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## STATE HIGHWAY BUILDING AND UPKEEP IN OREGON HAS GROWN TO BIG THINGS

The Collection of Auto Licenses and Gasoline Taxes to Keep the Work Going Has Become a Vast Business, That Is on a Very Sound Basis, and Growing From Year to Year—Far Beyond All Original and Later Estimates

The automobile license and gas tax business of the state of Oregon, the net receipts of which go to the building and upkeep of the highways of the state, has grown to be immense—

In fact, the gross receipts for this year will likely be around \$9,500,000, or nearly twice as much as the taxes collected for general state purposes from all other sources, which foot up around \$5,000,000 a year.

In 1925 there were 199,517 motor vehicles licensed in Oregon, and 17,036 trucks, or 216,553 in all, and the gross license fees paid on these last year were \$5,370,201.78. This license fee money, after costs are deducted, goes three-fourths to the state highway fund and one-fourth to the counties in which the vehicles are owned.

The gas tax receipts for 1925 were \$3,065,151.10. This money all goes to the state highway fund, after the collection costs are met.

So it is not a stretch of the imagination to estimate that the gas taxes for 1926 will be around \$3,500,000, and the vehicle taxes of all kinds around \$6,000,000; especially when it is known that up to March 15 for 1924 the total registered vehicles in the state were 145,774; for the same period in 1925, they were 162,492, and for the present year, that is up to and including last Monday, they were 177,876.

More Than Estimated  
Ever since Oregon had license fees for auto vehicles and gasoline taxes, to pay for her good roads program, the estimates have been exceeded.

The license fees up to date for this year are now running around \$490,000 more than they were for the same period of last year, from all license sources—likely quite a few thousand dollars above \$490,000 more.

State Highway Department  
The state highway commission for Oregon is made up of Wm. Doby, Baker; H. B. Van Duzer, Portland; and W. H. Malone, Corvallis. Roy A. Klein is state highway engineer, with, of course, headquarters at Salem.

There is an article in this issue giving an outline of the state highway work up to date, with mileage and costs, etc. It is well worth reading.

The peak load of bond payments, principal and interest, will be reached in 1930, when the total will be \$3,343,314.70. The following year they will be about \$40,000 less, and the year after that about \$132,000 less, shading down each year to 1950, when they will be wiped out with a payment of \$51,062.50.

So the people of Oregon, having their highway construction and upkeep program on the soundest possible basis, may look forward for still better things in the years to come, especially after the peak load year of 1930.

## STATE HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT HAS ITS MAIN SHOPS IN SALEM; A BIG FORCE

Has 299 Trucks and 126 Passenger Cars and a Vast Amount of Equipment to Keep in Repair—Has 53 Snow Plows—Takes Many People and a Great Deal of Machinery to Keep the State Highways in Repair

The equipment department of the Oregon state highway commission has its headquarters and main plant in Salem, on five acres of state property opposite the penitentiary on the south side of the extension of State street.

Here are four main buildings for shop and storage purposes, three storage sheds in parts of which are located repair shops, a general service building, and an office building.

A Lot of Equipment  
L. P. Campbell, assistant engineer, is in charge of this department. E. A. Hinz is chief clerk in charge of the office. S. B. Gillette is purchasing agent, and E. F. Hallik is master mechanic. Eighty to 85 people are employed there.

The reader will get an idea of the extent of the operations that center there when he is told that the equipment valuations run to \$552,611.57 at the present time, and that the parts and accessories and general stock run up in value to \$308,638.73.

There are 299 trucks now in service, and 127 passenger cars. There are two portable paving plants.

Two Branch Plants  
There are two branch equipment and repair plants, at Klamath Falls and La Grande, and one under construction at Coquille. The one at Klamath Falls employs 12 people now, and Hiram T. Smith is shop foreman there. The one at La Grande employs 20 people, and Roy A. Parnham is shop foreman.

Does Big Business  
The total receipts of the Salem plant for the years 1923 and 1924 were \$1,245,993.07. For the fiscal year up to Oct. 1, 1925, \$1,012,692.63. The net profits for 1923 and 1924 were \$143,501.28. For the year up to Oct. 1st last, the net profits were \$22,906.55. The smaller amount was due to the charging of lower prices for repair work; the difference going into the roads. The ideal way would be to make the receipts and expenses balance.

Make Their Own  
Certain tractor and truck parts

are bought in the rough and finished at the Salem plant. Some lines of equipment are made available in this way at half the cost they would stand the state if bought fully finished.

The department manufactures outright a heavy road planer for maintaining crushed rock surfaced roads. It was developed here. It is so good that a number have been sold to counties, and seven to the bureau of public roads for service in Alaska.

A large part of the equipment of the state came from the war department of the government after the World War.

This department has about 135 graders, used mainly in maintaining roads. It now has graders that one man operates; does the grading as he drives the tractor. This work took two men on the old style graders.

