NEW CITY LICENSE

Some Protests Voiced Against Its Enforcement.

ITS PROVISIONS MISUNDERSTOOD

Why It Was Necessary to Raise More Money Before the End of the Year.

Complaints have been made about the blanket license ordinance passed by the Council at its last meeting, but not nearly so many as were expected. Several dissatisfied persons have called at the City Hall to see the ordinance and have certain points explained to them. Mr. Branch, of the license committee, is there every day ready to listen to any further complaints and furnish all information or explanation desired.

One of the first complaints usually made is that the ordinance discriminates, as there are a number of trades, businesses and professions which have not been licensed. To this the answer is that the ordinance is not yet completed. The committee has not finished its work, and there is plenty of time before October 1 to make additions or necessary changes. The committee having, however, completed so much of the ordinance and the Councilmen having unanimously approved of what was done, it was considered advisable to pass the ordinance so far as completed.

The Mayor, who had carefully examined the ordinance during its progress, signed it the same day it was passed.

Of course it is understood that the synopsis of the ordinance published in The Oregonian was as brief as possible, as the ordinance entire would have filled eight or nine columns, and without the wording of the various sections some provisions are not plain and are liable to be misunderstood. The committee has no desire to tax any one out of business, and complaints in regard to any feature of the ordinance which appears to have such a tendency will receive its prompt attention. There are probably some instances where a person or firm may have to pay license on more than one kind of business, but it is not the intent of the ordinance to make persons generally pay a license for more than one kind of business.

For example: The proprietor of a drug store inquired of the license committee whether because he kept a few cigars and a little candy in his store, he would be called on to pay a cigar dealer's license and a candy dealer's license. He was told, "Certainly not." His business and occupation is keeping a drug store and a drug store license was all he would be required to pay.

Persons interviewed on the subject of the license advance many different theories in regard to how money to meet the expenses of the city should be raised. Some say it should be raised by a tax on all the property in the city. Some say real estate should be taxed higher. Generally these pay little or no tax on real estate. Some do not object to the license law, but complain that they are charged too much. Some say that manufacturers should not pay a license, that manufacturers should be encouraged.

Cigar Manufacturer's View.

E. Schiller, manufacturer of cigars, stated that the ordinance required him to pay a stipulated sum for each man employed, and that he calculated that it would cost him $400 per year, which sum, he said, was an outrageous tax, considering the volume of his business, and the further fact that he is also required to pay a yearly tax on his stock of goods to the Sheriff for city, county and all other purposes. He called attention to the constant effort made in Portland to encourage home manufacture, and remarked that the license law was a direct blow against it, so far as his trade is concerned. Eastern cigars, he said, are sold here in vastly greater volume than the home product, and the license puts still another obstacle in the way of the local manufacturer. He wanted to know if a cigar factory has to pay a license regulated by the number of men employed, why a sawmill, a shirt factory, clothing manufactory and every factory or shop which employs men cannot be licensed in the same manner.

Wants No Discrimination.

H. C. Wortman, secretary and treasurer of the Olds & King Company, stated frankly that he considered the license of $125 per quarter for department stores too high. He knew it was necessary to have money to defray the expenses of running the city and that the police and fire departments must be kept up, and did not object to a reasonable license, provided that all kinds of business were taxed, and there was no discrimination. He had noticed that many who ought to be licensed did not appear in the list presented in The Oregonian. Personally, the only complaint he had to make was that the license imposed on department stores was, in his opinion, too high, but whether the license committee could be brought to take the same view of the question he did not know.

Thinks Council Acts for the Best.

D. McAllan, of McAllan & McDonnell, had no objection to paying a license. He had been too busy to find time to examine the ordinance carefully. He thought the principle of the ordinance all right, but it should be as equitable as possible, and all should be included. He felt satisfied that the city had a good lot of officials and he had faith enough in them to believe that they would do what they considered was right and for the best.

Too Many Licenses.

