Economy Wave Under Attack

State Finance Director Sits in Capitol Hot Seat

By ROBERT B. FRAZIER
Register-Guard Staff Writer

sign on the wall says, "God give us the fortitude to the things which cannot be changed, and the courage nge the things which should be changed and the wis- o know one from the other."

rry S. Dorman, director of the state's new Department nance and Administration, looks at the sign several a day. In trying to do rt in the prayer, he has e one of the most con- sial figures in state gov- ent.

the average employe the Capitol Bldg. He will ly have harsh words for the man he blames for conomy wave" going on in artment.

ordinary man-in-the-cor- erks his thumb toward 's third floor office and a crack about the "Savings " a term calculated to ir- Dorman.

ally the term pleases him. d of like it," the former director says. He points at his department will ly save the state 1 per cent 000,000 worth of purchases ar. That is $290,000, com- with the $65,000 annual cost department.

cs Anonymous

I guess we are a savings Dorman says with a big Then he growls, "If we we ought to be."

of Dorman's critics prefer ain anonymous. Many who in about the new depart- re unhappy because the n axe has fallen on some dulgence.

, for example, the secre- who always uses Such-and- Brand carbon paper. She has used that kind, and s she can't work with any kind. Then along comes with his purchasing dep- William E. Stevenson. They everal hundred pounds of carbon paper that's just d, but that costs less. The ry can't use the brand she

makes unpleasant remarks the "Savings Center," and that New Brand is not s good" as Such-and-Such Dorman has an answer. setting up "expert commit- of major users of a variety modities. Stevenson meets he committees and learns brands are up to standard hich are not. Some commit- embers are state employes. are "major users" in pri- ndustry.

rts Test Aspirin

pose the state needs aspirin. expert committee on drugs ulted. Stevenson has a list jor aspirin manufacturers. hese equal or aren't they," Perhaps the experts agree ur brands are "equal" and wo are inferior. The state r bids from the four manu- rs whose products were ed.

r bidder wins, for a large y of aspirin. Buying in y saves money. The aspirin to the state hospital, the l school, the University of infirmary, into medicine s on state jobs everywhere, yplace else the aspirin is

er the old system the state have made separate, small ses of aspirin for each user. would have cost more.

same procedure is follow- buying typewriters, auto- s, road graders, typing pa- gasoline. "The minute you buying by brand," Dorman "Up goes the price."

the University of Oregon Department needs a mi- pe, Dorman doesn't dictate ype microscope it must buy. will insist the department e least expensive one avail- which meets specifications partment has set up for it-

man insists he's a reasonable man, who reserves the right to be shown.

A few months ago the University of Oregon School of Business Administration wanted some electric typewriters. "No electric typewriters," said Dorman, citing a regulation which prohibited their purchase by state agencies. Dean Victor P. Morris of the school went to Dorman and explained the typewriters were needed for instruction of students, not for office work. Dorman okayed the request.

The department has no authority over choice of text books.

Most of the criticism levied against Dorman thus far has been on the purchasing issue. That happens to be the division that has been most active in the first year of the department's life.

Now, however, Dorman is starting to reach into other areas. There is no reason to believe the hue and cry will die down as more toes are stepped on.

One large department was using a balance sheet which did not show a true balance. Dorman gave the department a new balance sheet.

Currently he's concerned about the many reports he says an employer has to make to the state and the many visits he receives from state auditors. Employers file reports to the tax commission, the industrial accident commission and the unemployment compensation commission. Each department uses different forms. After each form is submitted, a departmental auditor comes around to check up.

Dorman would like to see fewer forms and only one visit by only one auditor. He thinks there's too much paper work already.

Two of the greatest storms his office has precipitated have been over automobiles and over house furnishings for state employes.

The car issue has burned longest. He has suggested "car pools" in Portland and Salem. The pools operate efficiently at the University and at Oregon State College, he points out, and seem to work well in Michigan. While he still has an open mind on the car pool issue, his "wondering" has been loud enough to give state employes the jitters.

Citizens have complained that some state cars do not bear state seals on the sides, and that some employes drive them home at night. Also under criticism are state cars heavier than the Ford-Plymouth-Chevrolet class. These criticisms have, by implication, settled on Dorman's head. He pleads not guilty.