There are 53 snow plows. One is a rotary machine; four are V shaped plows on 10 ton tractors; 17 on five-ton tractors, and 31 truck plows for light snows.

A Big Problem  
During some winters, especially in eastern Oregon, the problem of keeping the state highways clear of snow is a big one. The snow plows are located at the spots where there is likely to be need for them. Take, for instance, Meacham, where at one time two feet of snow fell in two hours.

The department has also shovels for slides; portable shovels. A slide near Coquille is being cleared away now that will result in the removal of perhaps 100,000 yards of earth and rock—working from both ends. These portable shovels have their own power and track. Hydraulic pumps are also on hand, to use in removing slides, where plenty of water is available. One such slide was so removed recently where there was plenty of water—the whole Pacific ocean.

There is Much Work  
Every mile of the state highway is marked. The markers are made here. Thus where there is an accident the place can be known by the markers.

The paving plants are in use seven months in the year, building

new highways. They require 45 men each to operate them.

For the repair work, there are five divisions, working in all an army of men for the highways must be kept up the year through. The headquarters for these maintenance divisions are as follows: No. 1 and No. 2, Salem; No. 3, Grants Pass; No. 4, Bend; No. 5, La Grande. The repair forces work out of those places, and are directed from those headquarters.

## OREGON LEADING IN MATTER OF HIGHWAYS

(Continued from page 3)  
ginning of the year of \$1,452,458.44. This total income was made up as follows:  
Balance on hand, 1917 ..... \$ 84,418.14  
Bond sales and accrued interest .. 40,708,819.37  
Motor vehicle license fees ..... 16,683,329.92  
Gasoline and distillate tax ..... 9,994,185.28  
One quarter mill property tax ..... 1,724,032.23  
Interest on bank balances ..... 259,524.67  
Fines for traffic law violations .. 47,974.18  
Total ..... \$69,512,283.79

It is to be noted from these figures that property has paid a direct tax for the carrying on of the work of only \$1,724,032.23, or less than 2 1/2 per cent of the total. While the point is not susceptible to exact measurement, it is not to be doubted that improved highways have increased the property values by much more than the tax has amounted to.

### Oregon a Pioneer

It will also be seen that practically the entire revenues have been received from the motor vehicle license fees, gasoline and distillate taxes, and from bonds which have been predicated on, and will be retired from the revenues to be received from the license fees and fuel taxes. Oregon was one of the pioneering states in instituting a motor vehicle fuel tax, and has been followed by approximately thirty-five other states. The Oregon plan of basing the retirement of bonds on the income to be derived from license fees and fuel taxes is fundamentally sound and is suitable in placing the burden of paying for improved roads upon the shoulders of those who derive the benefits.

### Reducing the Load

As given in the table above, income to the amount of \$40,708,819.37, has been secured from the sale of bonds. This amount, however, includes \$3,011,805 which was secured from bonds which were recently issued to retire previous short term bonds. These short term bonds were sold when interest rates were high and their retirement by the sale of later bonds materially reduces the interest rate to be paid on the outstanding indebtedness.

Disregarding short term issues now retired, a total of bonds to the net par value of \$38,700,000 have been sold. Of this amount \$1,436,250 have been retired, leaving the outstanding indebtedness \$37,263,750 at the present time. Payment of interest and retirements will amount to \$2,919,761.65 during 1926. The peak year will be reached in 1930, when the payments will amount to \$3,343,314.70. Subsequent to this the yearly payments will progressively decrease until the last retirement is made on April 1, 1950.

### Construction Going On

While the construction program of the department has been gradually decreasing from the high water mark of 1921, owing to the gradual decrease in the funds available, the work carried on each year is amply sufficient to make highway construction still one of the major financial enterprises of the state. A total of \$13,328,366.87 was expended during 1925. Of this \$2,595,819.24 was for interest and retirements on long term bonds and \$3,000,000.00 was for refunding of short term issues, leaving a balance expended of \$7,729,547.63, exclusive of bond requirements. The estimated expenditures for 1926 are approximately \$10,000,000.00, of which bond interest and retirements will require \$3,919,761.65.

The grand total expenditures during 1925 were made up of \$10,611,283.45 from state funds, \$1,327,328.95 from government funds, \$1,327,343.38 from county funds, and \$82,600.74 from funds of railroads and industries. The total estimated expenditures for 1926 will be made up of \$7,950,000 from state funds, \$1,300,000 from government funds, \$700,000 from county funds and \$60,000 from railroad funds.

To Connect Up Sections  
In formulating a plan of pro-

cedure for constructing the state highway system, the state highway commission followed the logical method of taking up first the most important highways and of giving precedence to the sections between important centers of population. In such a plan of construction it necessarily follows that the later years of the program will consist of work which is required to connect up the more important sections previously constructed, and to finish out the continuity of the particular highway as a whole. During the very recent years the work of the department has consisted largely of this class of work, with the exception, perhaps, of the major construction put under way on the Roosevelt coast highways in Curry county. Grading and surfacing had been completed from Port Orford to Euchre creek and a contract for grading from the latter point to the Rogue river was awarded. This work was awarded in two sections, with a combined length of 11 miles, and is estimated to cost \$211,000. It is expected that construction will be completed during the present year.

