

Explosion Razes Los Angeles Plant, Rocks Downtown Area



LOS ANGELES, Feb. 20.—(AP)—This is a general view of the wreckage of a two-story building destroyed by a terrific explosion in downtown Los Angeles, killing at least 15 persons and injuring more than 100. Bare spot at left of this picture is scene of actual explosion itself (arrow). (AP Wirephoto)

IT SEEMS TO ME

By Charles A. Sprague

Before the legislature met I offered a prediction that the apportionment of the basic school support fund would prove a vexatious and controversial problem, and so it has developed. Sixteen million dollars is a lot of money to divide, and the formula for its division is of intense interest to school districts most of which had looked toward this fund as the solvent for their financial ills. Now they find it is not a cure-all, though in many cases it will be a real boon.

It is not surprising that an issue should arise between Portland and Astoria over the apportionment. The big city is the natural target of the country. In this case the Portland school authorities have not helped their case materially, because they haven't managed their representation very well. First they proposed a formula which wouldn't hold up under mathematics and leave anything for equalization; and second they are backing an apportionment by congressional districts, a purely artificial basis quite at variance with the principle of a general state fund and state-wide distribution.

Then the comparison shows that Portland pays the lowest school tax of any first-class district, and while it has the excuse for this year that it was denied a chance for a special election by a freak omission of the law, still in previous years it rode along on lean rations for schools.

Blasts Cut Pipe Line Near Haifa

JERUSALEM, Feb. 20.—(AP)—Explosions ripped the Iran Petroleum company's pipeline in two to four places near Haifa today and a purported spokesman for Irgun Zvai Leumi said the blasts and other violence were "our soldiers' reply" to British restrictions against Jewish immigration to the holy land.

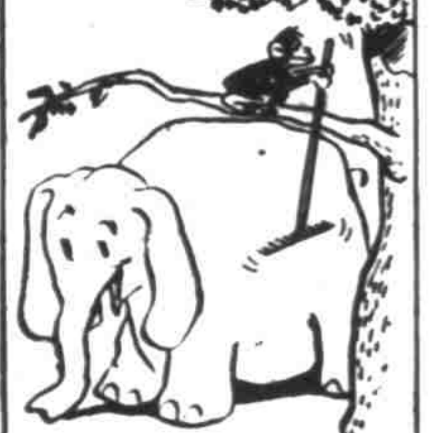
Bomb blasts, mortar fire and the chatter of small arms were heard throughout last night in the area of Haifa, principal Palestine port and scene of forcing evacuation of would-be Jewish immigrants.

Indian-Owned Timber Bids to Be Opened Here

PORTLAND, Feb. 20.—(AP)—Bids will be opened at Salem March 11 on some 29,000,000 board feet of timber owned by Indians, the U. S. Indian service announced today.

Animal Crackers

By WARREN GOODRICH



Now down two feet and over one-eighth of an inch.

Blast Kills at Least 15, Hurts More Than 100

LOS ANGELES, Feb. 20.—(AP)—A tremendous explosion blasted a one-story brick building into smoking rubble today, killing at least 15 persons, jolting the entire downtown district and breaking windows in houses and office buildings 70 blocks away. More than 100 were injured.

Shortly after the explosion at 9:45 a.m., which leveled the O'Connor electroplating plant, Assistant Police Chief Joseph Reed told reporters he feared the death list might range from 30 to 75, but by nightfall bulldozer, power shovel and other workers, probing the debris, could find but 15 bodies.

The plant was located at 922 East Pico st., about a mile south-east of Pershing square. Plant Doing Government Work

J. J. O'Connor, head of the electroplating firm, told reporters which also demolished three nearby residences, was followed by a fierce fire in a mile square area 300 houses were damaged in what police described as the worst southern California disaster since the earthquake of March 10, 1933, when more than 130 were killed.

Earl H. Richardson, chief of the city fire prevention bureau, attributed the explosion to chemicals in the plant. Richardson said the plant, when inspected only two weeks ago, was found to be practically free of gas hazards.

Elevators in some buildings several blocks away were jammed in their shafts by the force of the blast.

