

Clackamas County News

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Published weekly on Fridays at Estacada, Clackamas County, Oregon. Entered in the postoffice at Estacada, Oregon, as second-class matter.

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In Clackamas County, one year \$1.50; outside the county and in the State of Oregon, one year \$2.00; outside the State of Oregon, one year \$2.50; foreign \$3.00 a year. Subscriptions are payable in advance.

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ECONOMIC HIGHLIGHTS

What Associated Press staff writer Richard L. Turner called a "new and to some a startling phase in the argument for helping Great Britain" recently appeared while the Senate was debating the lease-lend bill. This new phase was the admission that the proposed policy involves the risk of war.

The opponents of the lease-lend measure have long used that as their prime weapon. They have declared that once the bill becomes law it will be only a matter of months before we are active participants in the war against the Axis. At the beginning however, the bill's supporters generally pooh-pooed that supposition. They said that the measure could not carry us any closer to war. Now their tone has undergone significant change.

For example Senator Barkley the majority leader recently said that "the course we chart is not without risk." Going a long step farther Senator Pepper one the most aggressive backers of 'ali out' and for Britain said, "If the action we propose will not save England we will save it anyway." Frankest of all was Senator Bailey another leader of Democrat forces who said "I am hoping that intervention may not mean war but I am ready if intervention does mean war."

The President himself has said that there were hazards in any course that this country might pursue in its foreign policy. It was obvious that the possibility of war was in his mind when, in answer to a question at a press conference, he said that even if we were to engage in naval hostilities with Japan there would be no let-up in our sending supplies to England. The administration stand is that risky as the lease-lend bill policy may be it contains the greatest assurance for American security with the least risk of war.

If we went to war it is apparent, that at the beginning our participation would involve the navy and perhaps the air force not the army. Britain could certainly use our fighting fleet, the great British navy which has sustained heavy losses is spread out dangerously thin. She must command the North Sea, the Mediterranean and a considerable part of the Far and Near East. She must convoy the merchant ships that bring her supplies from the New World and Canada and Oceania. Her fighting force in the Orient is inferior to Japan's. Britain has plenty of men in khaki today she hasn't enough floating gun platforms.

In theory if we should go to war with Germany, Japan would at once attack us. She might attempt to seize the Philippines and the lesser Pacific islands which fly the American flag. And then what might prove one of the greatest naval wars of all time would begin.

There is still another possibility here. Britain apparently fears that Japan is about to embark on new adventures of her own, toward Indo-China, the Netherlands possessions, or even Singapore, key to the East. Large numbers of the famed Australian troops have been sent to the Singapore garrison. Enough planes have also been sent it is reported to give Britain superiority in the air in that area, the Japanese air force is not especially large and the sons of Nippon aren't supposed to be much as pilots. At the same time Britain would have a tough job resisting a full-dress attack by the Japanese fleet. Many observers think that if Japan does make her move we will step in, that the buglers on our warships will sound "battle stations" and it won't be for practice. Some think we might also help if Japan went after the Crown colony of Hongkong, a position which is virtually indefensible from land and can only be protected by sea power.

It should become clear before long what Hitler's spring strategy will be, a drive thru the Balkans, an attempt at invasion of England, a Japanese push in the East, or perhaps, a combination of all three. In the meantime this country is not nearly so far from the war as the majority of people judging by polls hope.

Communicable Diseases Cause Big Death Toll

This is the time of the year when communicable diseases especially influenza cause a high death toll the public health research department of an Oregon life insurance company warns.

During January of this year 111 Oregonians died from diseases classed as communicable. In the previous month 113 deaths were listed. Both totals are nearly double the monthly rate from the same cause in the summer.

The state board of health records show that January and December have the highest fatality rate from communicable diseases for the whole year so a decline is expected as spring advances.

DUTY OF THE STATES

In the opening days of the Oregon legislature now in session scores of bills were introduced. A considerable proportion of them had to do with revenue and taxation. With one exception, a measure proposing to reduce the state gasoline tax by a cent a gallon, all of them would if passed impose a further strain on the tax payers.

That is the normal tendency of state legislatures thruout the country. But in these highly abnormal times the lawmakers face an obvious duty which so far seems to have been generally overlooked. That duty is to pare state expenditures to the bone.

This year we will all pay higher federal taxes. And, as every informed person knows the increases so far approved by Congress mark but a very short step along a very long road. Further tax boosts cannot be postponed for long. Federal income is not now meeting the regular expenses of government, to say nothing of tremendous appropriations made for defense. In short we are going to pay record-breaking federal taxes and the general standard of living will suffer accordingly.

The states don't pay for war machines. The world emergency has imposed no special burdens on them. And that goes for towns and school districts and counties and all the other myriad taxing bodies that cover the country. Local government must retrench as it never retrenched before. The best brains in local governments from governors down to village officials must figure out how tax savings can be made. Let that be remembered by the many state legislatures which will hold their biennial sessions during 1941.

Wheat Quota Election Date Is Set Tentatively

A referendum among wheat growers to determine whether or not marketing quotas for wheat will be ordered under the terms of the AAA law became almost a certainty with the announcement by the secretary of agriculture that May 31 has been set as the tentative date for such a referendum.

This development was foreseen at the recent state conference of AAAA committeemen held at Corvallis where many angles of the quota were discussed. Although the final marketing quota determination will not be made until later present estimates indicate that the supply of wheat for 1941-42 will be in excess of the amount where the 1938 law compels a referendum to be called.



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