

The Oregon Statesman

"No Favor Sways Us; No Fear Shall Awe"
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Ballot Measures—VIII

Eighth measure on the ballot is a constitutional amendment sponsored by the Oregon State Teachers' association which would require the state to provide revenues for the operation of elementary and high schools in the state in an amount equal to 45 cents per child per day of attendance. Method of raising the money is left to the state legislature, but the amendment would lift the six per cent limitation from application to this fund.

Of the total sum \$8,000,000 must be applied to reduce local property taxes until the year 1950; after that the legislature will decide how much shall be applied to this purpose. The method of distributing this fund, which will include the present state elementary school fund and the \$5,000,000 diverted from income tax proceeds under the initiative of 1942 and the act of 1943, is left to the legislature.

When we first heard that the teachers' association was proposing a constitutional amendment for establishment of state aid we were inclined to oppose it, assuming that it would be using the constitution for legislative rather than truly constitutional purposes. A study of the amendment does not bear out that fear. It proposes to establish as a principle state sharing in cost of our common schools in a substantial amount. Since the principle would be meaningless unless tied to a figure, the amendment fixes 45 cents per child per day of attendance as the measure of state aid. This figure is arbitrary to be sure; but any figure would be arbitrary and no figure would leave the amendment empty of meaning.

Next the amendment frees rather than restricts the legislature, giving it power (irrespective of the six per cent limitation) to provide the revenues from what sources it chooses or can find; power also to determine the way the fund is to be apportioned among school districts; and after 1950 power to determine the amount of the state fund to be applied to offset school district property taxes. Thus the amendment involves one principle: a mandate for state contribution to schools in a definite amount; and secondly gives the legislature wide latitude in carrying out the mandate. The Statesman has come to the conclusion on analysis of the proposed amendment that it is entirely proper matter both in substance and form to go into the constitution. In fact, it is hard to see how that step could be avoided if the six per cent limitation is to be gotten around.

So much for the constitutional amendment point which has been raised in discussions of the measure. Now what about its merits?

In the past Oregon has depended very largely on local school district taxes supplemented by a county tax (also a property tax) and a state elementary school tax (also a property tax until very late years) for financing its schools. If school children were distributed geographically in exact proportion to assessed valuation the distribution of the burden of education would be equalized. That condition does not exist and has not for decades, if it ever did. As a result there is wide disparity in school taxation. The writer in his message to the legislature in 1939 reported:

"Of the 2085 school districts of the state, 691 levy no special tax for elementary schools. For other districts the taxes range as high as \$0.7 mills.

There are two ways to equalize the tax burden: one would be to consolidate districts into larger units, though subsequent changes would again bring about inequity; the other method is to provide a larger sum from the state

Editorial Comment

JUST AN IRRESISTIBLE IMPULSE

Some weeks back we were "chastised" by the venerable Oregonian for venturing the quib about the roses which Eugene supplied for the "City of Roses" in the first air shipment of produce of this region to New York city. Now we shall risk the rebuke of our editorial brethren at the beautiful city of Salem (especially Charley Sprague) by quoting a few lines we find in Bernard DeVoto's admirable book, "The Year of Decision—1846".

"In '46 the southernmost house in the Willamette valley was near the site of the present city of Eugene. Passing down the valley from there, one came to a kind of settlement, of which Lieutenant Howison, of the US schooner Shark, reported this year that 'too little exists to be worthy an attempt at description'.

This quote is irresistible since it is only a few years since Eugene had its Centennial Pageant, and in asking Salem to postpone its normal pageant date, a distinguished lady of Salem wrote to this effect:

"We do not intend to have noisy displays of soldiers and cowboys and Indians and such shows to please the populace, because Salem from the beginning was a city of culture and deep spiritual purpose, etc."

The Salem request was granted by the directors of our pageant, of course, but not before some of the local talent had given Governor Sprague some moments of explaining "Salem's cultural aspects."

