

Chamber Hears Three Leaders Talk on Outlook in New Year

Members of the Chamber of Commerce and a number of attending luncheon were added insight into local conditions by the president of the council, a representative of city board and a spokesman Eugene's merchants.

Council President A. L. Hawn, in outlining the problems of municipal government—immediate and to continue—stated that application of the principle, "first things first," is the besetting question at the city hall.

Building Costs
James A. Rodman, Sr., president of the Chamber of Commerce, said, "The building costs will remain as high in 1948 as they were in the past year. And, in the absence of government 'interference,' he stated, the prospect is that as many living units will be built this year."

This building rate, Rodman said, will see the provision of twice as many single family dwellings in the three years, 1946-48, as were built in the three years immediately following the first world war.

More Retailing
The merchant's outlook, William R. Russell told the forum audience, must now be directed by the fact that Eugene's retail business has grown enormously since pre-war days. At the same time, he said, "the day has returned when the customer must always be right."

Hawn listed revision of zoning regulations, solution of the growing traffic problem, provision of an adequate sewage system and development of recreational facilities as being among the foremost problems of city government at the outset of 1948.

The traffic problem, he said, will be somewhat alleviated with completion of the Millrace Junction highway relocation project. Bids on the remainder of this work will be called this spring.

Parking Problem
The problem of parking is constantly growing, Hawn stated, and he suggested that it should be considered a problem of the business community, not the municipal government.

Then, making it clear that he was speaking for himself and not for the entire council, he said that solution of the Willamette Street traffic problem may be elimination of daytime parking on that thoroughfare.

On the question of where the money will be found to finance the various developments now needed in the city, Hawn indicated that increased taxes and some bond issues will be needed. He pointed out that less than half of the city's present income is from property taxation.

Inflation
Rodman's prediction on the outlook for housing and construction costs was based on a strenuous

objection to artificial inflation of costs through excessive charges for labor and material. He also criticized the effect of high taxation, and gave force to his criticism in stating that the cost of a \$5000 home today includes taxes totaling \$1250.

"We should not be so impatient with Eugene's housing problems," Rodman said, and continued to explain that this city has been unusually affected by recent population growth.

'Incentive'
The cessation of controls over rental housing was a great incentive to building in 1947, he continued, and provided for the construction of single-family homes at a rate unprecedented in the history of our nation, and 82 per cent greater than in 1946.

Restoration of rent controls over dwellings of this type, Rodman declared, would force the building rate back to 1946 levels.

Less Per House
Factors in the present shortage of homes, Rodman said, include the fact that since 1939 the per capita occupancy of living units

has fallen from 3.4 persons to a "bare" 3 persons.

In closing his remarks, the realtor drew his case against artificially high building costs, and concluded that "we must stop cheating—there must be a reform from within." Otherwise, he said, fixed prices will destroy the prosperity of this nation.

Prices were also given prominent mention by Russell, chairman of the Chamber's retail merchants' division. However, his approach to the subject was a marked contrast to Rodman's.

No General Rise
Speaking of merchandise prices, Russell predicted that the general rise formerly expected will not materialize during 1948.

He based this statement on personal knowledge that wholesalers have in some cases even reduced their prices in recent weeks. And he gave a large measure of credit for this development to the actions of retailers in refusing shipments at inflated prices.

Responsibility
Of the Eugene market, Russell said that the growth of retail business from \$18,000,000 in 1939 to

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\$56,000,000 in 1946 (the latest figures available), has brought new responsibilities of customer service to local merchants.

The forum program was conducted Friday by Deane Seeger who explained that Forum Committee Chairman Orlando John Hollis had gained his holiday from the rostrum microphone through a policy dictating rotation of the master-of-ceremonies duties among members of his committee.

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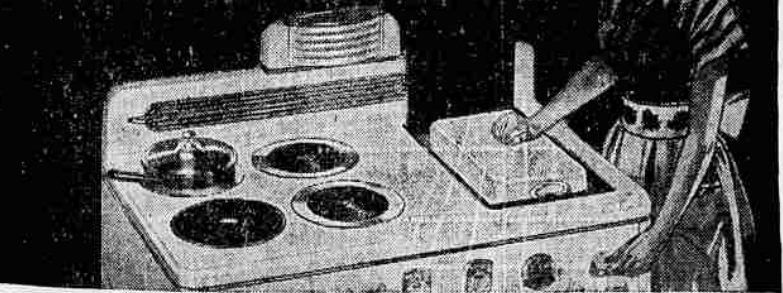
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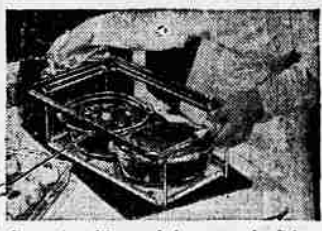
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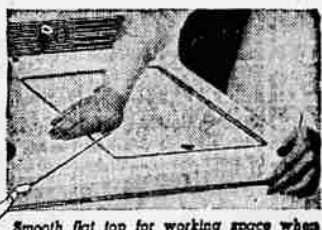
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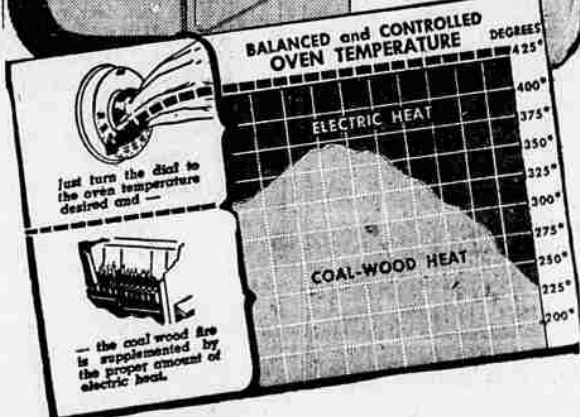


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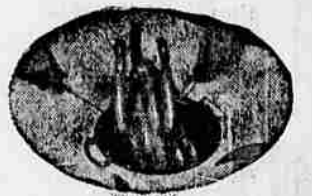
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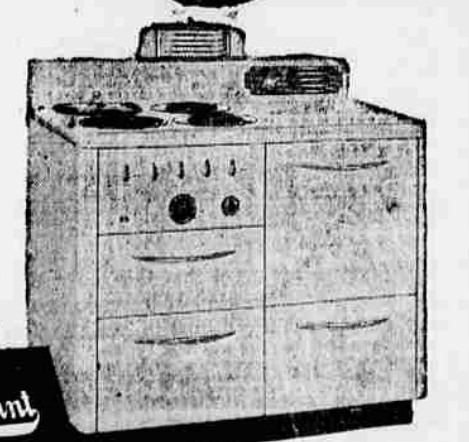
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