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REVENUE SHARING FOR COMMUNITIES

Earlier this spring President Nixon delivered his Community Development Message to Congress and to the American people. At that time he indicated he would soon submit the "Better Communities Act" to Congress. He said the legislation was intended "to replace inflexible and fragmented categorical grant-in-aid programs, and to reduce the excessive Federal control that has been so frustrating to local governments."

The Better Communities Act (H. R. 7277) has since been introduced in the House of Representatives and referred to the Banking and Currency Committee. The measure proposes a \$2.3 billion funding level for the revenue sharing program that would be established by the legislation.

If passed and signed into law, federal revenue sharing monies in this field would replace funds now distributed through the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) under seven separate categorical programs.

The goals of the legislation -- to give local decision-makers the flexibility to set their own priorities and to do away with the tremendous amount of paper work presently required of local governments applying for categorical funds -- are objectives I enthusiastically endorse.

However, there are some serious problems with the specific legislation as proposed. For example, the Better Communities Act would channel over 90 percent of its funds to metropolitan areas embracing cities of over 50,000 population. While the needs of urban areas are clearly critical in many cases, I am completely unconvinced that the legislation as currently written provides equitable treatment for our non-urban communities.

Mayor Les Anderson of Eugene has called another problem to my attention. Those communities with on-going federally-funded programs under categories that would be replaced by the Better Communities Act would be covered by a "hold harmless provision" in the bill which is intended to assure adequate funding during transition to the special revenue sharing approach. Coos Bay, Eugene and Reedsport in the Fourth District would seemingly benefit from the "hold harmless" provision.

But Eugene officials, after reviewing the language of the legislation, are concerned that the transition monies may well not be adequate to meet the needs of cities like Eugene. They have suggested that the funding formula be weighted differently to more accurately reflect the total urban renewal effort of cities like theirs.

As currently written, for example, Eugene's share of the transition monies in the 1975 fiscal year would be \$422,000 compared to some \$3,179,000 which Salem would receive. I have asked HUD officials and the staff of the House Banking and Currency Committee to take a hard look at and comment on the substitute formula suggested to me by Mayor Anderson.

Revenue sharing represents a major change in direction for the Federal government and, for the most part, I believe it represents a change for the better. But problems like the above with the Better Communities Act will need to be resolved before I can give it my full support.

Since hearings on the legislation have not yet been scheduled, it is difficult to predict when -- or even if -- the measure will reach the floor of the House for action and, if it does, in what form it will then be. I am now looking hard at the legislation with an eye toward providing whatever helpful input I can while the measure is still in its formative stages.

Legislative Log

NEWS FROM COOS-CURRY LEGISLATORS

Sen. Jack Ripper
 Rep. Ed Stevenson
 Rep. Bill Grannell

The hard fought bill to designate a 50-Mile Fisheries Conservation Zone at the continental shelf off the Oregon Coast, came one step closer to law, with the unanimous passage in the Full Ways and Means Committee last Friday. It now goes to the Senate for approval, which is expected this week. The Southcoast Legislators are disappointed that enforcement provisions were amended out when it was discussed in Sub-committee.

As it now stands, the law would give the Fish Commission authority to manage and regulate fishing practices as part of the preservation of a natural resource spawned and nurtured in Oregon streams. The bill is weakened a great deal from its original intent, but it does put the State on record in its policy to manage ocean fish resources.

Moving ahead on a package of bills designed to regulate election practices, the Senate voted for a majority report on amounts of money that could be used for campaigning for office. The amount set for State Legislators was 25¢ per registered voter, with 15¢ for county and local races. The sentiment was unanimous for campaign expense limitation, but a minority report asked that the amount be set somewhat lower, at 15¢ for Legislature, and maximum of \$1,000 for local races. The bill now goes to the House of Representatives where some changes may yet be made.

In one of the most interesting debates heard this session, Rep. Stafford Hansell, one of the Legislature's most conservative Republicans, led the fight to decriminalize the use of marijuana. Despite the well documented evidence offered by Rep. Hansell, an overwhelming majority of members, including Rep. Stevenson and Grannell, voted the wishes of their constituency and rejected the proposal.

Still being fought bitterly by the coast Legislators is the proposed increase in commercial fishing license fees. Testimony from Senator Ripper in Full Committee of Ways and Means, as well as Sen. Bill Holmstrom, Committee chairman, brought a compro-

mise in some of the recommended rates. Rep. Stevenson, Rep. Grannell, Gerald Simmons, Manager of the West Coast Trollers Association and a number of others had given strong testimony previously at the sub-committee hearing. The bill, which contains the Fish Commission budget is scheduled for Senate debate this week. If passed in the Senate, it would still have to go to the House for concurrence.

Rep. Ed Stevenson reports that the Oregon Safe Employment Act has passed both the House and Senate and is now ready for the Governor's signature. This bill will conform safety practices in industry to the National standards now in OSHA, the Occupational Safety and Health Act.

