

OREGON GASOLINE TO RISE IN PRICE

Standard Oil First to Make Announcement.

ADVANCE 1 TO 4 CENTS

Shortage of Product Ever-Present Danger—Portland May Lose Out as Distributing Center.

Because the last Oregon legislature passed a gasoline test law with requirements far more rigid than those of any other state, Oregon motor car owners now face the certain prospect of having to pay the piper in the form of a rise in price of from 1 to 4 cents per gallon.

The rise is forecast by an editorial announcement in the November issue of the Standard Oil Bulletin, published at Standard Oil headquarters in San Francisco, and just received here.

The Associated, Shell and Union Oil companies have not yet announced any contemplated action.

This announcement is confirmed by J. E. Balsey, district sales manager here for the Standard Oil company. He has not as yet been officially apprised as to the date the price increase will become effective or its exact amount, but said it would be soon and was certain to be "a substantial increase."

Oregon Law Stands Alone.

"The situation is just this," said Mr. Balsey, shortly before he left Portland on a 10-day trip to headquarters of the company in Los Angeles. "The Oregon law requires that all gasoline sold in the state shall conform to a Baume gravity test of 68. This is the only such law in the United States.

"Other Pacific coast states and the United States government base their gasoline requirements on boiling points, without reference to specific gravity. Boiling points are not, and never has been a scientific test of gasoline efficiency. In the early days, all gasoline was of the same quality, but with improved refining methods and the necessity of 'cracking up' crude oil to obtain the greatest possible amount of motor fuel, the specific gravity has inevitably been lowered.

"The boiling points test, with a continuous chain of low to high boiling points, is now the one universally accepted except in Oregon, and the one finally adopted by the United States government.

Special Process Needed.

"But the specific gravity law is on the Oregon statute books and must be obeyed. This means that every drop of gasoline to be sold in this state must be put through a special refining process, must be shipped in special compartments on the steamers, must be stored here in separate storage tanks. The cost of complying with these requirements is very great, and at the same time motorists gain nothing, because gasoline meeting the boiling points test gives more power.

"The increase in price is due solely to this law, and will be based entirely on the additional cost of conforming to the law's requirements. The unfortunate thing about it is that the increase must come out of the pockets of the people.

"I don't know yet how much the increase will be, but it will be substantial. The people of Oregon are the only ones in the whole United States who will have to suffer this higher price, which is due solely to the extra cost of manufacture and distribution imposed by this law."

But this price increase is not the whole of the situation, nor its worst feature. Even with the added cost, Oregon motorists face a constant danger of gasoline shortage. As no other states require the Oregon test, only a limited amount of the special process gasoline for Oregon is manufactured.

Acute Shortage Faced.

When gasoline supplies here run short between steamer shipments, as happened a couple of months ago, when the state was within seven days of an absolute famine, the only possible way to avert such a famine is to suspend the operation of the law. It is illegal under the law to sell in Oregon gasoline that passes the California and Washington tests.

When this shortage occurred a couple of months ago, the governor was so serious that Governor Olcott permitted the shipment of several thousand gallons of gasoline into the state from Washington by the various oil companies here. The governor made plain that this was permitted at the time only because of the emergency and that he had no authority to suspend enforcement of a law on the statute books.

As a matter of fact, though no publicity has been given it, the state has been even closer to an actual famine since that time. A few weeks ago towns in eastern and central Oregon were entirely without gasoline, while reserve stocks in Portland had been used up until the sole supply remaining was that in the tanks of the various service stations. A shipment arrived just in time to save the day.

Portland is one of the main north-west gasoline distributing points of the Standard Oil company and other companies. But to comply with the Oregon law, officials explain, they have to provide separate storage tanks for gasoline to be sold here, for it cannot come from the same

tanks as that shipped to Vancouver, Wash., and other points in Washington. The Shell, Associated and Union Oil companies all have to do the same, the extra cost being heavy.

