

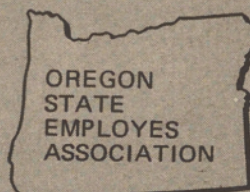
the OSEA news

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HEADQUARTERS OFFICE
1127 25th St. SE, 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



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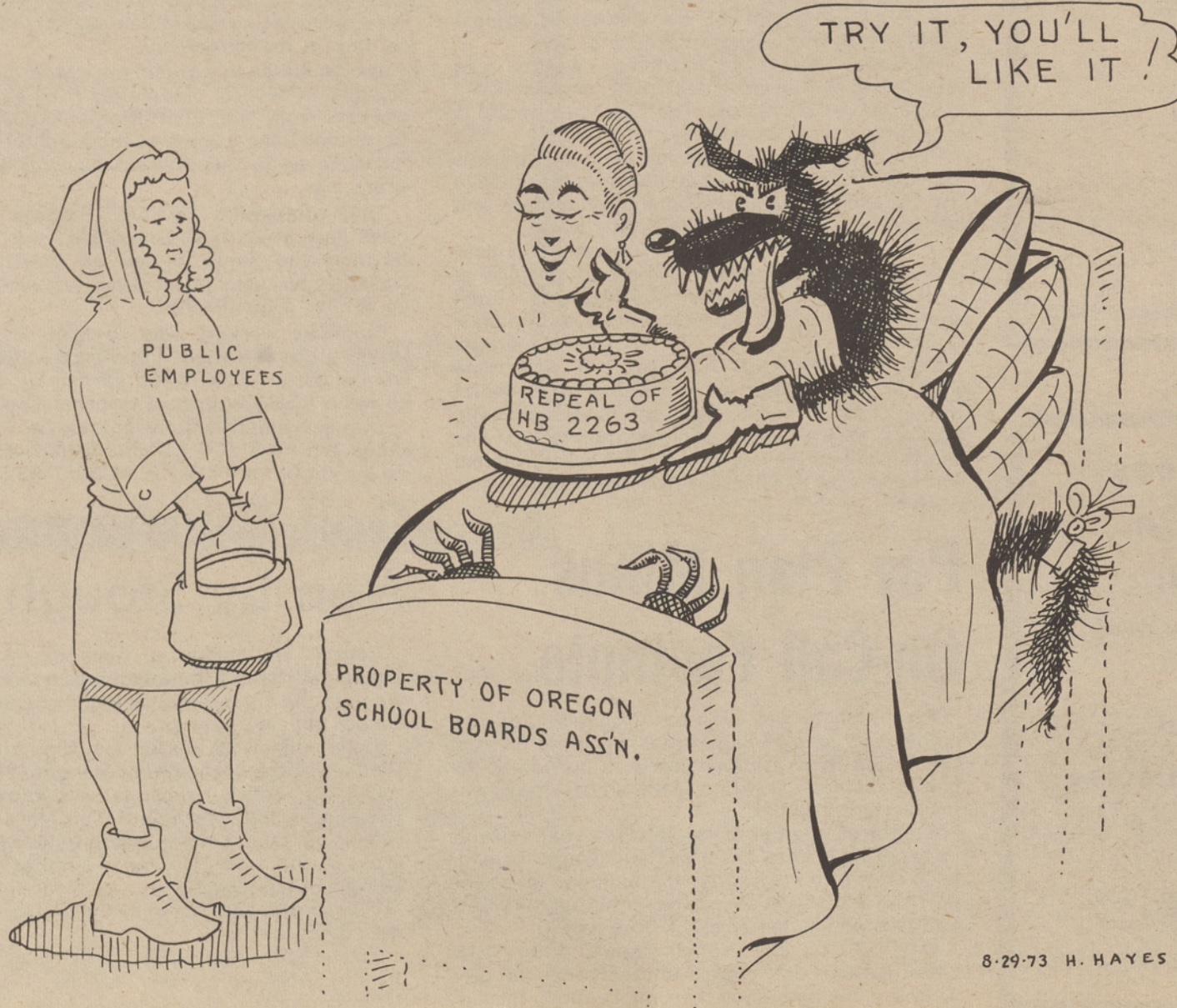
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8-29-73 H. HAYES

From the....

Executive Secretary

Strikes a False Issue

During the next month you may be approached by someone pushing a petition to "stop teacher strikes and hold down school taxes." If so, don't sign it because that isn't the purpose of the petition at all.

The petitions will be circulated by a "front" committee backed by the Oregon School Boards Association, called "Taxpayers Against Teacher and Public Employee Strikes." Their aim is to get a referendum vote on the public employe collective bargaining bill -- HB 2263 -- passed in the recent legislative session.

Strikes by teachers are not prohibited under present law. Witness the teacher strike at Hillsboro this spring, which was not taken to court because there was no law prohibiting it.

HB 2263 does not specifically prohibit strikes by all public employes, only policemen, firemen and guards at correctional and mental health institutions. For that reason its opponents (and a proposed ballot title written by the attorney general's office) claim it "gives most public employes the right to strike."

Actually, the bill contains many safeguards against strikes. It also provides penalties for prohibited strikes which are not specified in present law. Its most significant provision is authority for the courts to order injunctions against any strike which would endanger the "health,

safety or welfare of the public." Any prolonged strike in a school would certainly come into this category.

The real opposition by the school boards is to the provision in HB 2263 that the court shall order binding arbitration when a strike is prohibited. The big battles between teachers and boards have been where impartial fact-finders under the present law have made recommendations favorable to the employes and the boards have refused to pay any attention to them.

In case any state employe taxpayer is envious of or worrying about teacher salary costs, the average of salary adjustments for teachers in Oregon this year was less than three per cent. That is less than half the average pay raise for state employes.

Capitol reporter Charles Beggs recently discussed HB 2263 and the referral attempt in his Oregon Statesman column. Regarding the strike issue, Beggs said:

"That's a volatile enough issue with the public when it involves private employes. It's a bombshell in public employment, and it is a big weapon for opponents of the bill in their efforts to defeat the whole measure. . .there are real causes to doubt whether it will pass the voters, if it gets on the ballot. Images of wide-spread teacher strikes can be conjured, scare stories about government worker strikes in the East -- these kinds of things will ring home."

The School Boards Association and their "Taxpayers Against" committee will make heavy use of this phony issue to defeat a good collective bargaining bill. The best thing state employes can do right now is inform themselves and their friends on the true facts of the measure, and not allow them to be misled with scare tactics about teacher strikes and school taxes.