

\$1

# Dollar Day

\$1

SATURDAY, MAY 24

SECOND SECTION

## The Coquille Valley Sentinel

SECOND SECTION

COQUILLE, COOS COUNTY, OREGON, THURSDAY, MAY 22, 1941.

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### Public Opinion Is Labor's Bulwark

By George Peck

Last month, the United States Steel Corporation released its annual statement for 1940. Once again, following the splendid example set last year, it has published its report in such simple form that all who are able to read, can get a clear understanding of just what was done with the billion and eighty-one million dollars it collected for goods and services; once again it clearly shows what percentage the workers got and how much was left for stockholders.

Several significant things are brought to light in that statement. One of these is that the employees worked 21 per cent less hours to earn four per cent more wages in 1940 than they did in the boom year of 1929. Further, each of these wage dollars bought more because commodity prices were lower in 1940 than in 1929.

An examination of the financial reports of all American manufacturing industries shows that the United States Steel Corporation is typical and not an exception to the rule. That would seem to indicate that the American worker, continued to improve his position during the past ten years just as he did in the preceding decades.

As further proof of this, let us take a glance at the entire 39 year record of United States Steel Corporation. During the nine-year period from 1902 to 1910 inclusive, out of the money to be divided between the owners and workers, the workers got 65 per cent; for the decade 1911 to 1920, 73.4 per cent; from 1921 to 1930, 80.9 per cent; and from 1931 to 1940, 94.6 per cent.

So we see that with less effort on his part and working under better conditions, the American System of Free Enterprise is enabling the American worker to get a larger share of what he produces in each passing decade. What stronger evidence could be submitted to substantiate the claim that the American Way is the best system that has yet been devised? What stronger argument could be advanced to absolutely silence those who would have us scrap this beneficent system and set up either some other system which already has proven to be a failure or some other new untried scheme of things?

We have steadfastly and repeatedly maintained in this column that labor has every constitutional and moral right to organize and to collectively bargain for higher wages and better working conditions. However, during the past few weeks, we have begun to feel somewhat alarmed for labor as we have witnessed a growing tendency on the part of some American workers to demand higher wages.

In some cases, these demands are reasonable, but in a number of others not justified. There is a wide divergence of opinion as to how much return capital is entitled to on its investment, but every fair American worker admits that it is entitled to a reasonable return. Therefore, when the demands of the worker, if granted, would not only wipe out any return for stockholders and even in some cases force the company into an unprofitable position, it places those particular workers in a very unfavorable light.

Public opinion has for the most part been with the worker in his fight to obtain an adequate wage, a fair share of what he produces, and to attain a higher standard of living. Without this moral backing, he would not have made the forward strides that he has. If he should now, as unfortunately is true in some cases, make exorbitant and unreasonable demands, he is bound to lose favor with the American public as a whole. It behooves labor's leadership upon which it leans so heavily, to see to it that labor maintains public opinion solidly behind it, for without that moral support, labor cannot continue to advance its interest, may even lose some of the gains already made. That would indeed be a pity.

### State Capital News

Suggestions that the state legislature be called into special session to amend the assessment laws met with an emphatic "no" on the part of Governor Charles A. Sprague.

The suggestion has been made by Portlanders, aroused over the prospect of increased taxes on residence properties as a result of the recent opinion of the state tax commission condemning the use of the "varied ratio" system of assessments in Multnomah county.

The governor declared that except for a highly vocal minority there has been no demand for a special session. Furthermore there is little assurance that the legislature could or would do anything to correct the situation in Multnomah county even if convened in extraordinary session.

Unless and until some one can convince him that a real emergency exists he has no intention of calling a special session, the governor declared.

It required 178,200 envelopes and 167,350 letterheads costing a total of \$2,204.65 to fill requisitions filed by members of the state legislature during the recent session. Stamps totalling \$6,309.14 were also requisitioned by the lawmakers and the several committees. One member of the House is charged up with 6150 envelopes, and 5850 letterheads, as well as miscellaneous stationery items to a total cost of \$98.37 in addition to \$69.50 worth of stamps to supplement

his meager per diem. On the other hand another representative managed to get along with only 300 envelopes and 200 letterheads, at a total cost of \$4.58 while the postage bill of this modest member totalled only \$7.75.