All good clean fun and no lasting damage! Towns are much like people. Each town has its back-story, and none of us can ever claim that a family tree without a few gnarled limbs or that the finest city has grown without imperfections. What we do now is almost more important than the past.

In 1946 Lane county will be 100 years old and in 1947 it will be 100 years since Eugene Skinner (also with an eye to real estate) staked out Eugene City. It is time for us to be thinking of our next pageant, and this DeVoto book, in spite of its somewhat flippancy comment on some parts of that period, is a storehouse of suggestions.

DeVoto's description of the hardships of the trail is one of the most vivid bits of writing we ever have encountered, and it moves us to the thought that perhaps our presentation of "the trail" should contain more of this realism. Anyhow it is time to begin planning. Goodwin Thacher, author of our script, is already planning, but he can't make ready alone.

We have had a memorable 100 years, and an inspiring century of opportunity lies ahead. (And we shall doubtless find some profit in Friend Sprague's suggestions), Eugene Register-Guard.

treasury and lighten the burden on the local districts. The pending amendment will increase substantially the amount of the state school fund; and if the legislature provides for its equitable distribution then there will be an evening up of the burden of school support.

Objections are raised, especially by taxpayer groups, against this measure on the ground that if the income tax receipts should shrink to pre-war levels the burden would fall on property. It is true that property is "exposed" to additional burden by this amendment, but only in the event other present or prospective tax sources prove inadequate, or the legislature and the people prefer to have property assume this burden.

The Statesman suggests that it is time the people of the state looked at their schools from another angle than how cheaply they can run them. The war has brought home to Oregon school directors the fact that they have to compete for instructors. Teachers' salaries in Washington and California are substantially higher than in Oregon. The state department of education has had to give emergency certificates to scores of teachers who cannot qualify under regular standards.

Nor is the condition one which will clear up with the end of the war. Our colleges of education are almost empty of students, including women, preparing for a teaching career. Some months ago this editor made a study of the changes among high school principals and superintendents in Oregon cities. The facts, which were published, should alarm parents of children of school age. They showed our schools were becoming starved at the top because of the loss of able men as school administrators.

We submit that the time has come for the people of Oregon to face the facts. Those facts point to this, that increased funds MUST be provided for the operation of our schools if we are going to maintain even the present standards (which are none too high). To do this by taking the six per cent limitation off of local district taxes would mean that property alone would bear the whole burden, because that is the only taxing power a local school board has.

Moreover there would then be no limit and directors and patrons might "shoot the works" for their schools and soak the railroads, the utilities and other non-resident property owners. The proposed state fund sets a limit at the same time it applies a mandate; 45 cents per child per day; and the legislature has broad taxing powers, made broader by this amendment. The additional revenue sought is not exorbitant in amount or beyond the capacity of the people to pay.

The amendment is timely; it is practical; it is just; it is necessary. The Statesman strongly urges Vote 314 X Yes.

Retort Discourteous

Under "Editorial Comment" we publish an editorial from the Eugene Register-Guard, with its quotation from a writer of 1846 who says of the Salem of that date: "too little exists to be worthy an attempt at description."

The R-G editor should pursue his reading of Oregon history farther, picking up the diary which Bob Sawyer of Bend edited, that of Lt. Henry L. Abbot for whom Camp Abbot was named, who led an engineering party on railroad surveys from California north to the Columbia river. He can find there this entry:

Oct. 26 (1855). Rose early and went 25 miles to Eugene City, a dirty place.

"Only apathy can beat us," says Senator Truman. Is that a new way to spell Dewey?

Interpreting The War News

KIRKE L. SIMPSON
ASSOCIATED PRESS WAR ANALYST

If Japan's main fighting fleet or any substantial part of it has at last been brought to action, as Tokyo broadcasts say, a major objective of American operations in the central Pacific has been attained.