Blue Smoke Shirts High

As a blue-black column of smoke soared hundreds of feet in the air, inhabitants of nearby houses stumbled out of their collapsed dwellings, some with blood streaming from them, screaming for help for members of their families trapped inside.

William Tynan, battalion fire chief who saw the explosion, said the district "seemed to go up in smoke similar to the pictures we've seen of the atomic bomb explosions."

Fifteen fire companies, 500 police officers and contingents of marines and soldiers converged on the hectic scene.

SALEM BUILDING OKED

PORTLAND, Feb. 20.—(AP)—Norman S. Powers was authorized by the federal housing administration today to build a five-unit apartment building on Fairgrounds Road, Salem. The Salem Woodworking company was granted a permit to erect six houses for sale.

SAYS LYNCHERS CONFESS

GREENVILLE, S. C., Feb. 20.—(AP)—Sheriff R. H. Bearden said today he had obtained signed admissions from 11 Greenville taxi drivers to taking part in Monday night's lynching of a 24-year-old negro near here, but was pushing his investigation in the hope of rounding up other possible suspects.

WOOD SCHOONER SAFE

ASTORIA, Ore., Feb. 20.—(AP)—The vessel Catherine II, last of the wooden hulled schooners on the west coast, reported late tonight it was out of danger from leaks and would continue down the coast to San Francisco. The steam schooner earlier had reported two leaks in the hull and rudder trouble.

'Utter Desolation'

That's what Justice James T. Brand of the Oregon supreme court says he found in Germany on arriving there to sit as trial judge on Nazi war crimes. In The Statesman on Sunday.

Army Accepts Plans to Revise Courts Martial

WASHINGTON, Feb. 20.—(AP)—The army moved tonight to sit on courts martial and to make other reforms in its system of military justice, which has been a target of criticism. Secretary of War Patterson announced that the army has accepted most of the recommendations made by a committee of the American Bar association and the house military committee. However, a majority of the changes cannot go into effect immediately because congress must amend the articles of war.

Death Takes C. V. Galloway Of Tax Group

Charles V. Galloway, 69, member of the state tax commission for 28 years, died Thursday in a Portland hospital which he entered two weeks ago. He had been in ill health for several years. Galloway, who headed the tax commission's property tax division, was a native of Bellevue in Yamhill county (Jan. 6, 1878); received his education at McMinnville college and the University of Oregon, and entered state service in 1902 when he was elected to the legislature at the age of 24.

The commissioner in earlier years was a farmer and orchardist on the original donation land claim of his parents, and was a banker in Portland for a considerable time. He is survived by the widow and a daughter.

Galloway is the second of the three-man tax commission to die this year. Coe A. McKenna died early in January. Funeral arrangements will be announced later by Macy & Sons, McMinnville.

Morse Says Labor Not Cooperating

WASHINGTON, Feb. 19.—(AP)—Senator Morse (R-Ore) complained today that labor unions are not cooperating in revising labor laws, and warned that if he has to choose between no legislation and bills which go too far, "I'll vote for legislation that goes too far."

A witness before the senate labor committee, President Joseph A. Beirne of the National Federation of Telephone Workers, hinted that this union might not go on their spring strike after all. "Personally, I would be inclined to arbitrate," Beirne said.

Big Guns in Power Issue Set for Heavy Fire Today

By Wendell Webb
Managing Editor, The Statesman
The big guns in the power issue unlimbered for action in the house at 10:15 a.m. today when the move to override the governor's veto of senate bill 99 will come up for final action. The bill was re-passed by the senate today, but a determined battle is forecast today in the house to thwart attempts to win the two-thirds margin necessary to enact the measure into law. The bill previously passed the house 46 to 14. Cruz of the measure is the proposed abolition of a law which lets the state take over a private hydro-electric project anytime on two years' notice. Under the bill to be debated today, the state could not acquire such a utility during the life of its license except by condemnation. The house today also faces a heavy calendar otherwise — 22 measures being up for final passage, including the one to bar fireworks—and the senate, too, is

Amendments To Road Bill Are Proposed

An apparent hope of reconciling differences between proponents and opponents of the so-called freeway bill (senate bill 121) grew out of a public hearing before the senate and house roads and highways committees last night in the house chambers. Proposals to settle the differences came in rebuttal talks. Fred Inkster, Oswego, favoring freeways, suggested an amendment to bar their establishment in cases wherein existing highways have more than 10 tourist-catering businesses to a mile, and L. R. Roedel of Milwaukie, opposing the measure, suggested they be limited to stretches between congested areas.