H. C. Broeden, dealer in and manufacturer of furniture, thought placing a license on business looked like class legislation. He had paid city, county and school taxes on his property and merchandise, and now he was required to pay a license on what had already been taxed. He manufactures as well as sells furniture, and he supposed he would have to pay a manufacturer's license as well as a dealer's license, and as he sells linoleum and carpets, he supposed there would be another license for that.

Mr. Kerr, of Wadhams & Kerr Bros., said he had not examined the ordinance; had only seen the synopsis published in The Oregonian. He did not object to a legitimate tax if others were taxed in the same manner. From what he had read of the ordinance he was of opinion that the firm would have to pay license on a number of different businesses. They sold groceries; also tea and coffee, and baking powders, and in all it looked to him as if they would have to pay licenses for at least half a dozen different business vocations. This, of course, he could not consider right.

Several other large business houses, who declined to be quoted, as they had not sufficiently examined the ordinance to express an opinion in regard to it, seemed to have an idea that they would have to pay license on several different businesses. They had conceived this idea from reading the following section of the ordinance, which it would seem is clearly calculated to create such an impression. If this is not the intention of the section, the license committee cannot too quickly furnish an explanation of what it does mean:

"Section 4 provides that in every case where more than one pursuit, employment, occupation or business, for which a license is required, shall be pursued or carried on in the same place by the same person, at the same time, a license must be taken out for each pursuit, employment, occupation or business, according to the rate severally prescribed therein."

Consumers Must Pay It.

Retail grocers called on all objected to the license on the ground that they paid taxes on their stocks and delivery wagons already, and that to be charged an additional sum in the shape of license would smack of double taxation. One leading grocer said: "If we have to pay this, it will add $110 a year to the cost of running our business, and we will be obliged to charge customers enough to cover this. The consumer will therefore have to pay this tax, as, if a certain per cent is added to the cost of doing business, we will put it on to the consumer.

"I do not think the blanket license ordinance is just. Taxation should be upon real and personal property and not upon this or that vocation." All the retail grocers called on uttered about the same sentiments.

Will Investigate First.

James Honeyman, of Honeyman, DeHart & Co., said there were some things about the license ordinance which were not clear to him, but he had not yet had time to talk to the committee or to examine the ordinance carefully. The firm sold hardware at wholesale and retail. They also sold powder, bicycles, etc., and from the synopsis of the license he had seen in The Oregonian, he judged that it would require them to pay license as wholesale and retail dealers in hardware, as dealers in bicycles, powder, etc. This, he did not think would be right, but before making any complaints he would see the committee and find out just how the ordinance affected him.

Merchandise Taxed Too High.

Frank Rothschild, of the Famous Clothing House, thought it an injustice that merchandise dealers should be required to pay a license. If there was need of money to defray the expenses of the city it should be raised by equal taxation on all. He realized that money must be raised and was willing to pay his share of taxes, but while the assessed valuation of real estate had been lowered last year, the assessment on merchandise had been increased and he had been taxed heavier than ever before. He considered the license law unjust and unequitable.

Want the "Big Fellows" Taxed.

Retail clothiers who handle men's furnishings and boots and shoes "kicked" because their license, they thought, would amount to $45 per quarter. "The officials might as well take the whole thing and done with," one of them said. "I think property-owners should pay the expense of running the city and let us poor tenants off. I am willing to do my share in fighting this license law, as I cannot afford to pay any such sum. Why don't they tax the big fellows according to the business they do?"

Will Pay if Others Do.

Hardware retailers were not very willing to pay the license, either. They thought $15 a quarter too much, and that its imposition would not stick in law. They would pay, however, if others did.

Calls It Partial Taxation.

A jeweler said: "This is very partial taxation. Why don't they license lawyers, doctors and other people who are transacting business in the city? You ask how we feel about the new license. What does it matter how we feel? I suppose we will have to pay it or go out of business." This dealer had not read the list of new licenses, and so had not begun to worry over it.