American reports so far speak only of Japanese aerial assaults on our carrier forces. Tokyo claims of 50 or more American warcraft of all types sunk sound fantastic. They follow what has become an almost ritualistic Japanese propaganda practice in previous sea-air encounters in the Pacific, all of which ultimately turned out to be American victories.

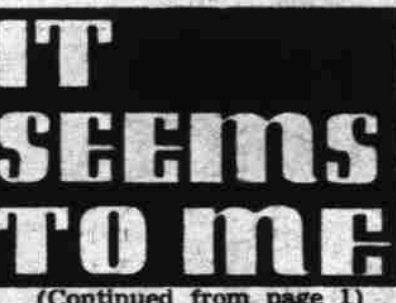
It would take American confirmation to convince observers that the Japanese high command is ready to risk its jealously hoarded fighting fleet at this stage of the battle of the Pacific however. There has been every reason to credit Admiral Halsey's third fleet with such combined air and sea power in the East China sea area operations that nothing short of the full weight of enemy naval strength could hope to cope with it.

A full Japanese fleet concentration there would leave the central and southern Philippines exposed to the invasion thrusts General MacArthur so obviously has poised for action. It also would leave the approaches to the South China sea dangerously vulnerable from the west. There is no question that Admiral Lord Mountbatten is preparing in the Bay of Bengal theater for action coordinated with the American advance in the central and southwestern Pacific.

Tokyo reports of the fight discount the probability that the sustained cross-fire air attack on Formosa is a prelude to attempted American invasion of that island. They assume with good reason that Halsey's bold strikes have to do with impending invasion moves against the Philippines. If they have succeeded in drawing such portion of Japanese naval power as have been based at hide-outs in the northern part of the South China sea into action, unquestionably the primary American purpose short of the hope of bringing the main enemy fleet to decisive battle has been served.

The battle must inevitably mean losses. When they are revealed, however, they must be calculated in relative rather than absolute terms in assessing the tactical or strategic results of ship for ship in every category of air or sea, every craft destroyed or put out of action cuts more heavily into Japanese ability to maintain the struggle than into American fighting power.

'One World'



(Continued from page 1)

lay its claim to being THE American party, because of its large majorities.

If the slogan is a sly implication of "America first" doctrine then it would seem to be poor politics, because Governor Dewey has been busy tossing Gerald L. K. Smith out of his car. If it was chosen to impute the doctrine of communism to the new deal crowd its accuracy may be questioned, because Earl Browder was born in Kansas, along with Claude Ingalls of the Corvallis G-T and me. I expect to "vote republican" but I know that many good "Americans" are going to vote democratic.

Then there's another sign going up around the state. It shows the head and tall black hat of a Prohi, like the cartoonist figure in the days of prohibition.

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News Behind the News

By PAUL MALLON
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WASHINGTON, Oct. 16—Good old Dan Tobin's gentlemen of the teamsters union are presumed to have become so effluent at the opportunity of becoming the first audience to be addressed by Mr. Roosevelt in opening his campaign in the usual partisan sense that they beat up a couple of naval officers who had straggled into the Statler hotel here after the speech.

The officers were looking for a dance to which they had been invited, the beating being administered because they did not have politics on their minds and declined to answer courteously the inquiries of the teamsters as to whether, as navy men, they intended to vote for Roosevelt.

That is the way it has been presented to the public, and left, but that is not the way it happened. The teamsters did not assemble here for union business purposes of their own. Nor did they come voluntarily to cheer Mr. Roosevelt. They were ordered to Washington by Mr. Tobin for the special and sole purpose of becoming a background for the president's "first" partisan effort.

Many of them were drafted all the way across the country by their union boss, and did not like it. Aside from the tribulations of travel these days, a few of the coast unions actually did not have the cash in the till to make the trip and sold government bonds from their treasuries to get the funds together.

These especially did not care for the honor. They cheered, as Smith would like to have a few republican votes!