The joint legislative committee will consider the bill next Tuesday. Several speakers opposing the measure last night were sharply critical of the highway commission.

Chairman of those favoring the bill was Howard Merriam of Eugene, speaking for it were A. C. Roehr, Portland chamber of commerce; Horace Dryer, Portland; Guy Hickok, Salem chamber; Allen Wheeler, Eugene; William Tugman, Eugene; Virgil Langtry, Oswego; Patrick O'Leary, Woodburn chamber; Joe Davies, Oak Grove, representing the Oregon Property Rights association; C. L. Middleton, Portland, representing the Veterans of Foreign Wars; Lyman Ross, representing the Washington County Farmers' Union; Harry Pearce, Park Rose chamber; Eric Enquist, mayor of Troutdale, and Louise Palmer Weber, Portland.

Local Fliers to Aid in Search for Plane

Local fliers of the civil air patrol will help in the search for a single-engine Navion plane "NC86098," which was reported missing last night by the civil aeronautics administration after it left Red Bluff, Calif., Sunday at 4:45 p.m. en route to Beaver, Ore. Lt. James E. Cannon of the Salem CAP announced the pilot was thought last heard from Sunday at 7:45 p.m. by Eugene airport radio operators who heard a plane report it was lost in that area, Associated Press said.

FIRE DESTROYS FRUNES

CHICO, Calif., Feb. 20.—(AP)—Fire today destroyed two warehouses containing almonds and dried prunes valued by company officials at more than \$1,000,000.

Freeway Accord Talked

(Story in Column 4)

The Oregon Statesman

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Plan Set To Allow Merger

A bill constituting the final step to pave the way for the merger of Salem and West Salem, when and if such is desired, was ready for introduction in the legislature today. The bill, signed by the Marion county legislative delegation and Rep. Lyle Thomas of Dallas, specifically provides only that cities having a common boundary shall be deemed to be adjoining. But its avowed purpose goes beyond its wording. Under Oregon law, annexations and mergers can be effected only when areas are adjoining. The new bill is designed to remove all technicalities regarding boundaries of the two cities for which it was drawn.

Informed of the bill by The Statesman last night, Mayor R. F. Elstrom of Salem said this city's officials would be glad to consider a merger plan whenever such is desired.

Mayor Walter Musgrave of West Salem said the city council there would study the program. Rep. W. W. Chadwick, one of the sponsors of the new enabling measure and former Salem mayor, said Thursday he was hopeful the bill eventually would bring about the combining of the two municipalities.

Under existing laws, a majority vote in each municipality is necessary to effect a merger, but the cities can vote at separate elections so long as they come within the same year.

Drawing of the bill to be introduced in the house today was simplified by the two previous approved measures, which were signed into law by Gov. Snell Thursday, providing means for Mill City to incorporate.

Oil Refineries Strike Averted

LOS ANGELES, Feb. 20.—(AP)—A strike that threatened paralysis of transportation and industry in five western states was averted today by a tentative wage agreement between the CIO Oil Workers' union and Standard Oil Company of California.

The agreement, which adds 10 cents an hour to basic pay scales, plus a provisional living allowance of \$17.70 a month retroactive to Jan. 1, is subject to the vote of 22,000 workers in California, Oregon, Washington, Arizona and Nevada. The union's membership will vote on the offer within 72 hours.

After the agreement was signed by the union and Standard Oil and General Petroleum Co., but later, Richfield Oil agreed to its terms, and it is expected to serve as a pattern for other major oil companies, including Shell, Union, Tidewater Associated and Texas.

New School Gym Plan Authorized

Construction of Salem school district 24's \$109,600 gymnasium and heating plant at 795 N. 14th st. was authorized by the city engineer's office yesterday. All local obstacles have been cleared for the time being. The school district has experienced past difficulty in obtaining approval of the civilian production administration.

6-YEAR TERM BACKED

WASHINGTON, Feb. 20.—(AP)—A six-year term for school debts with no reelection, will be pushed by Oregon's Rep. Stockman. He said he would continue backing the plan which he thinks would give presidents a freer hand.

