

## Five Years of Work Under "Oregon Plan" For Aid to State's Handicapped Children Leave Marked Results In Many Fields

(Editor's Note: Five years ago, Oregon put into effect a new law for the care and education of disabled children that has been a model for forward-looking persons throughout the nation. How that law operates is explained in two articles written by a staff writer of The Oregon Statesman. The first one follows.)

By Marguerite Wittwer Wright  
Staff Writer, The Statesman

The Spartans systematically killed their physically imperfect citizens; Roman fathers had a legal right to destroy an unpleasing baby; some American Indians abandoned their disabled; in India the handicapped were drowned in the Ganges, and some Eskimos ate their aged and otherwise incapable relatives.

Western civilization is more humane in its treatment of its youthful lame, the halt and the blind; but all too often care ends with attention to physical wants.

**Oregon Pointing the Way**  
Throughout much of the United States, physically handicapped children are allowed to exist in institutions, segregated from their more fortunate contemporaries. They are fed and clothed and sometimes taught broom-making or rug-weaving. They are kept alive but they are lost from the mainstream of life and some may wish euthanasia was legal, while society smugly imagines it is doing its Christian duty by them.

Not so in Oregon. If the quality of civilization may be measured by its efforts to conserve the precious, intangible wealth of the human spirit, then this state—through a law passed in 1941—is pointing the way for all America toward a more enlightened social conscience.

**All Given Opportunity**  
For in Oregon, "exceptional" children are not set apart as freakish exhibits. A group of mothers, clubwomen and interested lawmakers convinced the legislature that the blind, the deaf, the emotionally maladjusted, the crippled and those of defective speech or low vitality should be given every opportunity to live and learn,



This smiling lassie at her desk at the Union Title company office owes part of that smile to Oregon's program for the education of handicapped children. She is Beverly Hutchinson, 639 N. 15th st., who was graduated with her class in Salem high school last June despite injuries from a May, 1946, auto accident which kept her out of school for 18 months. Now, she's looking forward to her freshman year at Willamette university, majoring in music.

play and work as nearly alike and with other members of their age groups.

Thus, the basic assumption of the "Oregon plan" is that every child is entitled to education in so far as he is capable of profiting

therefrom. A little girl who used to sit propped up by her bedroom window watching the other children on their way to school became the impulse which culminated in the Oregon plan. The sight of that

wistful youngster haunted State Rep. Harvey Wells for years. So the white-haired Portland insurance man, who often drove his grandchildren past the house to school, finally introduced himself to the child's mother and learned her story.

**Wells Sets to Work**  
The nine-year-old was a spastic—she was unable to control her motions—and her dearest wish was to be able to go to school like other children. But there were no provisions for exceptional children in the public schools, and the institutionalized youngsters received little or no education.

That started Harvey Wells thinking. As dean of the Oregon legislature, secretary of the Shriners' hospital for crippled children for 22 years and president of the Oregon Humane society, he was in a position to help the eager little girl.

He took it upon himself to get first-hand information about the number of handicapped children in Oregon who were deprived of schooling. And soon he found he was not alone in his interest on their behalf.

**Mothers Urge Program**  
First, there were the mothers—thousands of them, unorganized and unaware of their potential power. Then there were the women's clubs and Parent-Teacher associations and other groups itching for a sound campaign.

Representative Wells and Dr. Vernon Bain, then with the state department of public education, collaborated in writing the bill. Mrs. Charles Robison, wife of a Portland attorney and leader in the Portland Federation of Women's Organizations (representing 76 clubs), was active in organizing the mothers' lobby.

Gov. Charles A. Sprague secured the women a hearing before the

appropriations committee. It was Mrs. Robison said, the first recognition of the state's responsibility toward crippled children.

**Legislature Gets Problem**  
Then, kindly, respected Harvey Wells presented the problem of the handicapped tots to the assembled representatives of the people of Oregon.

And in the gallery sat the mothers. They had come from every part of the state, brought to Salem by their PTA, Business and Professional Women's clubs, the University of Oregon Mothers' clubs and other groups.

There was hardly a dry eye in the legislature, Wells recalls.

The only opposition was the cost of a state-wide program, but the lawmakers realized the parents of handicapped children are taxpayers and that there was no moral justification for withholding educational opportunities for their young. The measure passed unanimously.

The program set up by that law has now been in operation five years and reports from many sources indicate that the Oregon plan is working remarkably well—except in the field which inspired it: The education of spastic children.

**Expansion Held Vital**  
The nature of the illness and difficulty of treatment evidently have prevented further progress in the rehabilitation and education of these unfortunates. Much work with spastics is being done at the Grout school and the Shriners hospital in Portland. The University of Oregon medical school and the Society for Crippled Children and Adults in Eugene also are ac-

## Truman Enters Oklahoma on Tour Agenda

By D. Harold Oliver  
WASHINGTON, Aug. 23—(AP)—President Truman's political associates have reported he will invade the "border" state of Oklahoma during what was described as an unprecedented election campaign tour of the nation starting labor day.