No law requires state seals to be on state cars, he points out. It is just a regulation. Sometimes, he asserts, it's better if cars are not marked. Examples are cars used by the Liquor Control Commission and the Public Utilities Commission for investigations.

Senators Insist

Sen. Richard L. Neuberger of Portland last session tried to require seals on cars by amending the salary increase act to exempt from it employes driving unmarked state cars. He was supported in this by Sen. Robert Holmes of Astoria and by Sen. Angus Gibson of Junction City. But the amendment failed.

(Dorman drives a '47 Chevvy coupe, with a big state seal on the side.)

Secretary of State Earl Newbry has met Dorman head-on on the car-pool matter. The secretary argues that it wastes man hours if an employe has to return a car when he returns from a trip. He also says that employes who drive cars home at night save the state $12 a month garage rental. Car pool garages, Newbry points out, would have to be built in Portland and Salem at a cost of $200,000 each.

Dorman's office authorizes purchase of no vehicles more expensive than the Ford-Chevrolet-Plymouth class. There are, however, heavier state-owned cars. Dorman's office has no control over cars driven by Newbry, Gov. Douglas McKay, or State Treasurer Walter Pearson. Each is an elected official and has in his budget certain funds he may use as he sees fit, including the purchase of cars.

Mileage Charged

Newbry has had two state-owned Oldsmobiles. Now, however, he drives his own Packard on state business and charges the state mileage. Pearson drives a state-owned Oldsmobile; and previously drove a state-owned Buick. Gov. McKay travels in his own Cadillac. Newbry charges the state 7 cents a mile for driving the Packard. Dorman has suggested 7 cents for the first 1000 miles and 6 cents a mile thereafter.

"It costs just as much to drive a car the second 1000 miles as it does the first," Newbry has objected.

The state has another Buick and four Dodges, all purchased before Dorman's office was set up.

The matter of home furnishings for state employes has been a smaller fire, but it has burned just as hot in its own area. Oregon like several other states, provides living quarters for certain employes of state institutions. For a small charge the employe gets a furnished house, food, and inmate domestic service.

Boom Is Lowered

Dorman lowered the boom on purchase of what he called "mink coat" items. No longer, he said, would the state purchase electric coffee makers, deep freezes, fancy table linen and other such items for state houses. He also opposed permitting employes to buy these items through the state, taking advantage of the state's discount.

William Ryan, supervisor of institutions, immediately objected that home furnishings were an important part of the salary higher bracket institutional employes received. Without such inducements, Ryan warned, the state could not attract top people.

Newbry criticized the newspapers for printing Dorman objections. He said it made state officers and employes look like crooks.

Dorman tried to smooth this over by saying he hadn't called anybody a crook. He said he was opposed to getting state employes by "come on" methods. Salary schedules, he argued, should be raised if employes are not now getting enough money.

Anybody Can Look

"Anybody can look in the book," Dorman points out, "and see how much the governor makes ($11,000) or what my salary is ($9600), but I defy you to say how much the warden of the penitentiary makes ($7900 plus inducements)."

His objections to private citizens using the state discount is that it's unfair to retail merchants who pay taxes to support the state.

Dorman needs his broad shoulders. He takes all the abuse heaped on the department, including that heaped on his young assistants. He is proud of his staff.

"They're all young men," he points out. "I like to have young men around me. I'm too old." (He is 61. His assistants are between 36 and 40).

Bright Young Men

The "bright young men," as they are called in the Capitol, are:

William Stevenson, former assistant director of purchasing in Minnesota, in charge of purchasing.

William Collier, former statistician for the state tax commission, administrative assistant and research director.

Ray Fields, former auditing employe in the secretary of state's office, head of the fiscal division.

LaVerne Young, Dorman's assistant when Dorman was budget director, head of the budget division.

Dorman, who has known McKay 30 years, became budget director when McKay became governor. He became director of the Department of Finance and Administration when the budget department and others were lumped together by the 1951 legislature. He and Mrs. Dorman live in Salem.

A former Portland businessman and a veteran of both world wars, he has two sons in uniform, one a West Point graduate. A third son was killed in North Africa in World War II.

