



Bishop Stephen G. Spottswood, chairman of the national board of directors of the NAACP, congratulates Richard A. Meyer, president of Anheuser-Busch, Inc., upon his election to the national board of the NAACP.

Mr. Meyer is the first business representative elected to the NAACP board west of the Mississippi in the history of the civil rights organization. The notification of Mr. Meyer's election took place at the NAACP Fourth Annual Founders Day Awards Luncheon in St. Louis recently. Mr. Meyer also received an award from the St. Louis Chapter of the NAACP for his outstanding contributions to the chapter in obtaining the largest number of life memberships in a crash two-week program for the chapter.

Nilson supports wage minimum

A strong recommendation for passage by the Legislature of a bill introduced by Representative Vera Katz (Dem.-Portland) that would raise the amount of the state minimum wage and that would extend coverage under the Oregon Minimum Wage Law to agricultural piece workers was made by Norman O. Nilson, the State Labor Commissioner.

Nilson testified before the House Labor Committee on HB 2079 in Salem. This measure calls for raising the Oregon minimum wage from \$1.25 an hour to \$1.60 an hour. He called the present \$1.25 "unrealistic, something which belongs in the past and indefensible."

He said that exemption of agricultural workers from minimum wage coverage is "an idea of the past." He said that this is clearly demonstrated in that two nearby states, Montana and California, have enacted legislation to provide that agricultural workers have equal protection under minimum wage statutes.

Nilson said he felt "disappointment when I realize that a fellow Oregonian who earns the established legal

wage of \$1.25 has to work three minutes longer than a Russian worker in order to buy a pound of roast and that he has to work about as long as his Russian counterpart to earn enough for a pound of potatoes."

The Commissioner said he was speaking not only as Labor Commissioner "whose sworn duty is to assure and to protect the right of Oregon's working men and women to a living wage but also as a citizen whose social conscience is deeply troubled by a situation which is unhealthy - economically, socially and morally."

He said that he derives little comfort and assurance that a majority of the people covered by the Oregon law earn "little more than that pitiful, substandard wage." He emphasized, "In this case, even a relatively few is too many. If the legal minimum of \$1.25 constitutes an unhealthy condition, which indeed it does, then I don't think we can ignore it because there is not an epidemic yet."

Nilson said that in respect to those who work in agriculture and are not presently covered by minimum

wage legislation, they are involved in an industry which is rapidly being mechanized and which, in turn, needs fewer and fewer people. He said that the number of farms of less than 50 acres declined by 68 per cent between 1950 and 1969 while farms of more than 1,000 acres increased by almost 25 per cent in the same period.

"As we observe this process, similar to historical trends in other industries where structural changes and mechanization have taken place, we must ask ourselves: Where does it leave individual workers; what does it do to their individual rights and safeguards?"

"We find that in 1971 slightly less than half of the nation's hired farm workers had Federal minimum wage protection. Also, of all the farms which in 1970 employ one or two hired workers, 97 per cent were not covered by Federal minimum wage provisions."

"Again we ask: Where

does this leave the individual worker? Those scattered ones must not be forgotten ones. Like human freedom, social progress and social justice are indivisible. "The idea of keeping one part of Oregon's work force isolated in no-man's land where the rule is exemption from the rule is an idea of the past."

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"Voice of the NAACP"

by Ellis Casson, President

"Do We Really Want a Holiday for 'King'?"

A few weeks ago we observed the birthday of the late Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and again we heard the clamor for a holiday in honor of Dr. King.

There is no doubt that Dr. King's birthday should be a national American holiday. There is also little doubt that such a reality will eventually come, but when?

A lot will depend upon the sense of reality and the determination exercised by Black people in pursuit of this goal.

As Black people we must begin this discussion by realizing that we are as far away from a King holiday as we are because of our miser-

able support of the programs and dream that Dr. King lived and died for.

We give glorified lip service to the world about our love for Dr. King, but the world watches and our enemies sneer as they see us letting Dr. King's organization, SCLC, die. The world watches as the King memorial and other tributes to the life and testaments of Dr. King stumble along on white graces with little or no Black support.

The world watches as those who rose to the center of the national stage, with the blood of Dr. King's elimination forever tarnishing their robes compete, ego-trip and take rule or ruin attitudes about the movement he gave so much to build. Black America sits idly by as the whole King movement splinters according to the whims and designs of King's disciples.

