

Limited Firecracker Period Won't Hurt Sales Any

By WILLIAM WARREN

From here on out, flying saucers, pinwheels, sparklers, lady crackers, snakes, golden butterflies and devil chasers will be on sale in Oregon only from June 20 to July 6. And the fellows who furnish the fireworks are glad of it.

Oregon's new fireworks law relegates such capricious cuties as the M-80 and the cherry salute to the limbo of lost limbs. And the purveyors of pyrotechnics say—"goody!"

They felt the business was getting a bit out of hand, and good regulations, such as those adopted by the recent legislature, are better than a ban on the whole works, say the firework men.

C. E. Brown, who heads the Hong Kong Importers and the Western States Fireworks Co., with headquarters in Toppenish, Wash., was in Salem this week to study the new firecracker act, now signed by the governor and already law since it carried an emergency clause.

Brown said he was glad to see the more hazardous merchandise banned. For instance, the M-80. It is war surplus, used by the army in war games because it lets go with a blast that sounds like cannon fire. It can take a hand off, and has.

The cherry salute is so called because it is the size, shape and color of a cherry, with the fuse sticking out like a stem. It is powerful enough to blast fingers off, and has.

The limited selling period doesn't worry Brown. It just capsules his schedule.

He's looking for a bang-up blowout come the Fourth of July, with as much goods sold as in an unlimited season.

Says the Hong Kong head man: "The kiddies will just save up their cash and concentrate on other firecracker buying between June 20 and July 6. We look for a sale as big as in former years."

How big is that sale?

Brown, whose two companies sell firecrackers, punk and assorted bombs, blasts and salutes in Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Montana and Alaska, estimates total sale of fireworks in these four states and the territory will represent a retail value of some \$4,000,000 this year. And that's a lot of debbles.

Brown says Chinese firecrackers are by far the most popular pyrotechnics, with rockets and roman candles next. A typical \$1,000 order will include \$400 worth of Chinese crackers \$200 worth of rockets and roman candles, \$250 worth of audible items and \$150 worth of visible items.

Audible items, of course, are the ones you get a bang out of. A popular entry is the flying saucer, some 3 inches long and one inch through, with a wing on top. The gadget flies through the air then explodes.

Visible items include the sparkler, cone-shaped fountain that shoots off stars, handle fountain that erupts like a volcano, house on fire, floral shell and pinwheel. Two brand new numbers in this group are the golden butterfly, which shoots a rig into the air where it shows golden stars, and the devil chaser, working along the same lines but showering silver stars. Each ends in a flash but no blast.

Brown imports his firecrackers and punk from Hong Kong. The crackers come from Canton, mostly. The punk comes



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Tate Checks Farm Incomes

Although almost everyone knows of farmers who have made money during the past eight or 10 years, most farmers have not been doing as well as the people in town or city.

W. M. Tate, chairman of the Marion county agricultural conservation committee, backs up this statement with the fact that the average net income of farm people in 1948 from all sources was only \$909 per capita, including the value of home-produced food and income from non-farm sources. This compares with the non-farm average of \$1,569.

Mr. Tate said that consumers are often misled by the prices they have to pay for groceries and other commodities produced on the farm, or made from raw materials produced on the farm. Too often, they are not aware of the prices actually received by farmers.

According to Mr. Tate, figures show that for the wool in a \$50

suit, the farmer received about \$5.70; for \$10 worth of meat, the farmer received about \$5.10; for the tobacco in a 20 cent pack of cigarettes, the farmer received about 2 1/2 cents; for the wheat in a 14 1/2 cent loaf of bread, the farmer received about 3 cents. And if the farmer had given away the hide of a \$10 pair of shoes, they would still cost \$8.83.

Too often, Mr. Tate said, this spread between what the farmer gets and what the consumer pays and the difference between farm and non-farm incomes are overlooked when farm programs and price-support measures are being discussed.

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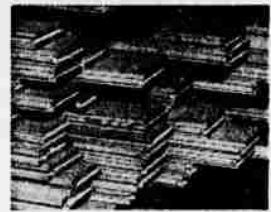
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