Diarmuid O'Scannlain, director of the Department of Environmental Quality, has informed your legislators of the release of sewage works construction grants funds which will permit early funding of Sewage Treatment Plant project for the city of Coos Bay, and interceptor projects for Eastside and Bunker Hill. We are delighted that these funds are finally made available so that these long over-due projects can proceed to completion.

From the House Rules Committee comes HB 3272 which establishes liens for unpaid employee benefits against land and improvements on which an employer has worked, according to Rep. Stevenson. Another bill would allow the Motor Vehicles division to revoke a dealer's license if he has circulated misleading advertising or committed an unlawful trade practice.

A law which will correct a practice which has in the past been very detrimental to farmers was carried successfully by Senator Ripper this week. This will allow a farmer or his heirs to continue the farm-use exemption, even though the land may change hands through death or sale of land, if the farm continues to be used for farming. If the land is sold for other purposes, such as housing, the taxes can be collected for the past two years for its highest use value. Over 200 heirs of farmers who had continued to farm that land have in the past been caught in this trap, because of a technical fault in the law, and have had to pay back taxes on the much higher rate.

With the rush of bills coming out of committee in the last few weeks of the session, both the House and the Senate have gone into frequent evening session and committee meetings. When will we adjourn? That's the big question!

George L. Edwards, 80, died June 16 in Myrtle Point. He was born Jan. 8, 1893, in Ozark, Iowa, and was a 65-year resident of the Langlois area.

Edwards was a retired logger and a member of the Bandon IOOF Lodge, No. 133. Survivors include his widow, Bertha, Langlois; sons, Lewis, Langlois; and Bill, Prince George, B.C.; a daughter, Bonnie Higgins, Langlois; eight grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren. A son, Jack, preceded him in death in 1970.

Ritualistic services were given by the Bandon IOOF Lodge Tuesday at 2 p.m. in the Bandon Chapel of Coos Mortuaries. Interment was in the Bandon IOOF Cemetery.

George Edwards

the past 10 years in Grants Pass, where his widow, Leona, survives.

Other survivors include a son, David, Coos Bay, a daughter, Pat Strain of Coquille; six sisters, Dora Autry of Tigard, Ada Campbell and Mary Capps of Bandon, Hilda Auer of Myrtle Creek, Edna Baker of Vallejo, Calif.; four brothers, Court, Jerry, Alden and Allen, all of Gold Beach; and step-children, Don Garris of McMinnville, Ron Garris of Corral Springs, Florida, Marlene Barret of Grants Pass; four grandchildren, 10 step-grandchildren, and numerous nieces and nephews.

Interment will be in the Knights of Pythias Cemetery at Bandon.



Salem Scene

by Jack Zimmerman

Oregon's Economic Future May Get Legislative Boost

Better grab something to hang on to 'cause maybe you ain't gonna believe this:

There's only eight more days left before the Big Jubilee! And that's a fact, George.

Which means there's just exactly enough time to get them parade floats, or what have you, ready; and to get them concession stands built and ready to set up in the park; and to sign-up for the Battle of Battle Rock.

Jubilee coordinator Jo Reeves, who incidentally is doing a bang-up job for her first time around--and taking on the tremendous job rather late in the program, says that anybody wanting to volunteer for the Battle should get in contact with her right quick, at 332-3771, or see Big Chief Rick Peabody, or June Denison. They do need some assistance. There ain't much pay but there is the glory of having starred in the popular pageant. Who knows, you may even get to fight with a Highlander.

Those boys have a real soft spot in their ol' Scotch hearts for the Indians. (Or is it real scotch in their ol' soft hearts?) Sign up right away, ya hear! They'll 'preciate it.

The schedule of events will probably be available the latter part of this week, if we can get 'em printed.

There's a new column starting in the News this week, called Baseball Sidelights. Ed Orr is the author, and the column will cover, as the head says, sidelights from the summer baseball program. Ed is also covering the games for us and we want to thank him a whole heap for his efforts.

Have you noticed the new look at the former variety store building next to Orford's?

The refreshing remodeling is being done by owners Mr. and Mrs. Bob Jackson, who have announced that seven rooms have been completed on the second floor for rent to singles or couples (not enough room for children). All units feature new decorating and furnishings, with kitchen and bath facilities available. They call the rentals Community House.

Who says there's no gas shortage? When I can't buy gas so bride can run the lawn mower, George, there's a mighty Big Shortage!

Gospel Group Will Appear

A 92-member high school gospel singing group from the First Church of the Nazarene in Denver, Colo., will present a free public concert June 27 at 7:30 p.m. in Upper Prosper Hall on the Southwestern Oregon Community College campus.

The concert is being sponsored by the bay area Key '73 Churches and the Arts and Lectures Committee at the college.

The group, TACT (Teen Action for Christ Today), has presented gospel music programs in 40 of the 48 continental states, as well as Mexico and Canada since 1969. Other appearances have been made at assemblies in high schools in the Denver area and the group will tour Hawaii and the western states this summer, with a European tour planned for 1974.

