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LEGISLATIVE DOINGS AT OREGON'S CAPITAL

Half of Session Over and Both Houses Scarcely Started at Any Important Legislation

Salem, Ore.—Although the legislature has been in session three weeks the important legislation has made little progress. Much time has been wasted, very little accomplished, and the big legislation scarcely started. The session is more than half over with both houses behind in their work.

With the Senate staving off action on its own bills, it has displayed even smaller concern for House bills which are in the Senate, and not one House bill has been placed on third reading, although several have been on the desk for several days. It has reached the point where the House suspects the Senate is holding up its bills and House members have about decided to ignore Senate bills until the Senate indicates some degree of interest in House legislation.

Relatively Few Bills Passed.

The Senate has passed 31 bills out of 191 introduced. It has indefinitely postponed 16 others, and 3 have failed to pass when put to a vote. Even with this slim record, and with most of the important measures unacted upon the Senate is much in advance of the House, for the number of bills passed by the more numerous branch is eight less, and these are of less general importance.

The public service legislation, the compensation act, which was talked and the reapportionment—the most important legislation which the session is expected to handle—have been sidetracked. Only the highway bills have been under discussion. The compensation act, which was talked of for months did not appear until Friday. The bill for a new judicial system on which a committee of lawyers was supposed to be laboring since last November, has not been presented.

Much Jockeying in Asylum Scandal.
The complications over the asylum investigation promises to develop a merry row. Already there are several resolutions for an investigation. The Senate has adopted the concurrent resolution of Senator Locke, but the House has not considered it. The House has several investigation resolutions of its own. The selection of an unbiased, open-minded committee should be a simple matter, and the investigation can be made with dispatch, but there are innumerable obstructionists and general jockeying to stave off the probe.

Only one side of the asylum situation has been told thus far, but Steiner and his friends have been promising some disclosures which, they assert, will completely dispose of the charges which have been levelled against the institution. If half of the rumors have foundation in fact, the hottest stuff on the asylum situation and also on the selection of the branch asylum at Pendleton by Bowerman has not been uncovered.

Many State Commissions Proposed.

No less than thirteen new state commissions and boards are proposed in bills now pending before the legislature. Several of these are to be without salary, if established, and others consist of present state officers invested with new duties or extended authority.

For instance, the public service commission, one of the most important, merely extends the jurisdiction of the state railway commission. Another example is the proposed state purchasing board, which would center in the present state board the purchase of supplies for all departments and institutions.

Other state commissions and boards named in pending bills are: A civil service commission to formulate rules for examination of all employees of the state government; a highway board; a naval militia board; a parole board, to pass on all applications for pardon; a state printing board; a board for the examination and registry of graduate nurses; a state board of accountancy; a game commission; a commission to revise the judicial system of the state; a text-book commission.

Besides these, there are bills for the creation of several new state offices, including bills for an assistant secretary of state, a state hotel inspector, a fire marshal and a state auditor or examiner of accounts. Another new office is proposed by an amendment to the constitution creating the position of lieutenant governor. A resolution submitting the last named proposal to the people has already been adopted by both houses.

Good Roads Boosters Invade Senate.
Good roads boosters invaded the Senate during the discussion of the

highway bills. The good roads advocates won three victories in the Senate, the most important being the bill creating a State Highway Commission, and the bill permitting the use of all convicts on the roads when not needed at the state penitentiary. A third bill makes operative the provisions of the constitutional amendment passed at the last general election and permitting counties to bond for the construction of good roads.

It is freely predicted that these good roads measures will meet with strong opposition in the House, as sentiment in that body is decidedly adverse to their passage.

Few "Salary Grab" Bills.

A notable feature of the session is the small number of "salary grab" bills proposed this session. Thus far measures affecting the salaries of county officers in not more than half a dozen counties have been introduced. The scarcity of this class of bills may be traced largely to the record of the 1909 session when more than a score of such measures, after passing both houses, were vetoed by Governor Chamberlain. The present legislature declined to give these rejected bills further consideration, holding that if any of them had merit they should be reintroduced and take their chances.

House Upholds Initiative.

Legislation amendatory of or supplemental to any of the laws adopted by the people under the initiative stands but little chance of receiving the indorsement of the present legislature.

This was demonstrated when the House, for the second time since convening, rejected a bill having for its purpose the creation of a law board which should prepare all of the laws to be submitted to the people under the initiative. Consideration of this measure following the unfavorable report of the committee on revision of laws, was postponed indefinitely by a two-to-one vote.

Abolish Whipping Post.

With only ten dissenting votes the House passed Buchanan's bill abolishing the whipping post. By the provisions of the bill, wife beating is made punishable in the same manner as other aggravated cases of assault and battery. The debate on the bill, which was defeated in the legislature two years ago, was brief.

Revision of Irrigation Code.

Extensive revision of the irrigation code of the state is provided in a bill introduced by Representative Brooke. The proposed amendments, if adopted, embody the best features of the irrigation enterprises in the state.

Principal among the changes is one enlarging the powers of the board of directors of irrigation associations, enabling them to treat with all complications arising. Another amendment defines more especially who are legal voters within the meaning of the act, giving to any man or woman who owns land or has a homestead or desert claim a right to vote. Provision is also made whereby assessments may be levied at any time in the year. It further confers on existing associations the right to lease irrigation works already constructed. Provision is also made for the consolidation of two or more irrigation associations.

Would Give A's No Advantage.

Names of candidates of the same party for the same office on the primary ballot are to be rotated, if a bill approved by the Senate becomes a law. It was passed without a dissenting vote.

The system as worked out calls for printing of ballots in such manner that the name of every candidate where several are in the field for the same office appear at the head of the ballot an equal number of times with every other candidate. The candidates whose names begin with A will be deprived in this way of any advantage they may possess.

Text Book Substitute Passed.

Representative Clyde introduced a substitute for his free text-book bill. In the substitute it is provided that a petition of one-fourth of the qualified school voters in a district may be placed before the board and an election called to determine whether free text-books should be furnished the school children. The bill passed the House.

Propose Eastern Oregon Normal.

Hopes that the state normal school question had been settled finally and definitely at the last general election were shattered when Senator Oliver introduced a bill providing for the establishment of an Eastern Oregon normal school at La Grande. Under the bill an appropriation of \$100,000 is made for the use of the proposed school.

When the bill was read a gasp of surprise went around the Senate chamber, followed by expressions of mirth on the part of some of the members, which would indicate that possibly the bill would not proceed far before reaching an indefinite postponement.

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