

Wyatt Gives Accent To Local Government



"We legislators may pass laws in Washington, D.C., but their true worth is determined by how they are carried out at the local level." That statement was made by U. S. Representative Wendell Wyatt from Oregon's First Congressional District during his keynote address to the 23rd annual General Council of the Oregon State Employees Association held in Salem from November 11 through 13.

"The Federal government can provide funds for highways, but it is the state highway departments which must build them. The Federal government can provide funds for urban renewal, but it is the cities which must redesign and rebuild their dilapidated sections. The Congress may enact legislation designed to upgrade public education, but it is the state and local officials and educators who must actually improve their schools," he declared.

Wyatt said there is little doubt that the problems of a growing and urbanizing society stimulated the flood of many of the new laws passed by the 89th Congress.

"Our cities are beset with traffic congestion, air pollution and rising crime rates. Our schools are struggling to meet the need for many new facilities for our growing school-age population. Our rivers and streams are becoming so polluted that their use for household purposes and for recreation is imperiled," he charged.

"The Oregon State Board of Census estimates that Oregon's population will reach 2,477,000 by 1985. This represents an increase of 30 percent over 1964. About half of this growth is expected to occur in the Portland metropolitan areas. The eastern counties are expected to continue to lose population to the more urbanized western portion of the state," Wyatt said.

"This continuing concentration of population in one section of our state poses at least two problems," the congressman said. "For the populous section, the main problem will be to provide increased facilities such as housing developments, highways, shopping centers and schools without destroying the amenities of life. For the sparsely populated areas, there is the problem of providing adequate public facilities with a small local tax base."

"The Federal government has various programs to cope with these problems," he continued. "The new Elementary and Secondary Education Act will provide additional grant funds to assist schools. Oregon has received \$357 million in Federal funds so far for its section of the National System of Interstate and Defense Highways. For primary, secondary and urban projects, \$137 million in Federal funds have been used or authorized since 1956. These and other programs can be utilized here in Oregon to help meet the needs of our growing and shifting population."

Wyatt said in Oregon, government employment is on the increase. "In 1947, Federal employees numbered almost 17,000

and state and local government employees almost 40,000. By 1964, Federal employment rose by 5,000 to a total of 22,000, while state and local employees had almost doubled, for a total of 76,000. At least one forecast expects government -- Federal, state and local -- to become Oregon's principal employer in 1985," he said.

State and regional and metropolitan governments will have increased functions and responsibilities in the future, Wyatt declared. "As the operation of our economy and our democratic society becomes more complex, the need for decentralizing both decision-making and administration becomes more imperative," he said.

"A disaster such as we suffered in the floods here in Oregon calls forth hard working efforts from everybody concerned. There is no thought of self-serving but only a desire to help rebuild devastated areas," Wyatt said.

He concluded by telling delegates, "We will continue to need such dedicated efforts in the years ahead, not only during times of disaster, but all of the time. New innovations and efficiency in government service will be needed to meet the public needs of the American people. We are entering a challenging era for public service and I know that everyone of you here today will rise to meet that challenge."

Wilson, Liebertz To Give OSEA Retirement Views

The Legislative Fiscal Committee's Subcommittee on Public Employees Retirement will hold a

Statewide Tax Campaign Set

Representatives of many groups who will oppose a proposed amendment to the Oregon Constitution which would limit property taxes to 1 1/2 per cent of true cash value of property met in Portland on November 29 and voted to set up a statewide campaign organization.

OSEA was represented at the meeting by Executive Secretary Thomas C. Enright, in accordance with a General Council resolution which authorized the Board of Directors to participate in a campaign to defeat the proposed amendment.



Mosser Hits Tax Measure

State Representative John D. Mosser blasted a proposed constitutional amendment which would limit property taxes to 1 1/2 per cent of true cash value and also gave state employees some advice on how to work with the legislature in his address before the OSEA General Council in Salem on November 12.

Mosser, Chairman of the Legislative Fiscal Committee and a member of the 1965 Legislature's Ways and Means Committee, is one of the leading opponents of the property tax initiative. A Portland-based group is currently circulating petitions to have it placed on the 1966 general election ballot.