Biting down hard on his ever-present pipe, Dorman grins and admits that "The sairway between my office and the governor's has been pretty hot some times." Only once, he adds, has the governor reversed him on a major matter. That, he says, was a matter of policy. There have been two minor changes in allowances. Once the governor was tighter than Dorman had been; once he was more liberal.

The "Savings Center" has not always cut down on requests. When the board of parole and probation put in for $64,497 for the two-year budget, Dorman's office figured it wasn't enough. The figure was raised to $67,427.

The man who occupies the hottest seat in the state Capitol has a philosophy of operation which he thinks saves him in his more trying moments.

"Call me a (bad word)," he says, "and that's all right. That's a matter of opinion and maybe I am. But come in here with some specific complaint and I bet I can answer it. These people (his critics) don't talk in specifics. Hell, we ought to have to justify ourselves, and I think we can do it."

HARRY DORMAN AND SOME OF HIS "bright young men" talk over a victory for the "Savings Center" as Dorman's Department of Finance and Administration is called by other critical state employes. The bright young men are: LaVerne Young, budget division administrator; Dorman, William W. Collier, deputy director, and William E. Stevenson, administrator of the procurement division.

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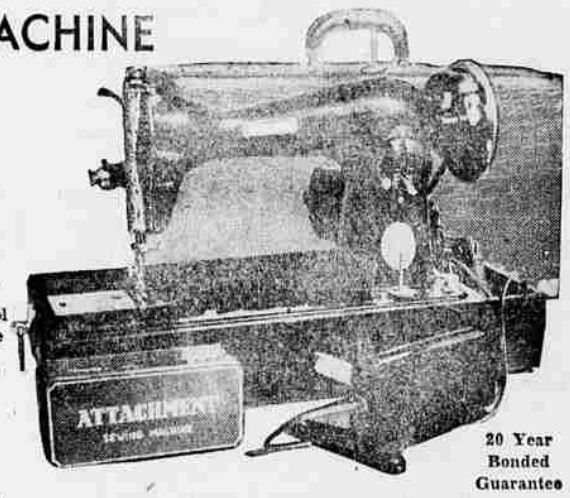

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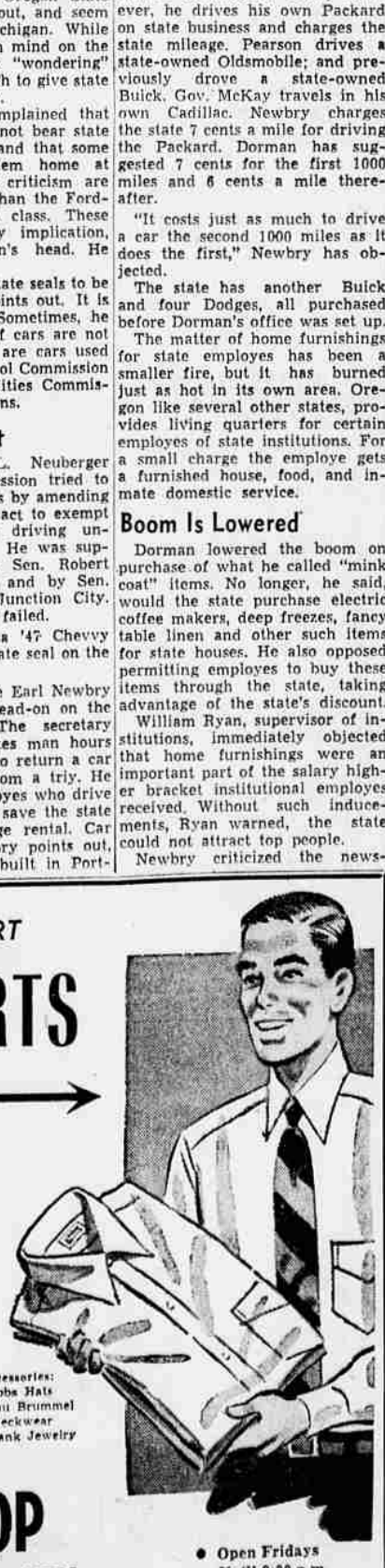

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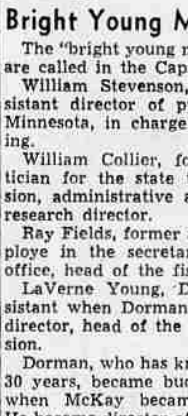

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