

The Sentinel

A GOOD PAPER IN A GOOD TOWN
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WOULD A \$5 AUTO LICENSE COST LESS?

Oregon automobile owners, who have been insisting on a reduction of the auto license fee, and the list includes a large percentage of those who drive cars, are more than likely to have their wishes realized at this session of the legislature, by the enactment of a flat \$3 or \$5 rate law.

But how many have stopped to figure whether they would be any better off, financially?

Taking the Chevrolet about which the Sentinel editor knows more than he does any other car, the present license fee is \$25.20. If the \$5 fee plan is adopted and one cent additional gas tax levied, it would work out something like this:

The assessor would assess such a car at about 60 per cent of its present value, say at \$150. With a levy of 70 mills in Coquille, that would mean a personal property tax of \$10.50. On an average of one thousand miles of traveling a month, the one cent additional gas tax would amount to \$6.67, or a total of more than \$22. That is three dollars less than the present license, but the more traveling a car does the higher the gas tax.

Of course, one hope that some auto owners might have would be that he might escape having his car assessed by the county assessor.

Writing in the Oregon Voter last week, W. B. Dennis has this to say about the taxing of automobiles as personal property:

Will as you will, the personal property tax on motor vehicles can not be dodged. If the Legislature fails to provide for its assessment, and collection by the state along with the license tax, county assessors will be free to do so. The alert among them, looking about for taxable sources of income, will not be slow to seize this open opportunity, especially in centers of large population. In fact it will be their duty to do so.

Not one of the six states that have adopted a flat tax has abolished the property tax. Nor can Oregon do so! I say "nor can," because the Legislature has no constitutional authority to exempt from taxation any class of property except as provided in the constitution itself. If this be true, then in some form or other, a property tax on motor vehicles must be assessed and collected. Choice of the agency lies between the state and the counties. The Legislature must do the choosing. If it does not provide for the property tax, it will be the duty of the assessors to do so.

Contrary to popular opinion the present license law did not abolish property tax on motor vehicles. It did exactly the opposite thing. It classified motor vehicles "For the purpose of taxation" as authorized by the constitution. The final tax assessed by this act is a composite of privilege tax and property tax. Value is estimated by the unit of weight. The law provides that the composite tax be collected by the secretary of state and the proportion of the tax due the counties, in lieu of local assessments and collections, turned over to them. If the state does not continue to collect the property tax for the counties, the counties will have to do it for themselves. The Legislature must determine which practice shall be followed in the future. The choice is limited between these two alternatives. The property tax on motor vehicles cannot be dodged.

The flat tax is a privilege tax. It has none of the elements of property tax. The gasoline tax is a sales tax. It likewise has none of the elements of a property tax. They are not assessed according to any unit of value, either of dollars or weight. The tax is the same for a \$7,000 car or a \$700 car; and for a 7,000-pound car and a 700-pound car. The courts, so legal authorities inform me, could hardly, and in view of previous decisions, construe a flat tax or gasoline tax to be a property tax. If that be true, what would be Oregon's position if the Legislature should adopt the rec-

ommendations of the governor's license revision committee?

The governor's committee recommended a \$5.00 flat tax plus one cent gasoline tax increase. It made no provision for a property tax. If the courts should say that the flat tax and gasoline tax are not property taxes, it would be the duty of county assessors to list motor vehicles on their assessment rolls, and those who have been clamoring for reduced license fees would discover that the cost equivalent of their license fees had been greatly increased instead of reduced. If such a possibility exists, the facts concerning it should be brought out into the open form of this discussion and definitely determined. The Legislature should not fool itself, nor should the people be fooled.

The revenue bills began to drop into the hopper of the legislature Wednesday, but it is quite doubtful that they will all be given consideration, the budget balanced, and adjournment taken within the 40 day session for which the legislators are paid.

TABLOIDS

By W. S. Sickels

Considered worthy of reprinting, the Portland Oregonian in its Fifty Years Ago items, mentions a fire which brought death to five cats. Thus are these clean little household pets being recognized more and more as having a place in human affections and affairs. Many people do not care for cats, due to the fact that they do not understand them.

In every community are a few individuals who have reputations for being close, stingy, greedy, etc., and with whom it is hard to transact any kind of business, even though the amount involved might be of no consequence. Such people also are always trying to get the best of it, which is a form of dishonesty often called shrewdness. They disgust you with their conduct, sometimes wrangling over a penny, and you despise them thoroughly. Yet they often command a deference that beggars explanation. Have you ever caught yourself showing uncalled-for politeness toward a character of this kind? If so, quit it and place him where he belongs.