Will Fight the License.

A furniture dealer who handles general house furnishings said he would fight the license. "I sell furniture, carpets, glassware, crockery, stoves and tinware," he said, "and my license would add $65 a quarter to my expenses. I pay taxes on my stock and delivery wagons and that is enough. I suppose they will try and make me pay extra because I sell on installments, too!"

One Man Satisfied.

A leading undertaker said: "Under the blanket license ordinance it will cost me $38 per quarter, and I am perfectly satisfied, providing all lines of business are taxed. I believe that all vehicles run on the streets of Portland should pay a tax and the revenue be put into a fund for the repair of streets and not diverted to any other purpose. Otherwise, I am strongly opposed to the ordinance."

Not Much Interested.

A retail dealer in crockery and glassware said: "I am more interested in timber lands than in licenses just now, as I have a large tract of splendid fir to dispose of, and now is the time to sell timber land. My license under the new ordinance will increase my store expenses $25 per quarter. I think the big fellows ought to pay this license instead of me."

Threaten to Contest.

Keepers of several cigar stands who do not manufacture were spoken to and they were just as indignant over the $10 a quarter the new ordinance puts upon them. "Ten dollars a quarter is not very much," one of them said, "but the ordinance will be contested all the same."

WHY IT WAS PASSED.

Cold Facts as to the City's Financial Condition.

Some busy business men who do not have time to read reports of Council proceedings have been asking for information in regard to the blanket-license ordinance, and have, among other things, inquired what was the particular necessity for such an ordinance at this time, and, if it was caused by a deficit in the city exchequer, what was the cause of this deficit? etc. The answer to these questions will be found in the following report from the ways and means committee, submitted to the Council, and adopted by it July 18, and which led to the adoption of resolutions directing the license committee to prepare the blanket-license ordinance and the vehicle-license ordinance:

The City's Finances.

The committee on ways and means—Messrs. Branch, Masters and Sherrett—presented the following communication, which was on motion received and placed on file:

Your committee on ways and means appointed at the first meeting of this present Council by his honor, the Mayor, finds, as suggested in his message, several grave and serious problems brought before them for consideration, which will tax the wisdom of this entire Council to properly handle. We ask your respectful attention to the following facts:

The decrease in the valuation of city property made by the County Assessor from $33,896,000 to $28,567,090, has resulted in a decrease in the revenue from direct taxation of $38 652, apportioned as follows:

Fire department, a reduction of	$19,658 00
Police department, a reduction of	17,201 88
Light department, a reduction of	14,743 50
Street repair department, a reduction of	2,456 12
Bonded interest fund, a reduction of	24,572 50
Total	$78,632 00

We find that the fire department has practically exhausted all the balance to its credit January 1, 1900, together with the amount already received from the collection of taxes for the current year, and stands today with an exhausted treasury, with the expenses of the last six months of this year staring them in the face, with the only hope that in some way we can provide for their needs over and above what may yet be received from taxes. To cripple this department by reducing the force of men employed would at once raise the rate of premium for insurance all over the city, and doubtless in the business sections of the city result in the cancellation of a large portion of the insurance by the insurance companies interested.

We find that the police department is even in a worse condition than the fire department. The entire pay-roll for June and a portion of May is not provided for, and it is generally understood that the Police Commissioners have already reduced their force. These two departments have been economically managed. Their forces ought not to be decreased a single man, and the problem confronts us in a very forceful and serious manner.

We find that there is a growing opinion among the owners of property that, where a street has been once fully improved at the expense of the abutting property, thereafter the said street should be kept in repair at the expense of the general fund. This is especially so in regard to the elevated roadways and the bridges in the city, even to the extent of remonstrances signed by a majority of the owners of property affected. We understand that the Supreme Court leans somewhat towards this view. This situation seriously cripples the City Engineer's department. The City Engineer's department can only expend the sum of $300 per month towards the general expense of repairs to streets and bridges. There are several bridges that are now in a dangerous condition, notably: Bridge on Hood street, between Porter and Gibbs; bridge on Hood street, between Caruthers and Baker; First-street bridge, on Marquam Gulch; Northrup-street bridge, now closed to traffic. The bridge at Fourteenth and Raleigh streets is old, and needs rebuilding. The long bridge at Willamette Heights badly needs a new deck.