South of Gold Beach the Myers Creek-Burnt Hill and Burnt Hill-Chetco river sections have been placed under contract for grading. The first section should be completed during the present year, and the other will be finished during 1927. The Burnt Hill-Chetco river section involves one of the heaviest pieces of grading work ever undertaken by this department. The work was awarded in four units, with a combined length of 23 miles, and is estimated to cost a total of \$1,000,000.

Work in Willamette Valley  
While the major work done during 1925 has been outside of the limits of the Willamette valley, there are a few projects within the valley which may prove of particular interest.

One of the most important of these is the paving of the section between Oregon City and Canemah. This was the last gap existing between Salem and Portland and its completion provides a continuous paved highway between the two cities.

On the south, the new bridge at Harrisburg has been completed, and the new pavement between Harrisburg and Junction City has been finished and thrown open to traffic. The completion of the bridge eliminates the use of the ferry at Harrisburg with the waits attendant upon that method of crossing the Willamette river, and the new pavement supercedes the previous rock surfacing.

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## CONVERT INSURANCE VETERANS ADVISED

Kenneth Cooper, of United States Bureau, Urges Time Limit Nears

SILVERTON, Or., March 17.—(Special).—The following report of the talk given here recently by Kenneth Cooper, of the United States veterans' bureau, has been received:

World war veterans who have not reinstated their war risk insurance or converted term policies into permanent forms of government insurance were warned in a statement made here by Kenneth L. Cooper, Oregon regional manager of the United States veterans' bureau, that the time limit to take advantage of the insurance benefits offered by the government expires July 2 of this year. He urged that every world war veteran who held government insurance during war service protect himself and his dependents by securing a permanent policy before the opportunity is withdrawn.

"Provisions of insurance reinstatement are so lenient, the terms of policies so liberal and premiums so low as to bring one of the six converted policies within the reach of every veteran," declared Mr. Cooper.

"We want every ex-service man in the state of Oregon to know about this time limit. It means that those who have not renewed their war insurance must reinstate and convert to a permanent form of government insurance before July 2. Those who have reinstated their war risk insurance and now hold term insurance are required to convert same into permanent policies before this date if they desire to participate in the insurance benefit offered by the government.

"In the latter case no physical examination is required, but such an examination is required for reinstatement. The medical examination will be given without charge at the office of the U. S. veterans' bureau."

Mr. Cooper stated that during the fiscal year 1925, 461 applications made by Oregon veterans and amounting to \$1,848,500, were approved. At the end of the last fiscal year 5874 ex-service men in this state had taken government policies amounting to over \$20,000,000, he announced. The total amount of such insurance now held in the United States amounts to nearly three billion dollars and

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affects approximately 550,000 world war veterans.

"Despite this tremendous amount of insurance in the hands of war veterans, there are still thousands of ex-service men in Oregon who are entitled to insurance but who so far have failed to secure permanent forms of government insurance," continued the bureau manager. "Unless these veterans take action before July 2 there may come a time when either the veteran or his dependents, or both, will regret the failure of the former soldier or sailor to obtain government insurance before it was too late.

"The record of death awards shows that beneficiaries of 141,334 veterans who held term insurance are receiving government insurance payments, the amount since the war being well over a billion dollars. Certainly no ex-service man with dependents who had insurance while in the service can afford to let this opportunity of securing a permanent form of government insurance slip by. These policies carry no restrictions, such as hazardous occupations, airplane flights or military experience, and this insurance is free from all taxation."

Mr. Cooper declared that this insurance is given to war veterans at cost, the government paying overhead expenses in connection with the department from other sources than premiums received. Dividends of nearly three million dollars were paid holders of converted policies during the last fiscal year. There are six forms of life insurance. This insurance contains a liberal total permanent disability clause which is not limited as to age and provides for waiver of payment of premiums so long as the veteran lives and is so disabled. All policies provide for loans at any time after the first year, the loan value increasing as time goes on. The form of any converted policy may be changed within five years from the effective date of the policy.

Ex-service men who desire further information or wish to fill out the required forms for reinstatement or conversion of war

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insurance should communicate immediately with the Portland regional office of the veterans' bureau, Woodlark bldg., Portland, Or.

## Georgia Melon Growers Try Not to Flood Market

MOULTRIE, Ga.—Efforts are being made to keep the production of the luscious Georgia watermelon, which Mark Twain insisted was the substance of angels, from increasing, notwithstanding that last year's crop was one of the most profitable ever marketed. The Sowega Melon-Growers' association, which controls virtually

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half the South Georgia crop, is leading the movement in the Georgia state and South Georgia is the heart of the belt. Association desires to keep flooding markets in the east.

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