The group also appears regularly in their own program on a Denver television station, has completed their first record album and are currently recording a second.

Nearing its final hurdle prior to becoming law in these waning days of the 57th session of the State Legislature in Salem is Senate Bill 224.

Relatively obscure as far as the public is concerned, this bill -- among perhaps 2,500 measures facing solons this session -- would have a direct bearing on paychecks received by Oregon's entire working population for years to come.

Furthermore, the ultimate size of that workforce would depend on the bill's success or failure.

SB 224 is one of a half-dozen to emerge from the Senate Task Force on Economic Development, named a year ago by then-Senate Pres. John Burns (D-Portland) and piloted through six months of statewide study by Sen. George Wingard (R-Eugene). It would create an Economic Development Commission and remove the present Economic Development Division from the governor's office and make it a free-standing department of state government.

The legislative proposal to accomplish this fact received Senate sanction with only one dissenting vote early in the session. Ways and Means Committee is reportedly looking with favor upon required funding and it is scheduled for early action in the House after receiving unanimous do-pass recommendation from that body's State and Federal Affairs Committee.

Why is SB 224 so important to Oregon's future? And if it passes, doesn't it tend to expand bureaucracy at a time when emphasis has been on curtailing expansion of new agencies?

The bill is important to present and future wage earners because it would produce the type of independent, hard-hitting economic development agency Oregon requires if present employment is to be sustained and if future job needs are to be met.

And -- under its present leadership -- there's little danger of spawning an expanding bureaucracy. On the contrary, even in its present form it is becoming known as state government's "unbureau."

The reasons for this somewhat unique designation stem from Gov. Tom McCall's appointment last December of Edward J. Whelan as administrator.

The 47-year-old Whelan -- thoroughly familiar with all levels of government in his native state -- resigned his position as president of Oregon AFL-CIO to take the job. An Air Force pilot in World War II and Korea, Whelan cut his governmental teeth with former Portland Mayor Terry Schunk when both achieved leadership of their fire-fighter's union. He served eight years in the Legislature, was a member of both the old Portland Docks Commission and later the merged Port of Portland, is a co-founder of Western Environmental Trade Association and until his resignation was an effective lobbyist for AFL-CIO.

From experience and inclination, Ed Whelan is a dedicated pragmatist when it comes to deciding what is good and bad for his state. He believes, for instance, there's no environmental worse than that of the unemployed.

This might seem incompatible with an administration that has tended to emphasize environmental protection over everything else. But Whelan thinks they fit together and already is working with existing agencies to achieve necessary ends because economic development depends largely upon activities of the Department of Environmental Quality, State Land Board, Department of Commerce, Highway Commission and others.

The course of Oregon's economic future is pretty clear in Whelan's mind. Keeping development on that course and

expanding results to satisfy human needs are his goal. He believes that goal can be achieved largely by coordination -- without proliferation and duplication.

The boss of the new Economic Development Department would answer to a five-man commission -- equally representing the state's geographic regions. This will have a tendency to stabilize a governmental entity that has been up and down more times than a yo-yo since inception in 1953.

During that period, the Oregon economy has improved erratically and diversified to some extent. But serious problems remain.

"Our Number One export," according to Whelan, "consists of young people we educate and then fail to provide with satisfactory employment opportunities."

He hopes to achieve a new spirit of cooperation in this respect between government, business community and higher education.

While technology struggles to produce an acceptable nuclear generating capacity to meet future energy needs, Whelan would like to ease the present shortage by attracting a petroleum refinery to the state.

Recognizing Oregon's tremendous capacity for growing and processing foodstuffs, Whelan would encourage agriculture and food processing to both expand the economy generally and create new jobs in sparsely populated areas easing present urban population imbalance.

Oregon's economic health can improve to the tune of some \$80 million annually by taking proper advantage of overseas export opportunities. Whelan's staff is working with existing industry to develop this capability.

When it comes to expanding domestic trade, there are still a lot of question marks. But these and other will be erased by the new Economic Development Department's first responsibility under terms of SB 224.

The new commission would be charged with developing a comprehensive development plan and subsequent efforts would implement that plan. Implementation will secure existing jobs and provide environmentally compatible new jobs where they're needed in the future.

The whole thing is crystal clear to Ed Whelan. And he's itching to get on with it!

Most Rivers Swim Safe

Most Oregon streams and rivers are safe for swimming, reports the Department of Environmental Quality.

However, DEQ laboratory tests show bacteriological conditions make water contact activities potentially hazardous in the Tualatin River system from Gaston to the river's mouth, Johnson Creek, Marys River below Philomath, Pudding River, Columbia Slough, Rickreall Creek, Bear Creek and the Malheur River.

All other streams and rivers in the state are bacteriologically safe for water sports, but swimmers should avoid areas within about 100 yards of a sewage treatment plant or industrial outfall as a precaution against the possibility of a malfunctioning treatment system.

DEQ also reports that no stream waters can be considered safe for drinking, because even in isolated areas there is a chance of recent, local contamination from upstream uses.

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