The first step for us to get the King holiday is to support the programs for which Dr. King died.

It is difficult to get insulated white folks to support a King holiday when we (Blacks) don't get out and work for it. Talking alone will not take us to victory.

The point is that Black is no longer "in" in America. We must scratch, claw and struggle for everything we get. We will not get this holiday through half-hearted effort. We've got to let this country know that we want this day and we want it now.

It's awfully discouraging to realize how often we forget. Our commitment to Dr. King doesn't seem to go any further than mementos and keepsakes on the wall. We identify with his memory, but we don't support it.

It is time to do something or get off the pot. That means SCLC should not be allowed to die. That means that Blacks should send their nikes, dimes and dollars to support the King Memorial and the King Center in Atlanta. Support the

MLK program here at Portland State.

Yet, if we continue to show more reverence for the weekend Scotch than we do for the King programs, we can forget it.

Currently, it is not politically expedient to do anything for Blacks no matter how justified. A King holiday is not one of the most popular possibilities available right now.

There is a touchy political question involved. Dr. King was not popular with the conservatives and right-wingers of this country. That is the opposition that some are afraid to buck with the holiday thing.

I have said many times and I say again, America is not a democracy, it never has been and it never will be. America is a pluralistic society within which all interests must fight it out to get their piece of the action.

Black America can get that King holiday - and all it needs to do is to prove it wants it bad enough. This must be proved by action and not by words.

After all, if Blacks won't support Dr. King, why should expedient white politicians risk the votes of the districts to support him?

Charity begins a home and spreads abroad. The NAACP supports the passage of a bill in Salem now asking for a holiday on January 15th to pay honor to Martin Luther King, Jr.

This State must act and act NOW.



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Fish bills progress

Senator Mike Thorne of Pendleton announced that hearings on a series of fish bills, including the measure to close the Columbia River to Salmon fishing from February 1 to June 1 and the bill to prohibit the incidental catch of steelhead by commercial fishermen, will be held on Wednesday, February 21 at 3:00 p.m. in the State Capital Building in Salem.

Senator Vern Cook (Dem.-Portland), a strong proponent of tighter restrictions on commercial fishing in the Columbia River, said, I commend Senator Thorne for this prompt action in scheduling the hearings on these very important bills. The Washington Natural Resources Committee, the equivalent of Senator Thorne's Natural Resources Committee held its first hearings on January 25. I understand

that the Washington House Natural Resources Committee will also hear the bills in the near future. The Oregon House also has the same bills before it and should set hearings not too long after the Senate hearings. The combination of all of these hearings and the facts that will be developed should provide the factual basis for rapid action by both the Oregon and the Washington legislatures.

"When I attended the hearings held by the Washington Senate Natural Resources Committee I was advised by its Chairman, Senator Lowell Peterson, that the Washington lawmakers would welcome a meeting with their corresponding Oregon counterparts. I hope very much that by March 1 this can be accomplished and identical legislation adopted by both legislatures before the final adjournment of either."

Report from the Senate

BY Senator Keith Burns

The 1973 Legislative session is now concluding the fourth week. We have gotten off to a rapid start with a number of important programs and bills. Probably of greatest interest and concern among both the legislature and the public is the question of property tax relief for home owners and renters. The committee on revenue is presently considering the Governor's plan for property tax relief, which is contained in two House Bills, No. 2005 and No. 2040 and one Senate Bill, No. 43.

These plans would remove the funding of school operations from property tax. The State would then provide direct aid to local school districts.

Naturally, the money for state aid would have to come from other sources of revenue. This would come from three sources. First, a state wide property tax on income producing property with a constitutional limitation of \$10 per \$1000 of assessed valuation. Second, the personal and corporate income tax levels would be increased especially in upper income tax brackets. The third and final source of the new revenue, is that taxes on businesses would be imposed.

Local school control by boards of education would still apply to all other operations. Boards of education would be permitted to levy local property taxes for school operations for only a total amount of \$2 per \$1000 of true cash value. Such taxes could only be levied subject to a vote of the people in the school district.

It is strongly felt that some form of property tax relief is not only required but will quickly pass the legislature and be referred to a vote of the people.

Several other bills and programs have come up which are of great importance to Multnomah County residents.

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