Gov. Roy J. Turner of Oklahoma, head of the national Truman-Barkley club, told a news conference that tentative plans call for Mr. Truman to appear in several cities in Oklahoma sometime between Sept. 27 and Oct. 3. The trip may cover two days. A state

fair will be running there Sept. 28. Oklahoma has been a fighting political arena in recent years, although the last time it went republican in a presidential election was in 1928. Then, it gave Herbert Hoover 394,046 votes to 219,174 for the late Alfred E. Smith. The latter made one of his early campaign speeches in Oklahoma City.

Before Turner called in newsmen, word came from the president's party aboard the yacht Williamsburg that Mr. Truman plans to visit more states than any candidate in history. The swing will embrace the deep south, where democrats are in

open rebellion against the president's election, and every other section of the country.

## 4-Nation Committee Backs Birth Control

CHELTENHAM, Eng., Aug. 23—(AP)—A four-nation committee was formed Friday to promote birth control on an international scale. The action was taken at the final session of the International Congress on population and world resources. The United States, Great Britain, Holland and Sweden will participate.

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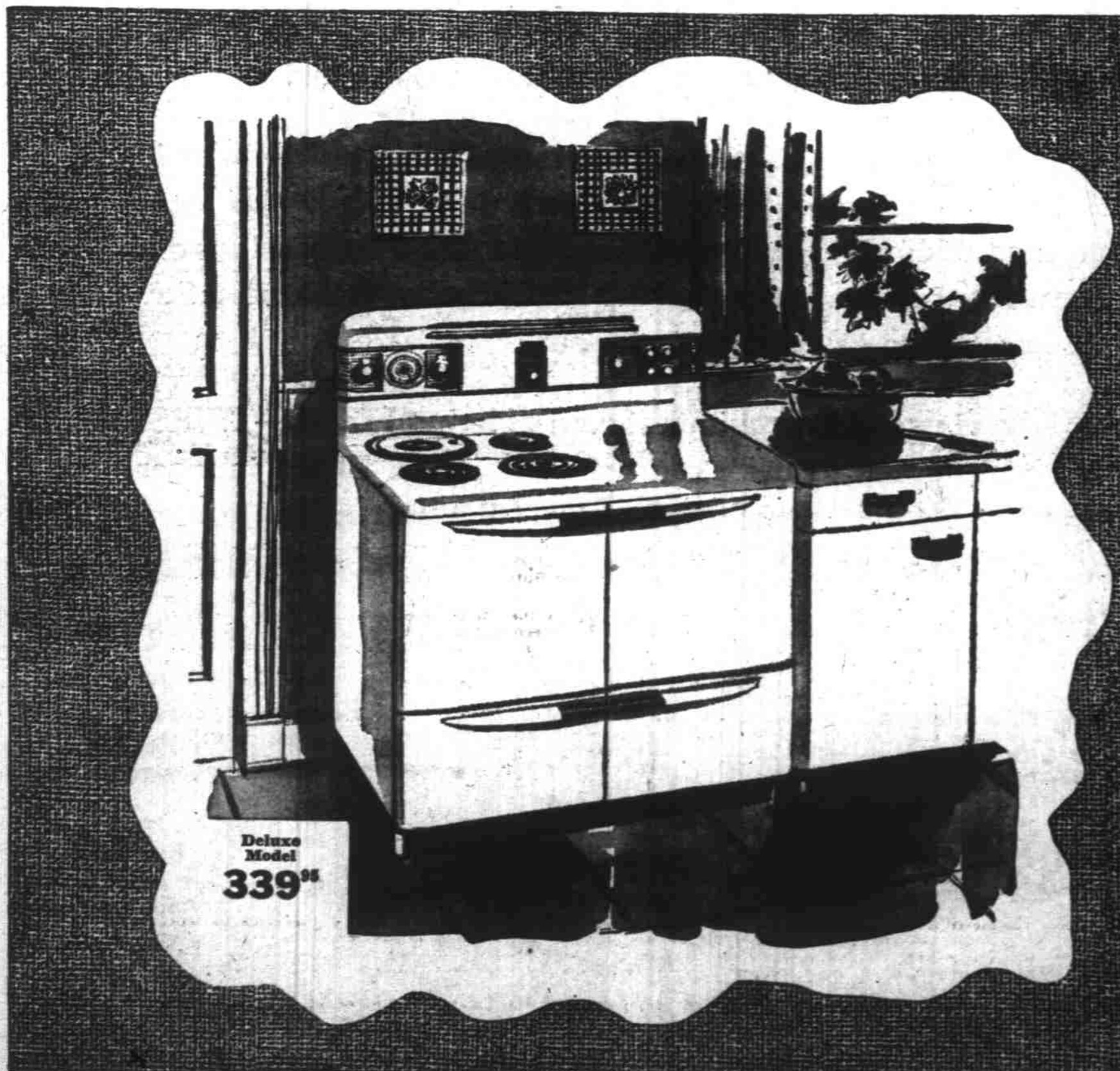
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