immediately or save it for future consumption. In either case, buying goods with the extra money will cause increased demand in the industries they choose to spend

their money in. Increased demand will cause the affected industries to hire more workers to process the accompanying increase in produced goods. In the short term there may be unemployment, but in the long run there will be more jobs.

Nyland correctly realized that protectionism means higher prices but failed to see that the opposite is caused by automation. If the age-old myth that automation causes a loss of jobs were true, it would be interesting to explain how the United States and Western European countries survived their Industrial Revolutions.

Richard Burr
senior, poli. science/journ.
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