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No Favor Sways Us; No Fear Shall Avo
From First Statesman, March 28, 1851
THE STATESMAN PUBLISHING CO Cbarles A. Sorague,.President

Municipal Costs in Salem
At the insistence of the state auditors, Salem's municipal
icials have prepared a 70 -page booklet comprising the proofficials have prepared a
posed city budget for 1940. Theugh the thoroughness volved is to be commended, the budget's bulk is calculated to
make it more uninviting to the layman than its more streammake it. more uninviting to the layman than its more stream
lined predecessors. Were it not for the vigilance of the press, the average taxpayer would know nothing about this
highly important though it is to him as an individual. In a nutshell, the budget proposes expenditures of $\$ 812$,-
060-well leave out the odd cents throughout-and through
various deductions this would mean a tax levy of $\$ 396,377$. various deductions this would mean a tax levy of
But because of the 6 per cent limitation, it is necessary to $r$ duce both of these amounts and the tax levy cannot be
than $\$ 385,960$ - and it is virtually certain not to be less.

One desiring to make an extremely safe and cautious remark might be constrained to say "That's a lot of money."
deed it is; and yet the City of Salem levied once before a la
ger tax; $\$ 995,810$, just ten years previously, in 1930. Old pis neers who were around at the time recall that in 1929 wh
that levy was determined that levy was determined, Salem was booming right along
tnd there had been extensive street and bridge construction.
A few years later at the depression low, the city fathers manA few years later at the depression low, the city fathers man
aged to cut the levy down to $\$ 349,788$; now municipal costs
are again on the upgrade. are again on the upgrade.
Though the tax levy
Though the tax levy in 1930 was higher than that anti-
cipated for 1940 , millages will be higher, for assessed valua-
tions in the city are down; in 1930 the total was $\$ 17,591,5.3$; last year it was $\$ 15,029,502$. About a million dollars of that
drop is aecounted for by removal of the water utility from
the tax rolls- for which the taxpayers will be compensated the tax rolls-for which the taxpayers will be compensated
some day in reduced water rates after the water department
debt is substantially reduced. This offset would already be noticeable had the city not spent a second million, in round
numbers, for intake and pipeline. But meanwhile the taxpayer is buying water at little less than the old rates, and is car-
rying also a higher tax burden. The remainder of the assessed valuation drop is represented in part by the state's purchases now climbing back upward, assisted by new construction. The
higher millage is in this latter respect not a serious matter be-
cause the taxes aren't paid, in final analysis, by the property, cause the taxes aren't paid, in final analysis, by the property
but out of the income of its owner.
More properly, municipal costs should bear a closer rela tion to population than to assessed valuation, from the stand-
points both of necessity and ability to pay. If Salem's popula-
tion now exceeds 30,000 compared to 26,266 in 1930 , eitizens might fairly expect a 15 per eent increase in total costs. Act-
ually there is no increase compared to 1930 , and less than 11 per cent increase from the trimmed budget of the depression
year 1933. Thus it may be seen that in relation to municipal
growth, municipal expenses are not growth, municipal expenses are not staging a runaway.
There is however no evidence that municipal costs have ever been as low in Salem as they might have been under
strict businesslike methods. The budget committee will be
forced to trim some items to stay within the 6 per cent limitaYorced to trim some items to stay within the 6 per cent limita-
tion, but its responsibility is greater than that; it should trim
every item that can be trimmed without hampering municipal every item that can be trimmed without hampering municipal
operation; partly with a view to cutting the total levy if pos-
sible, partly to make room for some of the desirable increassibe, partiy to make room for some of the desirable increas-
persoluning one to pay the cost of augmented fire department
items. We will have more to say later about individual For the present there is one other matter that merits at-
tention. Of the $\$ 102,978$ in the budget outside the 6 per cent limitation, almost the entire amount is for debt service, and a
considerable percentage is for interest. Paying off bonded debt and
effective
future.

The $\overline{\overline{\text { Streets of Franco }}}$



Radio Programs


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| Build Courthouse, PWA Advice Here "Proper" for County now to Act Alone Due to PWA Liquidation |  |
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| Pierce's plea suggests that the handed a few aces and kings does not greatly bolster their th of the public power ideal. |  |

Dn the Record By DOROTHY THOMPSON

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## Mutual-Don Lee

Salutes Salem
Feminine Fancies
Today
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