

The Oregon Statesman

"No Favor Sways Us, No Fear Shall Awe"
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Interim Committee Got Results

Often the way to bury a proposal in the legislature is to appoint an interim committee to investigate it. The committee may fiddle around for two years and at the last minute come up with some kind of report. Even when thorough and conscientious work is done succeeding legislatures may disregard the committee recommendations and let the report suffocate in the files.

The committee authorized by the 1947 legislature to make a study of the needs of highways, roads and streets however met with better fortune. It made an exhaustive study, employed experts to assemble material, and came up with definite recommendations. It even did a superb job in its report, employing Robert Ormrod Case to do the writing.

The major recommendations of the report: Increase of one cent in the gas tax and doubling of motor vehicle fee, are now on the way to become law, awaiting only the signature of the governor, which is assured because Gov. McKay was a member of the committee. The money will not be enough to complete the planned construction in 15 years but it will go a long way toward providing Oregon with a modern highway system.

Members of the interim committee, particularly Representatives Ralph Moore and Max Landon, the only legislators returning, have performed a worthwhile service to Oregon. They can feel great satisfaction that their program has been approved with a minimum of objection.

The mayor of Tacoma is fighting the transit company's proposal to establish a 13-cent fare. Most cities now have a 10-cent fare; but Chicago where systems are now municipally owned has a 13-cent fare for surface cars and 15 cents on the elevated. City transit systems are an essential industry, but they have a hard struggle, whether privately or publicly owned, to make income match expenses.

Death of an Oregon Artist

Salem art-lovers have noted with regret the sudden death of Peter W. Sheffers, Portland painter. Sheffers was quite well known here and several of his canvases hang in Salem homes or institutions. One, a marine scene, is in the lobby of the YMCA. During one winter Sheffers conducted art classes at the Y, coming up from Portland each week.

A member of the Royal Academy, Sheffers found Oregon such a delightful place of residence, with so many scenes worthy of portraiture, that he established his residence here, quickly gaining fame. He had numerous exhibitions in Portland, San Francisco and Chicago, and everywhere his work was lauded.

Worthy of particular mention were his seascapes, especially of the Oregon coast showing waves lashing the rocks of the shoreline. But

some of his placid inland scenes were pleasing too.

In the arts Oregon's contribution has probably been greatest in painting; and among those who have augmented this contribution was Peter W. Sheffers. We shall miss him as artist and as a hearty, strong-minded individual.

"Guys Just Like You and Me"

Bob McKean represents Columbia Empire Industries, Inc., an organization composed chiefly of manufacturers, at the state legislature. He sends out frequent bulletins to members acquainting them with the progress of legislation in which they may be interested. His last letter, which he signs as Robert R. McKean, Lobbyist (without apology) offers the following comment labeled "General":

We are now getting down to the tail of the session. It can't last much longer; maybe 10 days, perhaps 2 weeks. Everybody is tired. Nerves are frayed. Tempers are brittle. These legislators have been down here now for close to 90 days, on a generally thankless job, at a loss of money to themselves, endeavoring to do a sincere and honest job for their state and fellow citizens.

Do you give 'em the works when they do things with which you do not agree?

If so, or if not so, give them a pat on the back when they do things which you do like. We all like a word of thanks. We all appreciate it.

After all, they are just human beings. Guys just like you and me. Our fellow citizens. That's a pretty good comment. These 90 men and women have labored for nearly 90 days trying to do a good job for Oregon. They deserve credit, not abuse, for their labors; and on the whole their record promises to merit a pretty good rating.

Crunching popcorn in movie houses has long been the target of gibe and ridicule. Sometimes it has drawn direct action from irritated moviegoer or agitated theatre owner. We had never thought however that it would become a matter of legislative concern. But a bill has been introduced in the Oregon legislature invoking pains and penalties for tolerating the eating of popcorn and peanuts in theatres. "There order be a law" has at last found expression in a bill, sponsored among others by sedate Dean Walker, senator from Polk and Benton counties. This new "Walker plan" at least provides comedy relief at the end of a long and tedious session. Can the bill be amended to stop gum-chewing and parking cuds on the seats?

"Morse Lashes..." runs a headline in a contemporary paper. At least it is a change from "Morse Plays..." We're waiting for the one "Morse Purrs..."

Once again "Dollar Days," "End-of-month Sales"—we're well on the road back to normal.

One steel company has reduced the price of steel rails \$6 a ton. Now who says the cost of living isn't coming down?



IT SEEMS TO ME

(Continued from page 1)

taxes. They may add a bite on the sales tax; or impose a tax on incomes earned in the city. Some states share the sales tax intake with cities. The carryall hasn't collapsed where these free rides are allowed.