West Salem Vote Approves Tieup For Salem Water

WEST SALEM, Feb. 21.—West Salem property owners today approved the city council's plan to handle the local water problem when they voted 219-51 to authorize a mortgage agreement for \$12,000 to finance a tieup with the city of Salem water mains. The tieup will be by means of an eight-inch pipe line suspended from the Marion-Polk county bridge. Work will start as soon as materials are available and can be completed 60 days after actual work is started, J. L. Franzen, Salem city manager, has assured West Salem.

Mayor Walter Musgrave plans to go to Portland Tuesday to locate materials and accompany by Councilman Earl Burk and Fred Gibson and A. N. Copenhagen, members of the local water board.

2 Million State Office Building Recommended

Committee recommendation Thursday that the state board of control be authorized to spend \$2,000,000 on a new state office building, across Court street from the east end of the statehouse grounds, apparently presaged final approval of the plan today.

The bill will be up in the house for final action probably Monday. The building originally was to cost \$1,000,000, but higher labor and materials costs forced up the estimate. Roy Mills, secretary of the board of control, said construction of the five-story structure would be started soon.

Mills said the highway commission would be allotted two floors, the public utilities commissioner one floor, the state police a half floor, and that the board of control might also have space. The rest of the space has not been allocated.

The money would be borrowed from the school fund, and would be repaid by rentals charged departments using the building. The maximum interest would be 3 1/2 per cent, and would be repaid in 30 years.

House Votes \$6 Billion Cut

WASHINGTON, Feb. 20.—(AP)—The republican-controlled house voted tonight to try to hold spending in the next fiscal year to \$31,500,000,000, where President Truman had set \$37,500,000,000 as rock bottom.

The \$6,000,000,000 slash recommended by the senate-house budget committee sailed through on a roll-call vote. Twelve democrats joined 227 republicans in support of the slash. It was opposed by 157 democrats, Rep. Margaret Chase Smith (R-Me.) and Rep. Marcantonio (AL-NY).

The issue now moves to the senate, where a majority of republicans favor a \$4,500,000,000 budget slash to protect army and navy funds, instead of the \$6,000,000,000 cut.

Monmouth Man Hurt In Automobile Accident

George Robert Myers of Monmouth incurred a fractured right arm and some broken ribs last night when he lost control of his car and it left the Salem-Dallas highway about one-fourth mile west of the Bonneville power station, investigating state police report. Myers was taken to Salem General hospital in the Salem Deaconess hospital ambulance and the attending physician said his condition was "as good as can be expected."

British Pave Way For Freeing India; Date Set for 1948

LONDON, Feb. 20.—(AP)—The British today for the first time set a definite date—June, 1948—for getting out of India and designated a great grandson of the first emperor of India to liquidate almost 200 years of rule over that rich subcontinent of 400,000,000 people.

Prime Minister Attlee, in a common listening in strained silence, indicated that unless quarreling Moslems and Hindus resolve their differences over writing a central charter for Indian independence by next year's deadline, the British may turn control over to provincial governments.

He announced the appointment of Admiral Lord Mountbatten, whose mother was a granddaughter of Queen Victoria, to succeed Field Marshal Lord Wavell as viceroy in March despite continued prodding by opposition leader Winston Churchill as to why Wavell was being recalled.

An informed source said the "whole purpose" of Attlee's statement was to "produce agreement" between Moslems and Hindus, who have refused to work together in drafting a constitution for independence.

New Delhi dispatches said observers there believed Attlee's statement was strongly favorable to the congress party, inasmuch as congress leaders long have insisted that a British withdrawal would induce a sense of "responsibility" conducive to a settlement. Replacement of Wavell also was regarded as placating the congress leader, Jawaharlal Nehru, who was reported on the belief Wavell would set an obstruction to a settlement with the Moslem league.

Ronald Jones Re-elected by Farmer Union

By Lillie L. Madsen
Farm Editor, The Statesman
ALBANY, Feb. 20.—Ronald E. Jones of Brooks was elected president of the Oregon Farmers' union Friday at the closing session of the state convention. Gus Schlicker of Turner was made vice president. The secretary is to be chosen by the directors.

