

## DO OREGONIANS CARE?

In the February 1947 issue of *Harper's Magazine* there appears an article by Richard L. Neuberger of Portland, entitled "I Run for Office."

Apparently people have a tendency to be either far-sighted or near-sighted and too infrequently geared for dual-distance sight.

"Indeed, two campaigns for a seat in the Oregon Legislature," says Mr. Neuberger, "have made me wonder whether people really care much at all about local government. Have we thought about the atomic bomb to the exclusion of the schoolhouse on the corner?"

"I spoke at more than five hundred meetings during the 1946 campaign and found no genuine interest in the problems of our home town. People wanted England to do something about India and Palestine, but would do nothing themselves to clean up the pollution choking the salmon in the river which flowed through the center of our city (Portland). The atomic bomb and our relations with Russia were exciting; sewage disposal in the Willamette river was humdrum—and, even more depressing, it required the assessment of local taxes. In fact, when I mentioned pollution at one or two meetings, people dismissed the topic with a single comment:

"We'll get a federal grant to take care of it."

After discussing the incompatibility of a political and a writing career, Mr. Neuberger concludes, "The case against making politics my career is strong . . . Yet the argument is only 99 44-100 percent pure. The other fraction disturbs me occasionally. When I see Oregon's teachers paid the lowest salaries on the Coast, when I see a private utility company selling the power from the dam at Bonneville which the people built and paid for, when I see a Japanese-American soldier with forty-one blood transfusions denied a hotel room on a rainy night, when I see a million-dollar race track rising while

veterans cannot construct homes—then my blood pressure rises, too, and I wonder if any case is strong enough to impel abdication in favor of those who tolerate these things."

Neuberger has more to say in his article, which many Oregonians might like to read.

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 TEACHER SALARY PROBLEM  
FOR 1947-48

(Excerpt from *Sierra Education News*,  
California Teachers Association)

California Teachers Association in 1946 made a thorough survey of the cost-of-living as it affects the economic status of teachers. The CTA report, issued in March 1946, revealed that the cost-of-living, based on the reliable data of the Bureau of Labor Statistics, was up 33%, using the average for 1935-1939 as 100%.

It is of stark significance, in the light of this increase, that only a few salary schedules prevailing this year, 1946-47, show the same percentage of increase over prewar salaries. Since the study was made the picture has become still more gloomy, because salaries set in the spring of 1946 naturally took no account of the sharp increase in the cost-of-living during the past six months. The cost-of-living index at the close of 1946 was 153, or 20 points higher than that of last spring.

As the result of the wide difference between increases in the cost-of-living and the increase in their salaries, teachers during this school year have experienced the most difficult financial stringency of any year since the war began.

A recent study, reported in *United States News* of December 27, 1946, states that full-time earnings of industrial employees have increased 79% since 1939, while those of teachers increased only 31%.

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Thrift is the greatest of all virtues—especially if it was practiced by our immediate ancestors.

—*Highways of Happiness*