Not many hungry men have the chance these days to read the newspapers, but they have all heard about the swimming pool that is to be installed in the White House through a \$50,000.00 appropriation by congress.

"It isn't that we're so ignorant; we just know so damn much that isn't so."—Josh Billings. The foregoing is quoted from memory and may not be correct as to its wording.

British statesmen have hit upon the novel idea of settling Europe's war debts to the United States, which total about eleven billion dollars. They would pay two billion and call it square. American taxpayers in default would appreciate an opportunity to settle at some such rate of discount.

"Knowledge is power," runs an old adage. Also it is sometimes dangerous if not accompanied by silence. David S. Barry, veteran sergeant-at-arms of the United States senate, finally succumbed to the urge to write, which is more dangerous than talking. However, it seems the dignified senators might better have ignored the things that Barry wrote, but senators and congressmen are smarting under deserved general criticism, therefore are angry and peeved.

Bribery is not always in the form of an exchange of money for a vote. Many men enter the halls of legislation, both state and national, with the bribe in their pockets—a certificate of election to serve the special interest that may have had them in employment for several years.

Official records have revealed much heavy grafting in various forms—nepotism, padded expense accounts, and a hundred other shocks to honor and decency on the part of the people's representatives.

In former years being elected to serve the people in either house of congress was a distinct personal honor. That regard by the public is not so much in evidence now. People are learning more about politics and they realize that "the purification of politics is an iridescent dream," as expressed by the late Senator John J. Ingalls, many years ago.

Astronomers tell the sun is 92,500,000 miles from the earth, but there have been many days this winter when it seemed much further than that.

Communism is said to be making progress in this country. We have a few communists in Coquille, but no activity has been observed among them. They seem to have conscientious scruples against being active in anything.

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There is little, if any, prospect at this time of adjournment of the legislative session within the 40-day limit during which the lawmakers are paid for their services. That time expires next Friday night, February 17, leaving only a week in which to put through a taxation and revenue program if any relief is to be given to the property owner in the way of tax reduction.

Of course it can be done if the legislators make up their minds to do it. The tax problem has been uppermost in the minds of most of the members throughout the session and more, if not all of the members, already have their minds pretty well made up as to how they will vote on the various proposals. With the property tax reinstated through veto by Governor Meier of the tax repeal bill the problem now resolves itself down to one of either finding new sources of revenue to take the place of the property tax or admitting that it cannot be done.

There is no lack of tax proposals. In addition to the sales tax plan which remains the one possible source of any big revenue, there have been introduced measures to increase the income tax, the tax on insurance companies, on corporations and on inheritances. There is also a proposal to impose a tax on gifts and a capital levy or graduated property tax designed to penalize large property owners and give relief to the small property owner. But all of these proposals combined, without the sales tax whose approval by the voters is admittedly doubtful, would not be enough to cover entirely the state's needs and erase the property levy.

The past week has been a hectic one with committees working day and night in their efforts to grind out the huge grist of bills that have found their way into both houses. The next week will be even more strenuous as the lawmakers settle down for the long, hard pull on the home stretch in their determination to finish the job and get back home.

The legislature has at least set up the machinery through which relief is to be provided for Oregon's needy unemployed. House bill 169, sponsored by the joint committee on unemployment has not only been approved by both branches of the legislative assembly but has been signed by the governor and, bearing the emergency clause, is now law. The measure provides for a state-wide committee to negotiate with the Reconstruction Finance corporation for a loan to be used to supply direct relief. Estimates by relief workers familiar with the unemployment situation throughout the state place Oregon's need for the current year at \$5,000,000. While the federal funds will be advanced as a loan it is freely predicted that no attempt will ever be made to collect the money from the state. The state-wide committee will be appointed by Governor Meier. The situation in the several counties will be handled by sub-committees of seven members each, four of whom will be appointed by the governor. The other three will be members of the county courts or persons selected by the court.

Two House bills, sponsored by Representative Nichols, limiting to taxpayers the right to vote on bond issues and tax levies were killed in the senate. The bills were similar to those sponsored by Eddy in 1931 and which were later held to be unconstitutional. Constitutionality of this proposal has been taken care of in the amendment adopted by the people at the last election.

Oregon was the sixth state to ratify the child labor amendment to the federal constitution. There is little likelihood, however, that the amendment will become effective soon inasmuch as 36 state legislatures have failed to accept it. The only opposition to the measure in the Oregon legislature came from the rural sections where fear is felt that the amendment might interfere with the use of children under 18 years of age in farm work.

