

Legislative aide lauds Fadeley for defeating sales tax package

By Brooks Dareff
Of the Emerald

The major media have been unfair to Senate Pres. Ed Fadeley when criticizing the way he has handled the House-sponsored sales tax initiative, says Ed Blackburn, a 1983 legislative aide for Rep. Wally Priestley, D-Portland, who spoke Saturday to fellow members of the Oregon Citizen's Party convention in Eugene last weekend.

House Speaker Grattan Kerans, D-Eugene, used the same technique — creating a new committee — to push a sales tax initiative through the House as Fadeley did to kill that initiative in the Senate, Blackburn says.

But whereas Kerans was applauded as a selfless, capable, team-man administrator who pushed through a lot of legislation, Fadeley was criticized for using his position to manipulate the Senate action on the basis of his own personal convictions, Blackburn says.

Rather than lambasting Fadeley, Blackburn thinks "we should send Fadeley a letter of appreciation."

Being a capable administrator is more than pushing through a lot of legislation, he says. So it

would be better to enact five or six good pieces of legislation than many bad bills, Blackburn says.

The sales tax package would have been a bad piece of legislation, because it was regressive, he says.

The sales tax initiative only got as far as it did because the 1983 session "was the most conservative legislative session since before the Tom McCall era," Blackburn says.

This was surprising, because five or six "supposedly progressive" democratic candidates were voted in during the period of nationwide anti-Reaganism, which has been credited with ushering in many Democratic candidates during the 1982 elections, he says.

However, some of these democrats were regressives in progressives' clothing, and they were noticeably absent in the fight against shifting tax burdens onto the poor, he says.

Of the 36 democratic legislators, only one or two did not receive contributions from large business groups like U.S. Bancorp or Atlantic-Richfield during the 1982 campaign, he says.

"Economics" is the new catchword uttered by a new

generation of "knee-jerk pragmatists" who are too young to have gone through the labour movements of the 1930s and 1940s, or even the civil rights and anti-war movements of the 1960s and 1970s, Blackburn said.

Blackburn credited the Citizen's Party with playing an opposing role to the sales tax package within the House, but said that aside from Priestley, Sen. Margie Hendriksen, D-Eugene, is the only legislator in a sea of "elitists" who actively seeks to attach herself to grass roots organizations like the Citizen's Party.

The action that preceded and prompted Keran's creation of a special committee on property tax relief was the House Revenue Committee's vote against a sales tax. Rep. Carl Hosticka, D-Eugene, was the swing vote against the sales tax in that committee, said Blackburn, and one factor swaying Hosticka was the unexpected 26 percent of the vote pulled by Citizen's Party candidate Laura Stine against Hosticka in his 1982 bid for election to the House. The strong showing of the Citizen's Party indicated to Hosticka there was a large progressive element in his district that he could not afford to alienate, Blackburn said.



Photo by Mark Pynes

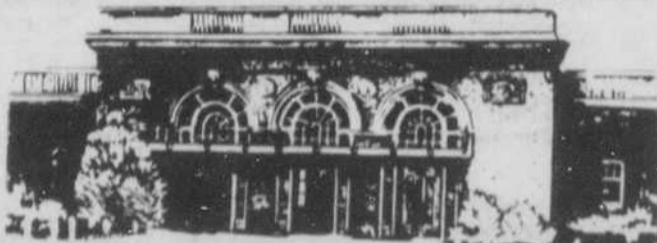
Whereas House Speaker Grattan Kerans (shown here during a recent speech in the EMU Forum) was applauded by the media for pushing a sales tax package through the House, Senate Pres. Ed Fadeley was roasted for defeating the controversial bill.

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