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Salem Scene

by Jack Zimmerman

Veteran Again Co-Chairs Ways And Means Committee

As Ways & Means goes--so goes the session.

This corruption of the old political saying sums up the influence exerted on any session of the Oregon Legislature by the Ways & Means Committee. The current 56th session is no exception.

Ways & Means handles the money. It pretty well calls the fiscal shots when it comes to funding functions of state government each biennium.

Co-chairman from the House for the fourth consecutive session is Rep. Stafford Hansell of Umatilla County.

In view of monetary problems generally, Hansell figures Ways & Means is, beginning its "toughest" session in recent history. And complicating the vital work of this important body is the fact it's getting off to a late start.

Failure of the Senate to organize quickly means Hansell's Senate counterpart and committee members from the upper chamber were not readily appointed and postponed most of its activity. This state of affairs--added to others regarding the delay, have provoked sharp criticism of the Senate by people in and out of government, including Gov. Tom McCall.

Some critics speculate the delay will extend the length of what is assumed will be an extra long session. No question about it: the delay is costing money--\$10,000 to \$12,000 a day.

And that bothers Stafford Hansell.

First appointed to the Legislature, he has served in the House of Representatives since 1957. A self-styled "fiscal conservative" Republican from a Democrat county, Hansell's service to Oregon has elevated him to a pinnacle of legislative respect shared by few of his peers.

Hansell's vocational pursuits involve wheat, peas, cattle and hogs.

Reflecting on the fact Hansell enterprises produce pork in quantities matched by few farms nationwide, a veteran lobbyist describes him in a manner that tends to dispel conservative purity:

"He's independent as a hawk on ice!"

The reaction likely is prompted by the fact Hansell often teams up with Democrat Sen. Don Willner of Multnomah County to co-sponsor conservation legislation of a genuinely liberal nature.

Fifty-seven-year-old Hansell's ready response to such comments involves the fact he believes strongly in preserving the natural assets of his native state.

"And besides," he quips--revealing a wit mostly reserved for those closest to him, "that way Willner goes along on some of the more conservative issues."

Hansell wit-as his work, however, is anything but frivolous.

He handles the state's money as seriously as his own. While the Senate voted fruitlessly for a president, Hansell had House members of Ways & Means visiting every state institution within driving distance of Salem. Personal inspection of facilities for the blind, deaf, mentally ill, retarded and so on are a must for the people who decide monetary priorities.

And this session "Staff" Hansell believes will be one in which priorities prevail.

Although he believes Gov. McCall's budget essentially sound, the Ways & Means leader already has rearranged some priorities to "find" pennies \$20 million for Basic School Support to cover the cost of inflation.

Deepest brow-furrowing specifies plaguing committee members involve doing their job within the framework of existing revenue. And the fact that revenue may be less than anticipated.

The co-chairman believes revenue estimates from income tax, interest and inheritance and gift taxes may be as much as \$10 million too high. He couples this possibility with

the economic decline, out-of-hand welfare costs, repayment of \$14 million to the Veteran's Loan Fund and needs of higher education and figures the committee already is in a "tough bind."

Philosophically, Hansell would prefer to ease that bind by concentrating on priorities. Unlike some of his fellow Legislators, he doesn't consider Federal Revenue Sharing the solution to state fiscal woes.

He counts the federal deficit as a major cause of inflation. And though he believes that deficit can never be erased, he wishes Congress had a balanced budget.

Oregon's Ways & Means Committee must work within those limits. And Stafford Hansell is a big reason the job will be done.



Heard about a certain woman hereabouts the other day who has a pet poodle with an apparent heart problem that must take pills about three times daily. Last week the lady was in process of giving dog a pill and at the same time carrying on a conversation with her spouse. Before she realized it . . . she had popped the pill into her own mouth. Luckily, she didn't swallow it.

The incident worries me. We have her dog's brother, you see, which is bad because there could be a possibility of an inherited physical trait involved. But that isn't what really worries me . . . bride happens to be the lady's sister and I don't know what that might mean.

-P.

All you readers out there please take note (oh, please!). If you happen to move would you kindly send us your new address in plenty of time so we can change our records . . . and you won't miss a copy of the paper. When you don't, the post office does . . . at a cost of ten cents each . . . and sometimes we get two or three notices of the same change. Now a dime doesn't sound like too much by itself, but when you add up these times over a year's time . . . they amount to a lot of dollars. We'd sure appreciate your cooperation.