The Oregon legislature should not be so farm-minded as to neglect its cities — and we interpose a word for Portland, the state's metropolis. If the state is not able to share additional revenues with cities it ought not to be too quick with intercession against city endeavors to finance their activities. Actually the cities have been quite patient under their limitations, and exceedingly resourceful. But if the state posts signs "Thou Shalt Not" at every gate what can the cities do? In the recent past they have resorted to licensing machines they know operate illegally just to obtain needed revenue, but the state, very properly frowns on that.

It is late in the session, I know; but apparently not too late to deny tax privileges to Portland. Is it too late to help the cities solve their problems?

Literary Guidepost

By Charles Hesse
SCOTLAND YARD, by Richard Harrison (Ziff-Davis; \$2.75). Real detecting is ten per cent inspiration and 90 per cent perspiration. So says Richard Harrison, author of a state history of Scotland Yard. He should know, since he long has studied police methods. In addition, he has written many novels and stories about detectives and crimes.

Because he thus has worked both sides of the street he is able to say that "in no other profession is there a wider discrepancy between fact and fiction than in detecting, yet detective literature during the past 50 years has attained a popularity equaled only by the western stories."

Harrison adds that "the detective of fact learns that genius is an infinite capacity for taking pains, and above all for making full use of the vast resources that Scotland Yard can place at his disposal."

"The fiction detective, on the other hand, works alone as a general rule, he is amateur or regular. His deductions are brilliant — so brilliant that the reader is seldom allowed insight into his reasoning. He works by flashes of inspiration or intuition and breaks every rule that is laid down for the guidance of his colleague in real life."

"This is, of course the fault of the reader as much as of the author, for few readers would care to tackle a thriller that read like an official report with whole pages of facsimile reproductions from the Criminal Record office."

Harrison notes the practice of some authors in making a butt of the Yard man, but says the Yard is used to such slights. However, he adds "many of the professional detectives of fiction would in practice, have failed to pass preliminary real life tests."

"None," he opines, "would have been drafted into the Criminal Investigation Department."

More than three fourths of the ties men buy are of the bold variety despite the howls of pain over gifts frequently heard from men after Christmas.

With Watson at the Legislature

Walker Drops Tax Problem to Strike Blow for Quiet Theatres

By Ralph Watson

Come all you children and stand real still While you hear the sad tale of the Walker bill. It's short and it's cruel, with an awful punch To hit you hard where you park your lunch.

Out goes your crunching caramel corn And crackling peanuts, all forlorn! But cheer up kids, don't get too glum— You still can have your bubble gum

Now who would dream that Dean Walker, up to his ears in tax bills, and all bowed down with the weight of ways and means would let a little thing like popcorn divert him from the serious things of life and legislation? If anybody had happened to suggest such an idea, the obvious retort would have sprung automatically to the lips: Oh, peanuts! But there it is, all printed out in black and white with a number on it. Senate bill 425, Inhibitions, penalties, emergency clause and all.

But if you had known that the senator had set Rex Kimmell to writing up a bill to outlaw popcorn and peanuts from the movies would you have dreamed that he would go so far as to reach across the party line to lure Senators Neuberger, and Gardner and Mahoney, and Dunn and Musa into going cahoots with him as joint papas in the endeavor? But you haven't heard all of it yet. He coaxed Jack Lynch into the conspiracy too, he who buys popcorn by the five gallon cans and parks it in his hotel room and Senator Hitchcock from down Klamath way, and Senator Lampert from right here at home.

Demos Outnumber GOP Not only that but he has got five democrats to only four republicans lined up with him on the bill. The first thing he knows these five demos will get the bill into the committee on municipal affairs, or public buildings, or resolutions, or forest products, or insurance and it will come back to the senate with all the republicans deleted and deflated and once more the minority will grab the peanuts and the popcorn and all the political oomph inherent therein.

Senate bill 425 is quite a message. It declares that "This legislative assembly" (now 89 days old) finds that movies "constitute

an instrumentality of great and says it is unlawful to run a movie under the republican form of government they can be run so they are beneficial or detrimental to the public interest. Consequently, and in the interest of public welfare they ought to be regulated so they would not be prejudicial to any form of government or race or creed."

That last is where it nuzzles up to the democrats, but be that as it will, from there on it gets tough, says it's unlawful to run a movie unless peanuts and popcorn eating "is prohibited and prevented"; says anybody who eats the lowly goober while the show is going on is to be immediately bounced outside and his money refunded; and don't miss this: If any cash customer becomes annoyed, irritated or peevish by the sound of munching and crunching peanuts or popcorn he can march right out to the ticket office and get three times the cost of his ticket and more than that, he can sue the guy if he don't give. If the boss don't can the munchers he gets not more than \$100 in fine or up to 30 days in the klink, or both—if the judge don't like peanuts in his ear either.