We understand that the interest fund on the bonded indebtedness of the city must be maintained at all hazards. It will not answer to default one day in the payment of interest. This interest fund is likely to call for relief before the expiration of the year 1900. This fund will need about $30,000. The reduction of the assessment of city property has affected the sale of our improvement bonds. It is the duty of the Council to maintain the credit of the city, and so far as possible make its securities good. The improvement bond interest fund has already had an appropriation of $5000, and may possibly require as much more. These various departments and interests are asking the general fund for relief.

The general fund has no income from taxation. Its only sources of revenue are from licenses, costs and fines. The understanding is that values will not be changed in the assessment for the coming year. This makes it very important that we take that fact into account. We are satisfied that the present license ordinance does not cover equitably all trades and occupations that it should cover. There are large numbers of business houses, trades, investment companies, brokers, loan agents, dealers in bonds and securities, and other occupations, who receive the benefit and protection of the fire, police and general authorities of this city, and should properly and legitimately be asked to support the city government. We therefore respectfully ask you to vote for and support a resolution which will be offered at this meeting, authorizing the committee on licenses to prepare and submit to this Council a blanket license ordinance which shall equitably and justly reach all parties who should contribute to the support of the city government.

The "Blanket."

PORTLAND, Aug. 6.—(To the Editor.)—I beg permission to use a small portion of your valuable space in order that I may enter a protest, and register a "kick" against the new scheme called the "blanket license ordinance."

In the beginning I want it distinctly understood that I would not try to evade any just tax or license required by our city for the maintenance of our municipal government. There is no doubt that it is almost imperative at this time for our city fathers to raise funds, from some source, with which to meet their pressing obligations. But what are the conditions which exist at the present time and have been in vogue here for many years, which make it necessary to pass such an ordinance?

When a business concern of any kind finds it is making money on the wrong side of the ledger, the first thing it should do, if possible, is to reduce expenses; and if this cannot be accomplished, its existence will be of short duration, for, unfortunately, business houses cannot put up "blanket ordinances" and derive benefit from them.

The City of Portland has been for many years, and is, to a great extent, at the present time, one of the most extravagant cities in the country. With the exception of the fire department and the present City Council, every official, from Mayor to Poundmaster, receives twice as much compensation as the city is able to pay for such services.

There are men today drawing large salaries from the City of Portland, who, if thrown upon their own resources, could not earn $50 per month. I contend that a city should be operated upon the same principles as any other great enterprise, and to be successful must live within its means. This I believe can be done without taxing every legitimate business enterprise out of existence.

Let the salaries of our public officials be cut in two, and the offices in some instances dispensed with entirely, for it is a well-known fact that we have quite a number of nice, soft, political snaps in the shape of public offices which have been created for the express purpose of giving reward to some political grafter or ward heeler, and from which the taxpayers gain no benefit whatever. We have about as much use for such officials as a cat has for two tails, yet the public are required to pay for them.

Another source of income could be derived by placing a toll upon all of our "free bridges," and thereby make them self-sustaining, or partially so at least. We have altogether too many "free institutions" in this fair city of ours, the cost of which, coupled with the grafters' salaries, makes it necessary to pass a "blanket ordinance."

I consider this poposed "blanket" unfair, unjust, and discriminating from top to bottom, and if put into force will be the means of driving out business already established here, and prevent other enterprises from coming in.

This is indeed a "cold blanket" for some branches of trade. Take for instance the second item in the list: "Each and every person, firm or corporation acting as principal or agent in soliciting or taking orders for, or selling books, maps, charts, periodicals, clothes, or other goods, $10 per day or $50 per week."