-P.

All you crab eaters remember the fire dept. feed this coming Saturday . . . from noon til 7 p.m. at the fire hall. Fresh-cooked crab, cole slaw, French bread and beverage for \$1.50, family rates available.

-P.

Saturday is the day to visit Hahn Hardware's Open House, too. Only it will be something else by then 'cause that's when they plan to announce a name change and winner of the name store contest. They'll have free coffee and donuts . . . so stop by.

-P.

Mary Bates called me Monday with a tip on getting kids to take pills. Said she got it from a book on puppy care but it works equally good with children. What you do is place the pill in a dab of margarine and place it far back on the tongue . . . where it slips right down the throat. Now if she'd just been a week earlier with that information.

-P.

Do you know that today marks the 56th anniversary of the U.S. Coast Guard? The organization was created in 1915 by an act of Congress.

-P.

The weather has been too good to talk about . . . so I won't.

LETTERS to the Editor

Commissioners Oppose H.B. 1113

Honorable Sam Dement
 Oregon State Senator

Honorable Rod McKenzie
 Oregon State Representative

Dear Sirs:

The Curry County Board of Commissioners would like to go on record in opposition to H.B. 1113.

This bill is in direct conflict with the President of the United States. At a time when the federal government is trying to return government to the people, the State of Oregon appears to be trying to remove all responsibilities of local government.

By doing away with the office of County Assessor, another vital function of local government would be removed from local control.

Board of County Commissioners, Ira W. Tucker, Chairman; Glen R. Hale, Commissioner; Gene Colegrove, Commissioner

Need Adult Homes

TO THE EDITOR

From time to time it may become necessary or desirable to place an adult in what is called an Adult Foster Care Home. The reason for such a placement may be several, these include: Some patients are less able to adapt to a group living situation and may be able to adjust more readily to a private home which is more similar to that which the patient is accustomed; another factor is that nursing home beds within our local area are of a limited number; at times it may be necessary to place a patient temporarily until a more appropriate placement can be made. Because of these factors, we are at the present time seeking to locate families who would be willing to take adults into their homes.

To qualify, a person needs to have a love and understanding for the elderly. The home itself needs to be of an adequate size, and safe and free from hazards.

The amount paid for services will be determined by what services are needed by the patients involved and will be determined by this department in cooperation with the patient's doctor.

The need may not always be for the elderly but at times we have need of a home in which we would be able to place adults who need some supervision because of a variety of reasons. Occasionally from time to time, we receive requests from people in the community for homes in which private placements could be made.

In all adult care situations, we have to adhere to the regulations of the Board of Health. The regulations state that no more than one unrelated person may receive nursing care in an unlicensed home, or no more than two unrelated people may receive other types of care.

If you would be interested in caring for an adult in your home, please feel free to contact our office at 247-6666 or Curry County Public Welfare at P.O. Box 616, Gold Beach, 97444.

Sen. Dement Explains Senate Prexy Vote

TO THE EDITOR

The deadlock in the Oregon Senate that has continued now for 12 days, has been broken. As Republicans have tried every conceivable way to reach a compromise that would be consistent with our governmental philosophy. As evidence of this, the Republicans have put forth several candidates in order to try to solve this impasse. I was very happy, pleased and proud to be one of those candidates put forth. I was hopeful that a Senator

Oregon's 56th Legislative Assembly has convened. Oregon Democrats return to Salem with control of the Senate and with a stronger representation in the House. The Democratic momentum is clear.

We are gratified to find that the Governor has joined us by outlining in his inaugural speech a legislative program that contains many of the principle Democratic proposals from the last session that had languished in the face of Republican indifference.

A primary concern for Democrats in the House is reordering the tax structure of the state; with particular attention to relief for the homeowner and for the senior citizen from the overworked property tax.

The property tax, as originally employed, was a small levy on the local townspeople for the support of a few basic services. By evolution and extensions, it has grown to become the chief source of revenue for a staggering number of local services. The demand for increased services continues, the costs of these services keep rising; the response has been simply to continue demanding more and more of the property tax as a revenue producer.

We do not feel it is realistic to continue any further in this direction. The individual homeowner has been asked to bear too great a load. Relief is imperative.