Then there is the emergency clause, which may get things going before the close of the fiscal year if the bi-partisan team gets a hustle on.

Sweetland Due At ADA Meet

Oregon's chapter of Americans for Democratic action, national liberal political group, will be represented at the convention in Chicago Friday by Monroe Sweetland, ADA board member from Oregon, and democratic national committeeman.

Sweetland is secretary of the domestic policy committee of the convention. Sweetland said the purpose of the Chicago convention is to "launch a major counter-offensive by American liberals against the forces which are sabotaging the present congress."

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SALEM

W. SALEM

Donnell Asks, 'Is Atlantic Pact Legal?'

By Joseph and Stewart Alsop
WASHINGTON, April 7.—The foreign minister so graciously sanctified the Atlantic pact on Monday, could have done worse than stop talking long enough to listen to Sen. Forrest Donnell of Missouri. He and Mrs. Donnell were on hand in the commerce department auditorium, the senator bearing under his arm a small bale of papers proving the pact illegal, unconstitutional and ill-drafted.

The senator might have given the assembled statesmen the answer to the question that is now secretly worrying every one of them. This question was once succinctly put by Winston Churchill: "Will America stay the course?" In short, will the United States, having assumed the position of world leadership, agree to carry the attendant heavy burdens and pay the resulting heavy bill?

The man who bears within himself the answer to this momentous inquiry is far from representative of the senate isolationists. The hard remaining core of senatorial isolationism is largely composed of portly, expensively tailored men with a strong tendency to sound, even in private conversation, like a broadcast news release of the National Association of Manufacturers.

The great majority of these men come from states, both northern and southern, where the local political organizations are rigidly controlled by the most reactionary big business groups. Some wear demagogue's

disguises. But most of them look very much like what they in fact are — delegates of power and mining and transportation and great manufacturing companies — and not all like what they are officially supposed to be — representatives of the amorphous but majestic group that the late Sam Blythe once called "the great rancid American people."

Not so Senator Donnell. He also looks like what he in fact is, from the stern frames of his eye-glasses to the somehow virtuous lines of his neat blue suit. But what Senator Donnell is goes back to the dusty, elm-shaded, lilac-scented streets of the town of Quitman and Maryville, in Nodaway County, Mo., where he was born and brought up.

It includes a father born in the Civil War, who left North Carolina in the early 80s, set up a little store, made a few town successes, and sent his son to college and law school. It includes also an old-fashioned, modestly prosperous St. Louis law practice, family life in one of the less ostentatious suburbs, and Sunday instruction of the Grace Methodist church men's Bible class. This thing that Donnell is made him governor and then senator, because Missouri's rural counties recognized him instantly as one of their own. And when the burden of his colleagues' song is "taxes," this thing that Donnell is makes him talk about "righteousness" and "the Constitution."

His life has been passed among his law books, and the letter of the law is very sacred to him. He has opposed the League of Nations, as a dubious contract, but worked for the World Court, which he evidently saw as a sort of supreme court of the world. In the same way, he has supported ERP and standing the justice and advantage of promoting the recovery of the western world. But the Atlantic pact looks like another dubious contract, and he is getting ready to oppose it too.

If it were not for the senator's

charming courtesy and transparent sincerity, the cynic might incline to mock his approach to this grim issue of power politics. He will talk for half an hour to prove what is obvious, that the pact is a binding commitment to fight an aggressor. He will denounce its loose language as though it were a contract of sale. He will even cite supreme court precedents ("Take the Cherokee Tobacco Case, 11 Wallace 616 or 78 U. S. 590, in which Mr. Justice Swain held...").

But what he will not voluntarily do is discuss the terrible problems of security and survival in the modern world, which are the Atlantic pact necessary. The nature of aggressive dictatorship, the safety that comes with preparedness, the need to unite in defense — all these are points you find he has hardly considered. Why should he have? His life has been happy, secure and remote from danger in a way no European can imagine. Yet when he is asked about these points, he does consider them, quite seriously, and you have the feeling that if he studied them a little longer, he might change his view.

Of course, in the unlikely event of a talk between the foreign ministers and Senator Donnell, the diplomats would end by asking, "But where is our answer here? What do we learn from this high-minded, rather old-fashioned gentleman?"

Yet they would be wrong. For Donnell is a symbol of the millions of Americans who want to do the wise thing, yet do not know the facts because we as a nation have remote and secure for so long. If the facts can be brought home to these Americans, they will act bravely and disinterestedly. And thus the question about American foreign policy, the question whether America will "stay the course," is essentially a question of leadership. If we have good leadership, the big business isolationists will not know what hit them.

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