This single license, it seems to me, if properly inforced, would provide all the revenue required, and we would still have enough surplus cash on hand with which to employ a few more License Collectors. This item covers nearly every business in existence, including all outside drummers and traveling men, and it even gives the newsboys and Salvation Army girls a "knock-out."

Then again the compilers of this great document have placed all job printers on the list for $10 per quarter, but have very considerately omitted the newspapers and periodicals. The job printers I suppose are taxed because of the great amount of city and county printing they get in the way of delinquent tax lists, election ballots, city printing, etc. The public will remember how the ballots and tally-sheets for the late election were handled.

Again I would like to inquire why the promoters of this scheme have placed on the exempt list the lawyers, doctors, dentists, patent medicine men, box factories, saw mills, street railways, and numerous others? I am opposed to this proposition from beginning to end, and will contribute the sum set opposite the business I represent to help defeat this unjust measure.

MADDEN, THE PRINTER.

CANNOT FIND HER MOTHER

Child of Mrs. Bunnemeyer Arrives From Colorado.

Traveling alone to Portland, all the way from Trinidad, Colo., little Gertrude Bunnemeyer was disappointed on her arrival here Sunday morning at not finding her mother waiting to receive her. The child is plucky, and remained expectant at the Union Station as minute after minute passed and her mother failed to put in an appearance. The matron of the station, noticing the 12-year-old girl with a patient, disconsolate look, sitting in the waiting-room, inquired her name. Ascertaining the circumstances of the case, she took the youngster under her care, and until 7 o'clock both did not give up hope that the mother would presently arrrive. Then Manager Lyons, of the Terminal Company, had the child placed in the care of Proprietor Charles Broock and Mrs. Broock, at the Barr Hotel, where she is receiving the best of attention until her mother is found.

The child is bright and intelligent, and told the circumstances of her coming in the following narrative: "My mother's name is Helena Bunnemeyer. My father is dead. I have been living in Trinidad, Colo., with my sister Mary, a girl 17 years old, and we were staying with the Hughes family there after our mother left for Portland. That was a year ago last May. She came to Portland to take care of my grandmother, Mrs. Stormberg, who was living with my grandfather on a farm near Portland. When my grandmother was well again, mother moved into town.

"Two weeks ago she wrote for me to come to Portland as soon as I could. Before I left my sister wrote that I was coming, and told in the letter when I would get to Portland. We did not have the address. We just addressed the letter 'Portland, Or.' I wrote her another letter from Portland Sunday evening, telling her I was here. No, I didn't cry when she did not come, but I waited all day for her. Everybody has been very kind to me. My mother could not have received our letter, else she would have come."

The Police Station was informed yesterday of the case. Postmaster Croasman was also notified, and instructed all the letter-carriers to make inquiries for such a person as Mrs. Helena Bunnemeyer, who came to Portland within a year, with two small children. No such name is found in the city directory. The child is positive her mother is in Portland, and it should be a matter of only a few days before her mother learns of the child's arrival.

Divorce Suit.

Anna Larson has commenced suit against Olaf A. Larson for a divorce, on the ground of gross drunkenness. The plaintiff alleges that from the time of her marriage to the defendant, at Vancouver, Wash., in 1890, until November, 1894, she lived with him, although part of the time was compelled to work to support herself and child, because the defendant had contracted the drinking habit and become lazy and shiftless. Mrs. Larson says she then went to Montana and worked as a domestic until January, 1897, when she returned to her husband, who was at Mullan, Idaho, on his promise that he would reform. Instead, she alleges he drank more than before, and broke the furniture and threatened to kill her, and was prevented from shooting her through the interference of a neighbor. The plaintiff further states that Larson has repeatedly told her he would kill her if she attempted to get a divorce, and she asks the court to issue an order restraining him from visiting, following, speaking with or interfering with her in any manner, and for the legal custody of their child.