We intend to advance a revenue package which would in-

whose views, by and large, tend to more like mine might be elected Senate President.

Unfortunately, the Democrats, under Senator Berkeley Lent, would not compromise and continued to offer only one candidate. The Republicans made offers to the Democrats that, in my judgment, were fair, but these offers were bluntly rejected. The Democrats, on the other hand, did not, in my judgment extend any fair or reasonable offers with respect to committees, chairmanships or other matters.

I was reluctant to support a Senator from a metropolitan area. However, a person cannot be so adamant as to indefinitely block the progress of State business.

Senator John Burns, Portland Democrat and new Senate President, more closely meets the qualifications I feel are necessary to fulfill this position. This is why I voted for him. He has a thorough eastern Oregon background, and as a matter of fact, his family continues to reside in the Condon area. Although he lives in the metropolitan area, I believe that he, as a compromise candidate, will be a fair and efficient President and very objective for every area of the State.

Sam Dement
 State Senator

TO THE EDITOR:

As we approach our 10th Anniversary, Peace Corps, and the peoples of Africa, Asia and Latin America want to thank you for the help you have given us in the past. By informing your readers of the work Peace Corps Volunteers are doing in the field, Peace Corps is enabled to successfully expand its technical assistance programs in over 100 countries throughout the world.

As needs in developing nations become more specialized, our recruiting efforts must also be channeled in these directions. At present, more than 30% of all Volunteers in the field are working in agriculturally-related programs. It is for this reason that we are approaching the Oregon farmers with their highly diversified farming backgrounds and technical skills, and again, asking for your continued support in assisting us in our ongoing agricultural programs.

Sincerely,
 MARK FRITZLER
 Area Representative
 Peace Corps/Portland

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Minority Report

By House Minority Leader Harl Haas

Prospects For Progress In The 56th Legislature

include several proposals designed to end the unrealistic burden assessed upon the individual homeowner.

It is not equitable to tax the property of the individual homeowner, which does not produce revenue, at the same rate as the profitable property of the public corporation. We propose adjusting the property tax assessments to a variable ratio based on the return that the property produces.

At the same time we will propose that the income ceiling on eligibility for property tax rebate should be raised from \$3,000 yearly to \$4,000 and that only the income of the property owner should be relevant in determining eligibility for property tax relief.

These changes are long overdue; we would be grossly unfair to the people of Oregon if we were to let yet another legislative adjourn without these basic changes in the state tax structure to provide genuine relief to the individual property owners.

The State's economy is another area of top priority during this session. Oregon, as such as any other state, has suffered from the unique combination of rising unemployment and inflation resulting from the Republican's fiscal policies. As of last September Oregon's portion of the fallout from these unfortunate decisions had risen to 47,000 people. These are people who must provide a livelihood for themselves and their families. We do not, as the Republicans do, consider any level of unemployment "acceptable." We must do everything that we possibly can at the state level to counteract the effect of the Republican fiscal policies at the national level.

Specifically, I will introduce legislation to give the Governor the authority to issue Recession Relief Bonds. These bonds would capitalize public project throughout that state to provide employment, they could be utilized whenever a rise in unemployment levels warranted.

In other labor-related areas of concern, the Democrats this session will seek more substantial protection for the worker and his family under the provisions of Workman's Compensation; we are going to make the effort once again to improve the circumstances of the migrant worker.

We find it difficult to reconcile the rebate of \$10,000,000 from the State Accident Insurance Fund last year with the state's provision of \$50 a week (plus \$2.50 a week per dependent) as the maximum level of support for a worker who through no fault of his own, has been permanently and totally disabled due to an industrial accident.

In the last session the House could not bring itself to ensure the provision of drinkable water for migrant workers in the fields. The House Democrats in this session will seek to ensure responsible and humane working and living conditions for this much-abused minority.

Environmental issues are fast-moving items in the politician's inventory. However much is said the only evidence of a sincere commitment to the quality of life in Oregon will be legislative action. We expect to actively solicit the opinion of environmental protection interests both in respect to specific environmental quality acts and for their reaction to the ecological implications of regular legislation.



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Welfare Probe Is Difficult

The Chairman of the House Task Force on Welfare says the investigation of welfare in the state "is just as difficult as we expected."

State Rep. Anthony Meeker (R-Yamhill County) says one of the main problems has been the "extent of federal intervention into the state's ability to conduct its own program."