But now I see the Wayne Morse boards are up, and they lack the party label, republican. What's going on here? Aren't the candidates apt to get their lines tangled fishing in each other's ponds?

Do you still believe in signs? I don't — not political billboards.

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4 Rookie Riflemen Arrive at Western Front for Action

IN FRANCE, Oct. 9—(Delayed)—Four more rookie riflemen have reached the western front from faraway American farms and factories, but like thousands of other replacements and the famed backward-flying dodo bird, they never knew where they were going but only where they had been.

The puffing French freight train halted on rolling farmland. The rookies jumped out, stretched and swore feelingly. They had been five days and nights in the cold cars.

They didn't know it then, but they had reached the last replacement depot. Soon they would cease being orphaned wanderers of war without outfits and without shoulder patches and would be adopted by some combat line company to replace its casualties.

Easing their packs, barracks bags and rifles down along the right-of-way, they cocked their ears toward the sound of distant firing. It had a strange, new undertone, different from anything they had heard before.

Suddenly they realized why. Western front artillery lanyards are not yanked for practice. For the first time they were hearing guns being fired in concerted anger.

Pvt. Kenneth F. Baxter, Chicago, stretched his six-foot frame again. His 37-year-old bones were cranky from the wet, cold weather despite a year of army life. Towering above the other soldiers, he served as a beacon for his three sidekicks, who promptly joined him.

The Chicago rifleman, former bartender, grocery store manager and defense plant supervisor, was the oldest in both age and army experience. The others had been in less than nine months.

The youngest was 19-year-old Pvt. Paul Bernhart, Burlington, Ia., farm boy. But Pfc. Billy Boren, 20, five-foot-five, blue-eyed, brown-haired Evansville, Ind., steel worker, looked even younger.

The fourth Pvt. Hardin Benton, 25, North Wilkesboro, N.C., had been a farmer and lumberjack.

They met at Fort Meade, Md., came overseas together in July, and bivouacked together at a replacement depot in Italy.

"Wonder how much longer we stay together," Baxter was thinking as they came up.

"Wonder if we go up tonight," Billy said, chewing a blade of grass.

"I don't reckon so," drawled Benton. "Seems like they'd let us wait until tomorrow anyhow."

For a moment they were silent.

The wisest union labor has enjoyed in all its history in this country. His counsel was to make both republicans and democrats equally amenable to labor influence. He refused to endorse fully even such a purely labor third party attempt as the elder late Senator LaFollette made in 1924.

The wisdom of this course lay in the odds that sooner or later, by strictly partisan political alignments, labor would one day suffer political defeat and do its major interest irreparable damage. Even as far as matters have gone in this campaign, it is evident that AFL will have Washington backing to assume leadership in labor to the detriment of CIO, if Dewey wins.

Personally I do not fully accept yet the evidence that the strongest class support Mr. Roosevelt enjoys is critically breaking up, but certainly the evidence is sufficient to warn of the possibilities of a November 7 surprise.

American elm trees are valued at more than \$750,000,000, according to forestry experts.

Veterans' Rights and Benefits

Mustering-Out Pay
Daily in this space will be published a portion of an official pamphlet giving information on the rights and privileges of war veterans under federal laws.

As a veteran discharged under honorable conditions, you automatically receive mustering-out pay from \$100 to \$300 to help tide you over the immediate period after your discharge and to aid you in your necessary readjustment to civilian life.

Those who served less than 90 days receive \$100; 90 days or more, but no foreign service, \$200; 90 days or more, and foreign service, \$300. Certain groups are excluded, such as those receiving base pay (not counting fogies) of more than \$200 a month at the time of their discharge. Any eligible veteran discharged before this law was passed may obtain payment by applying to his own branch of the service.

Stevens
A Lifetime Gift
The gift of sterling silver, will grow more beautiful with use through the years. Buy one piece or a complete set. Several patterns to choose from. Credit if desired.

