

the OSEA news

The monthly publication of the Oregon State Employees Association

HEADQUARTERS OFFICE
1515 State Street, Salem, Oregon, 97301
or P.O. Box 2307, Salem, Oregon, 97308
Telephone: 581-1505

PORTLAND BRANCH OFFICE
1432 S.W. Sixth Avenue, Portland, Oregon, 97201
Telephone: 224-1870

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Oregon State Employees Association



OSEA DIRECTORS

PRESIDENT
CHALMERS L. JONES
223 NE Graham St.
Portland 97212

PAST-PRESIDENT
GERARD J. LIEBERTZ
2708 NE 22nd St.
Portland 97212

VICE-PRESIDENT
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3949 Summers Lane
Klamath Falls 97601

SECRETARY-TREASURER
ADELE L. EGAN
1325 Chemeketa NE
Salem 97301

ACADEMIC and UNCLASSIFIED
PAUL H. WESWIG
2112 Polk St.
Corvallis 97330

EMPLOYEE REPRESENTATION
KENNETH P. STUEVE
Rt. 1, Box 29K
Philomath 97370

INSTITUTIONS
DELBERT C. CHANEY
828 SE 8th St.
Pendleton 97801

INSURANCE
JACK A. DANLEY
1300 NW Menlo Dr.
Corvallis 97330

LAW-LEGISLATION
PATRICK GREGORY
324 SE Ella St.
Roseburg 97470

MEMBERSHIP
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942 Lancaster Dr. NE
Salem 97310

PUBLIC RELATIONS
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1180 7th St. NW
Salem 97304

RETIREMENT
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Portland 97206

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106 NE 62nd Ave.
Portland 97213
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Salem 97304
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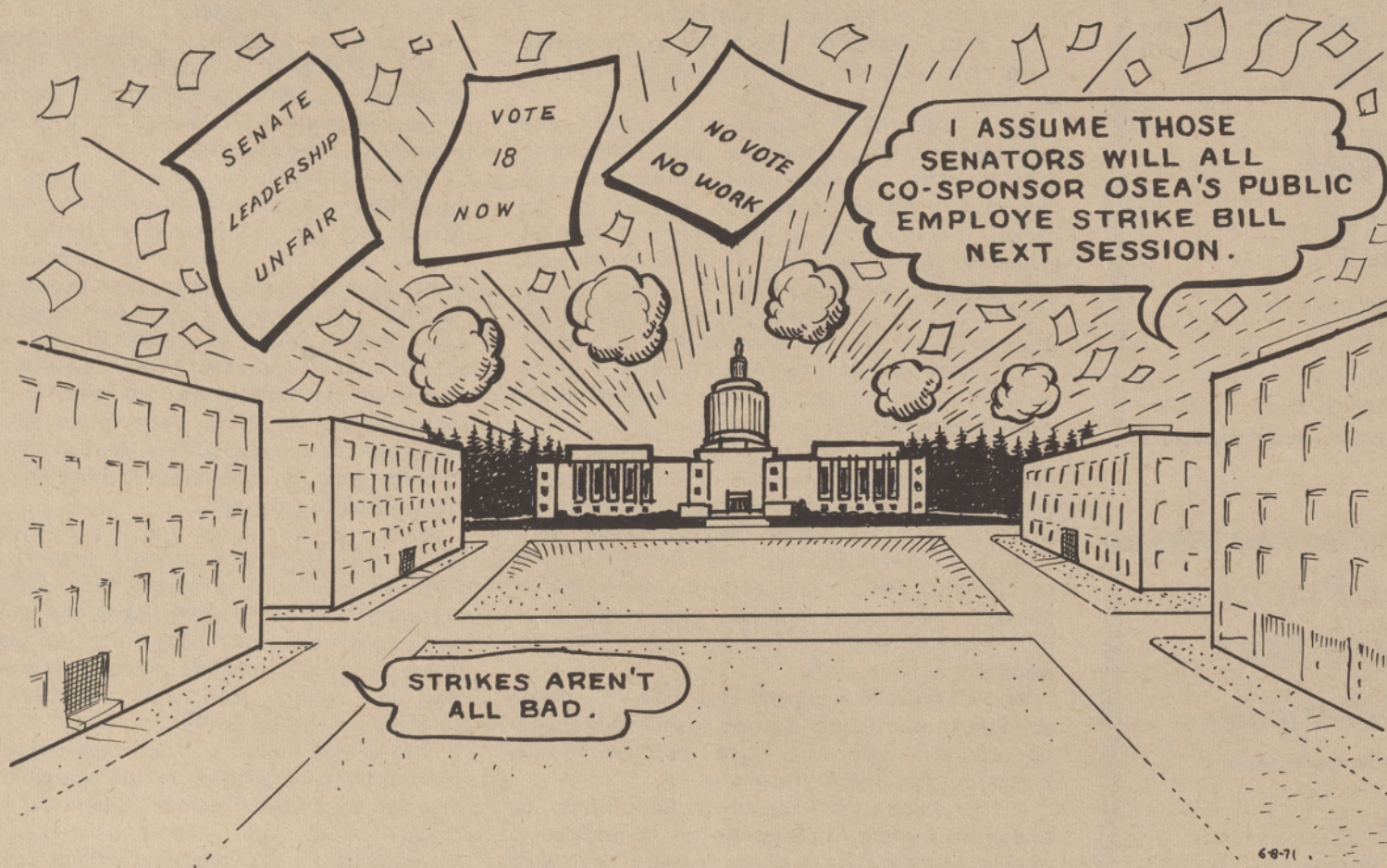
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(Address all communications to the Salem address.)