If passed, he said it would be "completely destructive" to local governments. He pointed out that if one taxing district in a county needs the full 1 1/2 per cent to pay its bonded indebtedness, then county-wide levies for county government and county school services could not be levied.

Mosser termed it an "irresponsible measure" and said it would result in a "complete loss of local control." Groups such as OSEA, who oppose the measure, must stress loss of local control and point out the complicated procedures it would take to administer, he said.

The Washington County Republican also gave OSEA some advice on how to work with the legislature. He said the association must establish a priority on its needs or it might be faced with the danger of losing all of its requests.

He said the legislature never has enough money to satisfy all requests, and noted that state employees must make up their minds as to what they want the most.

Speaking of salaries, Mosser said that state workers should be concerned about the pay level of top state officials because their salaries tend to place a ceiling on the wages of those further down the scale.

Salaries, Bargaining Stressed By Hatfield



State employee salaries and collective bargaining were the main topics of a speech given by Governor Mark O. Hatfield to over 200 delegates and visitors during the second day of the OSEA General Council in Salem on November 12. He told the delegates that the State of Oregon has an obligation to its employees.

"As you know," Hatfield said, for the first time in the history of this state we have made a substantial provision in our budget for mid-biennial salary adjustments --- \$1.3 million from general funds and \$1.3 million from dedicated funds."

"This to me is part of the obligation of the state to you as employees; that we recognize your enthusiasm, your abilities and your contributions. But you can't buy groceries with them. I feel therefore, that we must be competitive in salaries, not that the money in itself is the objective, but that it is a representation of what it means for you to be able to adequately provide for your families and continue your employment with the state."

He continued by saying, "If we look at it economically, job turnover is very costly. Re-training and new training is very costly, and it is a far better economic investment to make salary ranges competitive with private enterprise and hold our employees once we acquire them, train them and place them."

In his discussion of collective bargaining, Hatfield said it was the intention of the 1965 Legislature, in passing the collective bargaining law, to provide state employees with a greater voice in presenting their needs in the affairs of government, "not just as a body of people, but as individual citizens of this state with the right to be heard. . . ."

Hatfield told the delegates that he has discussed the proposed collective bargaining rules with all of the major department heads in state government.

"I have tried to develop a consensus as has the Civil Service Commission on how we can best put the collective bargaining law into operation --- recognizing that there is a great variation and difference between agencies, and that the system in one agency might not be applicable in another; recognizing too that there are professional associations that must be involved; that there are craft groups that may become involved; that there are associations such as the OSEA that must be considered. All of these various groups have the right to be considered in setting up the mechanics and rules governing collective bargaining," he said.

Hatfield discussed the proposed rules to implement collective bargaining which were drafted by the Civil Service Commission. He said they were only "tentative" and by no means final.

"We would like to have you participate in these sessions with the Civil Service Commission," he said, "because I again emphasize that they are not final, and they will not be final until I am satis-

fied that the decisions and policies are the best representation we can get from the greatest number of our public employees. And so we look to you for the development of this kind of a consensus," he declared.

Governor Hatfield concluded this address by saying that state government has not reached its potential. "That is why I pledge my continued assistance in any way I can be of help to furthering the cause and lifting the economic position of public employees in this state."

"Once again I commend you, and once again I invite you to make even more heard and strongly felt the voice of the public employees of this state through the Oregon State Employees Association," he said.

Straub Says Caliber High



The caliber and dedication of state employees in Oregon is as high or higher than their counterparts in private industry, according to State Treasurer Robert W. Straub.

Speaking to over 200 delegates and visitors attending the opening of the 23rd annual OSEA General Council in Salem on November 11, Straub urged state employees to "raise your voices in an attempt to influence the tone of the public" in the support of measures for better government.

He said the public attitude toward state government was formed in the early days when most of the services provided by government were "restrictive," such as police power and tax collection.

But in the last three decades, he said, the role of state government has changed and so has the attitude of the citizens. The attitude of the public toward state employees is now more friendly, he noted.

Straub also praised the association for the work it has done in representing state employees.