Resolutions adopted included those opposing further peacetime military conscription, importation of dairy produce, grain and meat, and the reciprocal trade act in its present form. Other resolutions sought elimination of the most-favored nation provision, and reduction of the sugar allotment by a 25 per cent cut to distillers, brewers and soft drink manufacturers with an accordingly increased allotment to housewives.

In a special report on the filbert situation, the farm union recommended limitation of filbert imports, because "competition is now greater than the filbert industry can stand and the \$30,000,000 invested in nearly all within 150 miles of this convention—will be lost if something is not done."

Confidence was expressed in David E. Lilienthal and the convention urged his confirmation as chairman of the atomic energy commission.

The Calapooya local in Linn county earned the coveted annual block-and-gavel award for all around progress.

VANCOUVER GETS STEAMER

SEATTLE, Feb. 20.—(AP)—Direct overnight steamship passenger service will be resumed between here and Vancouver, B. C., on June 22, first since November, 1941, operators announced today. The steamship Princess Kathleen, a wartime troop carrier, will return to service.

Baby Dies of Burns Incurred In Cook Stove

The four-months-old daughter of Mr. and Mrs. R. A. Reynolds of the farm labor camp died in a hospital last night from burns which Sheriff Denver Young said apparently were incurred five hours previously when she was placed into a hot cook stove by a 15-year-old neighbor boy.

Mrs. Reynolds was quoted by Sheriff Young as saying she had taken her three other children to the nearby home of Mrs. Homer Adams, a sister-in-law, about 2:30 p.m. yesterday and had returned immediately for the baby which she had left on a bed in the Reynolds home. Guided by the baby's muffled screams, Mrs. Reynolds found her in the stove, Sheriff Young said she told him.

Young estimated the child had been in the stove about 10 minutes. He said the stove had glowing coals and that the baby was severely burned about the feet, head and shoulders.

Funeral arrangements are in charge of Clough-Barrick company.

'Chutes Work 68 Miles High

WHITE SANDS, N. M., Feb. 20.—(AP)—Sixty eight miles above the New Mexico desert ribbon parachutes took over the warhead of a German V-2 rocket today and lowered it to earth so gently the descent required 50 minutes.

Lt. Col. Harold R. Turner, commander of the proving ground, was enthusiastic over success of the test which disproved German calculations that "chutes could not be used at an altitude of more than 150,000 feet on the theory they would burn from friction."

Army ordnance research with the rockets has been somewhat handicapped by damage or destruction of data-gathering instruments when warheads struck the earth, and in two instances the warheads never have been recovered. Other devices to slow up descent have not been too successful.

Ban Agreed on Portal Pay Suits

WASHINGTON, Feb. 19.—(AP)—A bill declaring "null and void" the \$5,785,000,000 nationwide accumulation of portal pay claims—and barring any in the future—was approved today by a senate judiciary subcommittee. It may go before the senate next week.

The bill would outlaw present claims arising from activities performed outside the working day as understood by contract, custom or understanding and bar such claims in the future.

Work on McNary Dam Assured Start by April 1

Sen. Guy Condon Thursday advised Gov. Earl Snell that he had received definite assurances that actual construction work on McNary dam, on the Columbia river near Umatilla, would be started not later than April 1.

TRAIN PASSENGERS FLEE

TOKYO, Friday, Feb. 21.—(AP)—Police halted a train 15 miles outside Tokyo today in a routine search for black market operators. To their astonishment, 90 per cent of the passengers fled through doors and windows, leaving 400 bundles of food behind.

CARS CRASH, NONE HURT

Cars operated by Douglas Heider, 2146 State st., and O. E. Bostwright of Evergreen avenue collided at Hood and Summer streets at about 10:30 p. m. Thursday, city police report. No one was injured.

Weather

	Max.	Min.	Precip.
Salem	57	43	.60
Portland	52	45	.60
San Francisco	56	43	.60
Chicago	27	16	trace
New York	27	15	.36

Willamette river 4.4 feet.
FORECAST (from U.S. weather bureau, McNary field, Salem): Partly cloudy today and tonight, little change in temperature. Highest today 54. Lowest tonight 36.