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From the.... Executive Secretary

A Look at the 1971 Session

The pay decisions of the recent legislative session might be described as, "much better than it appeared for a while we might expect; not as much as we hoped for and deserved."

The ill-advised Personnel Division proposal for changing salary steps and ranges was beaten down mid-way in the session. More than 2,000 employees, who were not recommended to get a pay raise, will receive a one-step increase. The drastic proposal for a 45 per cent limitation on merit increases has been greatly modified.

Ways and Means showed a real concern for protecting the state's merit system: of the series of Executive Department bills which OSEA felt threatened merit principles, only those which could be amended to meet Association objections were adopted.

It was disappointing that the collective bargaining procedure improvement bill was kept bottled up in the House State and Federal Affairs Committee because it made bargaining mandatory for cities and counties.

Rep. Stafford Hansell (R-Hermiston), co-chairman of the Joint Ways and Means Committee and chairman of its Salary Subcommittee, sometimes was a target of state employee criticism. Hopefully, the criticism was kept on a professional level, where the program he felt he had to advance could be objected to without reflection upon the man.

The fact that pay adjustments were not as much as OSEA worked for resulted not necessarily from the desires of Ways and Means leaders, but

from limited funds. More funds were not available because the legislative leadership, particularly on the House side, stood firmly against any new tax legislation to increase state revenues. In this context, Rep. Hansell's role was not that of architect but of engineer. He performed impressively with the resources and tools he had to work with.

Fringe benefits were given priority consideration, partly because employees could be given equal benefit with less of the tight dollars, and also because some of the costs are deferred. The long-sought employer medical-hospital contribution has been attained. Great improvements for all employees were made in the Public Employees' Retirement System, in the face of tremendous pressures for giving the benefits to special groups in separate retirement systems, and despite strong opposition from cost-concerned city, county and school district employing bodies.

How much influence the mid-session announcement of OSEA's new political action position had on the final result probably cannot be measured. No doubt, however, this and the united support given by employees to the Board of Directors' program had an effect upon the improved climate in the latter weeks of the session.

Now that the 1971 session has ended, your lobbyists begin work for the 1973 session. There is a place for every member in the political education, political action and other activities of the Association. We ask for and look forward to your participation.