George Winslow, representative from Tillamook county is being groomed for the 1935 Speakership. Winslow is one of the few veteran members of the House, now serving his fifth term. Across the hall Senator Franciscovich looms as the logical choice for the presidency of that body. Although one of the youngest members of the Senate both in years and point of service he has a likeable personality, is highly popular with all the members and would dignify the position of presiding officer.

Just who is entitled to credit for negotiating the loan which will keep Oregon off the shoals of warrant indebtedness is a question that is arousing the curiosity of a number of the legislators just now. A few days ago State Treasurer Rufus Holman issued a statement to the press in which he

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BUTTER Pound Local Make 19c Corn Flakes 3 Pkgs. 19c Peanut Butter Hoody's Quality. 2 lbs. 15c Rolled Oats Albers Reg. Cooking 9 lb Bag 24c BROOMS Med. Weight Four Tie EACH 39c	Shortening Swift's Crescent 3 lbs. 20c MALT Standby popular brand Can 29c COFFEE Golden West 1 lb. Can 27c MATCHES 6 Box Carton 17c White King Granulated Soap, lg. pkg. Ea. 30c	

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Chickens Pork Chops Beef Pot Roast
lg. Rhode Is. Reds or Loin Roast
Pound 14c Pound 12c pound 9c

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will give free demonstration on Sat., Feb. 11th, featuring some of the following items which we offer at these special prices.

HAMS Swift's Premium POUND 16c CORN Swift's Premium. No. 2 can 2 Cans 25c	BACON Swift's Empire. Med. Wt. POUND 12c SOAP Swift's White Laundry 10 Bars 19c	Frankforters Swift's superior quality 2 LBS. 25c SOAP Swift's Toilet Soap 3 BARS 10c
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Tru Blu

will also demonstrate their superior line of merchandise on Saturday, February 11th.

Crackers Tru Blue Sunshine Salted Wafers. 2 LB. BOX 25c COOKIES CHOCOLATE ECLAIRS	Graham Crackers Tru Blu Honey Maid 2 lb. Box 25c With every one pound purchase A package of Animal Crackers free LB. 25c
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declared that with the cooperation of Governor Meier and Secretary of State Hoss, "I" had negotiated the necessary loan. Right on the heels of this statement the governor sent another one of his numerous messages to the House and Senate in which he advised the lawmakers that he had been successful in negotiating a loan. Anyway the loan seems to have been negotiated and state officials and employees will be paid in cash—if and when the necessary appropriations are made. There is a string attached to the promised loan however. The money will be forthcoming only when it is shown that the legislature has held the state budget within the limits recommended by the governor and his budget director. What with many state activities cut off entirely from state aid by the governor and the budgets of others cut to the quick without any apparent rhyme or reason and strong pressure being brought to bear from many quarters to restore deleted appropriations as well as to recognize a few newly discovered needs, the responsibility imposed upon the legislature by this string to the

promised loan is a big one indeed.

Furniture and fixtures of the executive offices of the state board of higher education were moved to Corvallis, Saturday, following a recent order of the board transferring the offices to the college campus. Dr. E. E. Lindsay, executive secretary of the board, will continue in charge of the department until the expiration of his contract, July 1, after which the department will be placed in charge of a lower salaried employee yet to be selected by the board.

Senator Goss, Coos county attorney, thinks that county judges should be members of the Oregon bar and has embodied the proposal in a bill now pending before the legislature.

The latest proposal in sales tax legislation provides for an exemption of all personal property from taxation for all purposes. Retail sales would be taxed at the rate of two percent, personal services at the rate of one percent and wholesalers would pay one percent on their gross business.

Estimated revenues from such a tax are estimated by the state tax commission at an excess of \$6,000,000 a year or nearly twice as much as would be lost through the exemption of personal property. Revenues from this tax would be divided equally between the state and the several counties and would serve to offset present taxes on property. The measure has been designed to overcome many of the objections to the sales tax which was presented to the special session. Under its provisions a merchant would pay no tax on his stock of goods. Neither would the farmer pay on his implements and livestock. Both, however, would pay upon their sales. Prepared by the state tax commission the measure is meeting with a favorable reception at the hands of the legislators and has won over many of those who opposed the original gross sales tax bill. Its passage by both House and Senate is freely predicted. In such an event provision will also be made for a special election at which the people will have a chance to express their views on the tax at an early date.