The second term legislator says the hearings held thus far have "given the Task Force a great deal of background information regarding the problem. It's provided a strong base from officials and legislators knowledgeable in welfare . . . and now we are into the second segment of the investigation. That will provide us with testimony from citizens, recipients, and county officers and welfare personnel."

Rep. Meeker, who is chairman of the House Committee for Health, Education and Welfare, said that one primary question keeps coming up: "What is the State's purpose in welfare? To rehabilitate, help those in need, or simply give away money? This is what we hope to answer. Not only what the purpose is, but also, in what direction have we been going."

According to Rep. Meeker, there are six public hearings set for the Task Force, but there is a good chance more will be added. Plus, he says, there is a possibility more

We will seek to eliminate the agricultural exemption on field burning; add a five cent deposit on non-returnable bottles or cans sold in the state and provide authorizations for city governments to restrict vehicular traffic during air-pollution emergencies.

The Democrats in the House expect to act on consumer protection; there is no place on the shelves or in the salesrooms of Oregon for products which defraud or endanger the consumer. We will push for significant expansion of Oregon's consumer protection statutes.

This is not an exhaustive list of the Democratic program for the coming session; it does provide some of the major themes and a few particular examples. No doubt this session will thrust some surprises upon us; we cannot of course, predict how far we will be able to go in realizing these measures. The only thing that is that we will be very busy.

We are cautiously optimistic; however, with a Senate majority and increased strength in the House, the coming session holds the promise of seeing a great deal of the Democratic initiatives enacted.

Dellenback Reports

by Rep. John Dellenback

Easing Out The Seniority System

A respected American historian has said, "Of all the institutional failings of American government, the seniority system, of Congress is by far the most serious."

In any group as large as either the House of Representatives or the Senate there must be organization and leadership. Committees are extremely important, and the chairmen of the committees have a great deal of power. In essence, the seniority system provides that the chairman of each committee will be the majority member who--whatever his age or health or competence--has served longest on that committee.

I have no objection whatever to having the chairmen be the person who has served longest on the committee--provided he is chosen because of his abilities. I strongly object, however, to his being chairman simply because he's been re-elected enough times. No business or private organization seeking maximum results operates that way. Neither should the Congress of the United States.

The system concentrates so much power in the hands of so few, it enables chairmen to obstruct, distort or emasculate desirable programs or policies. It is a travesty on the democratic process.

A number of us have been directing our energies to this serious fault in the Congress. What we do to reform the seniority system will have a far-reaching impact on all Fourth District citizens.

Basically there are two ways in which the Congress can change this archaic concentration of power. It can alter the method of selecting the chairman of committees, or it can change the duties of the chairman in such a way as to diffuse power among committee members. In my opinion we need to make changes in both of these areas. It won't be enough merely to change the method by which the committee chairman or ranking majority member is selected.

Last year's Congressional Reform Bill made some significant reductions in the power of committee chairmen, and both the Republican and Democratic caucuses have sought a more equitable method of selecting the top ranking members of committees.

Republicans last week voted to require a secret vote by all Republican members on nomination for committee chairman or ranking minority members of committees. While the Republican party is not yet in a position to choose committee chairmen, this new procedure will help shift us away from automatic elevation of the most senior members to the top position of committee leadership.

The Democrats did not go as far with their reform. Their solution is to provide for a vote by all members for committee chairmanship when 10 members demand such a vote. I fear this will be ineffective, for finding 10 members who will defy the power of a committee chairman may be very difficult.

These are beginning, but significant steps. We still have a long way to go if we are to destroy this major stumbling block to responsible and effective performance by the legislative branch. Some of the most constructive proposals include permitting a member to hold only one committee or subcommittee chairmanship, setting an age limit for a chairman, and limiting the number of terms which a chairman can serve.

Certainly we have not yet eliminated all the evils of the seniority system, but we have begun. The greatest significance of our actions--in revising committee procedures and in providing a more democratic means of selecting leaders--is that members of the House are at last concerned with how rather than whether to reform the seniority system.

hearings will be needed to get further testimony from some officials who have already appeared before the Task Force. Task Force hearings are coming up Friday in Eugene, and Saturday in Medford.

OUT OF HOSPITAL
 Del Newdick returned home January 18 from Kelzer Hospital, North Bend, where he had major surgery.

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