The situation even presents the added danger of costing Portland its prestige as a gasoline distributing center. This is now the distributing center for Idaho, but it was pointed out yesterday by F. R. Chapman, assistant district sales manager for the Standard Oil company, that with the Oregon product soon to cost considerably more than that sold in California, Washington and other states, Idaho will undoubtedly refuse to continue buying Oregon test gasoline and will obtain its gasoline from companies distributing from points to the east.

The present price of gasoline in Portland is 23 1/2 cents per gallon, which includes the state tax of 1 cent per gallon. Due to the state tax, this is 1 cent higher than the price of gasoline in Vancouver, Wash.

Further Increase Due.

But with an increase of 1 to 4 cents per gallon, due to the Oregon law, this and the state tax will make the cost of gasoline in Portland 2 to 5 cents higher than in Vancouver, just across the Columbia river.

Following is the editorial announcement of the coming increase in gasoline prices here, as published in the Standard Oil Bulletin:

A recent statute of Oregon requires that gasoline shall be 58 Baume gravity or more in that state. All gasoline sold in California, outside of Oregon has a Baume gravity of approximately 54 degrees. The effect of the Oregon legislation will require the special manufacture of the gasoline in that state—and a resulting advance in price. The supply for Oregon will be affected by the fact that general test gasoline, with the accompanying equipment, will be unavailable for consumption in Oregon.

It might be expected that legislation imposing such burdens and inconveniences on the public has for its object some definite benefit, and is grounded on some sound consideration of public interest. Such, however, is not the case in the present instance. The consumer will be obliged to pay more for gasoline of 58 degrees gravity than for the gasoline regularly refined and sold in other states.

Other Gasoline Satisties.

"On the contrary, the gasoline furnished in California and Washington and elsewhere gives better results in power and mileage than the gasoline which must be especially made for Oregon. Not only does the public find gasoline of the usual grade satisfactory, but its quality conforms to the specifications prescribed by the United States government in its purchases.

On the other hand, Oregon gasoline will be more expensive to buy, more difficult to make, and will reduce the volume of gasoline extraction from crude oil.

"While the legislation is burdensome, with no compensating benefit, this theory is unsound and ill-conceived. Gravity is a poor measure of the quality of gasoline. The accepted standard for the measurement of gasoline quality is its boiling points. This is indicated in the report of the United States fuel administration committee, in which it is said:

"There are no gravity limitations in the specifications for aviation gasoline, nor in the specifications for motor gasoline, which are given later, for it has been found that gravity is of little or no value in determining the quality of gasoline."

"Perhaps it is not to be expected that legislators should be familiar with these matters of technical and expert knowledge. But the situation illustrates the unsoundness of government interference in the affairs of its people. The least government consistent with public order and safety is the best government. Trade conditions, competition and the law of supply and demand will better fit the proper standards of commercial products than the arbitrary edicts of non-expert law-makers.

"Leave the manufacturer and consumer alone. If the manufacturer does not produce what the consumer wants, he will have to make it. If the consumer buys what the manufacturer makes, he probably buys it because it is what he wants.

"The executive authorities in Oregon recognize the difficulty of the situation created by the law in question and are endeavoring to devise some means of relieving the public from the law's burdensome results until the next legislative session. In this they will have the full cooperation of the oil companies. But the whole incident shows the folly of trying to regulate ordinary matters of ordinary commercial concern by legislative fiat."

Los Angeles Rejects Test.

When the question of imposing a gravity test on gasoline in the city of Los Angeles was before the city council last winter, a special committee of experts appointed to study and report on the question found that to specify gasoline of the pre-war specific gravity would require an additional cost of 2 to 3 cents per gallon. One of the important findings of the committee, which unanimously opposed the specific gravity test, was as follows:

"The two items foremost in the minds of the consumers of gasoline are naturally quality and price. They desire a high-grade of gasoline at a minimum price. This, obviously, is impossible, as it is with any other commodity. A practical answer to this situation your committee believes is in a happy medium—a grade of gasoline sufficiently good for ordinary purposes at a reasonable price. This, we believe, will be possible under the government specifications (which are the same as those required by the California and Washington laws, but not legal in Oregon). . . .

