

# the OSEA news

The monthly publication of the Oregon State Employees Association

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Published monthly by the  
Oregon State Employees Association

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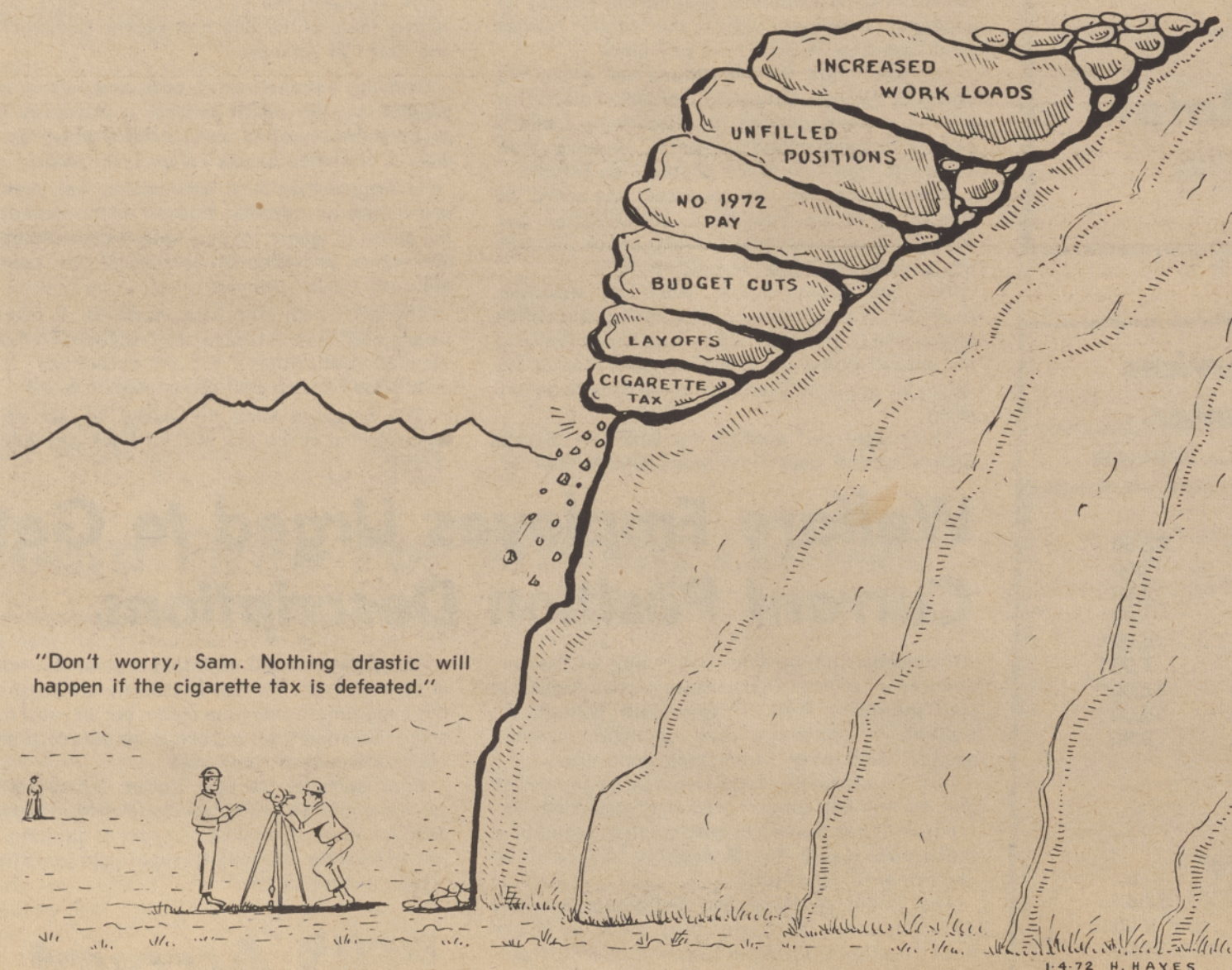
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(Address all communications  
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Second Class Postage Paid at Salem,  
Oregon. Subscription rates: \$1.50  
per year to association members;  
\$3.00 to all others; 25c per copy.  
Official publication of the Oregon  
State Employees Association, a non-  
profit organization.



## From the.... Executive Secretary

### The Real Answer

Several times over the years a senator on the Ways and Means Committee who was a good friend of state employees said to us: "Why should legislators vote pay and fringe benefits for state employees, when every time there is a vote on the taxes that finance the pay and benefits, the vote against the tax is heavier in areas of state employee concentration like Marion County than in the other areas of the state?"

A legislator told us this same question was asked during the tight 1971 legislative session in the Republican caucus.

The action of OSEA's Board of Directors in making support of the cigarette tax increase on January 18 a top priority activity will give a partial answer to the legislators' questions. The real answer, however, will come with the election returns from Salem and similar area precincts.

If the cigarette tax fails, it will take a whale of a fight to try to save the salary adjustments scheduled for July 1, 1972. The strongest weapon your lobbyists could have would be a showing in the precincts that state employees know what pays for their benefits and will work to provide it.

### No Other Way?

A good friend and long-time active OSEA member from the Corrections Division called the other day to ask where we got the idea that defeat of the cigarette tax would mean layoffs of 35 correctional officers and 132 psychiatric aides in the Mental Health Division.

We reminded him that House Bill 3064 of the special session requires that if the tax measure fails, all general fund appropriations will automatically be cut two per cent. This would be closer to four per cent because most of the reductions would be made in the second year of the 1971-73 biennium.

An analysis by the Budget Division, who would have to make the cuts, states very definitely that "layoff of staff is the only way that such reductions could be financed." It went on to give the specific figures which appear on page 4 of the special section of this paper.

Governor McCall has been so concerned by the examples given to him by his staff that he has said he would have to call another special session if the cigarette tax is defeated. Even he admits, however, that he does not have the kind of control over the legislature to make sure he could change their minds about the drastic automatic reductions.

We are not sure our friend was convinced. He was still saying, "They just couldn't do it. Somehow they would find another way."

We can't say anything is certain. But is it worth taking the chance of not getting out and voting "yes" on January 18?