"We firmly believe that gasoline required by the United States government will answer every reasonable purpose in this community or any other. We also consider it logical to believe that the United States government would not specify for its use throughout the country a grade of gasoline that could not be readily and economically manufactured and marketed."

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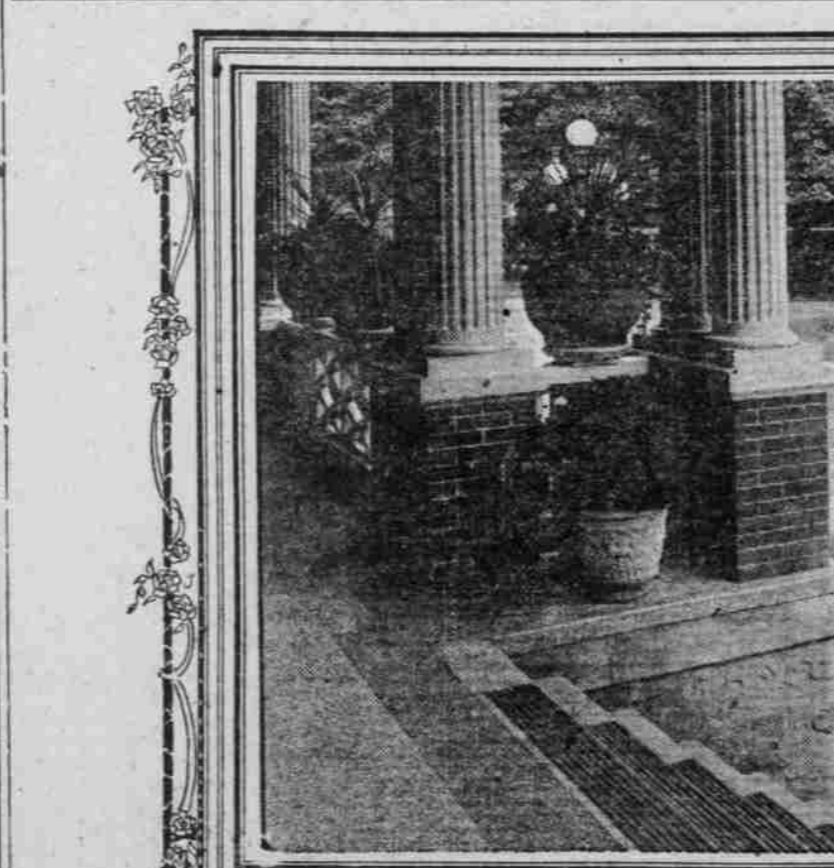
OREGON CITY, Or., Dec. 6.—(Special)—Mayor George L. Baker of Portland, will deliver the annual memorial address at the public ceremonies to be held Sunday afternoon at 2:30 o'clock in the Elks temple. The ritualistic work will be under the direction of Gilbert L. Hedges, exalted ruler, assisted by other officers of the lodge.

The Elks committee in charge of the service includes E. E. Brodie, C. H. Dye and J. A. Tobin. The ushers will be Dallas Armstrong, Kent L. Moody, Frank Champion and Joseph A. Miller.

Ladies see M. Sichel's ad, page 6.-Adv.

Chief Clerk Gets New Position.

J. B. Hubbard, chief clerk of the office of the general agency of the American Railway Express company since the consolidation of the various companies last year, has been appointed special representative of the financial department, with headquarters at San Francisco. Mr. Hubbard was formerly commercial agent of the American Express company here, and in his new position will be associated with G. P. Viets, in charge of the financial department of the company. As a token of their esteem



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