With industry working at high gear and unemployment at a minimum, indications now are that the unemployment compensation fund may reach the "ceiling" of \$14,373,512 set by the recent legislative session, before the end of the current year. Employers with unfavorable employment records during the past few years are particularly interested in this situation inasmuch as when this "ceiling" is reached penalties otherwise applied to this group of employers will be waived and the maximum payroll tax fixed at 2.7 per cent. The unemployment compensation fund hit a new high at \$12,170,124 last week with receipts for the first four months of this year totalling \$3,130,902 compared to \$2,846,950 for the same period last year. At the same time benefit payments were shown to have dropped off by 32.5 per cent with payments for the first four months totalling only \$1,444,057 compared to \$2,141,004 for the same period in 1940.

Compliance with the law requiring uniformity in assessments will not work a hardship on the taxpayers as a whole but will only tend to equalize taxation, Chas. V. Galloway, member of the state tax commission told a group of county assessors at a conference here last week. While taxes on some properties will necessarily be increased where past assessments have been too low, other properties in the same classification will be reduced in assessed values or at least benefit through a reduction in the tax rate, Galloway pointed out.

Meeting the demands of hospitals half way the state industrial accident commission this week adopted a new schedule of hospital rates providing for an increase of \$1 per day over the rates now paid for the care of hospitalized accident cases under the workmen's compensation act. The Portland Hospital association recently demanded an increase of \$2 a day for these services. The \$2 per day increase will cost the accident fund approximately \$75,000 a year, members of the accident commission said.

In spite of the fact that the elections of 1942 are still months in the future the political pot is beginning to simmer right merrily here in Oregon.

Howard Latourette, former speaker of the House of Representatives, was definitely "drafted" as a candidate for governor at a "coming out" party staged by a group of his supporters in Portland a couple of weeks ago, thus assuring the democrats of at least one entry in the race for that number one spot.

While he made no formal announcement of his intention it is generally taken for granted that Robert S. Farrell, Jr., of Portland, speaker of the house in the recent legislative session, is definitely in the race for Secretary of State. This suspicion is strengthened by young Farrell's frequent appearance in the public print. The youthful speaker is overlooking no opportunities to get his name before the reading public no matter how far he has to stretch a point in order to manufacture an interview.

But the big question mark in Oregon's political arena is Earl Snell. Serving now in his second term as secretary of state, Snell is barred by the constitution from a third consecutive term in that office. Having had a taste of political life it is believed

in the public service. But just which way will he turn? That is the question most often asked whenever two or more politically minded persons get together. Will he choose to become a candidate for governor and thus oppose Charles A. Sprague for the republican nomination, for it is generally conceded that Sprague will seek a second term. Or will he seek to wrest the senatorial toga from the

veteran Chas. L. McNary who has let it be known that he has no intention of retiring upon the expiration of his present term. Most logical suggestion appears to be that Snell will enter the race for congress from the big second district where the republicans have been waiting a good many years for the right man to come along to defeat the veteran New Deal democrat, Walter M. Pierce, of LaGrande.

As to that Snell himself is not saying and since he appears to be the only one who knows what he has in mind his future course will probably remain a matter of speculation until he finally decides to take the public into his confidence, some six or eight months hence.

Only 28 percent of automobile owners carry liability and property damage insurance according to estimates by the state insurance department. That means that of the 400,000 automobiles registered in Oregon approximately 285,000 are not insured. Many, if not most of these, are operated by owners who, being without insurance protection, are not in position to pay any substantial claim for damages resulting from a traffic accident for which they might be responsible. This presumption appears to be borne out by the fact that in the less than six years experience under Oregon's safety responsibility act, 452 motorists have had their licenses suspended for inability to pay judgments and of this number 356 are still barred from the highway, never having been able to qualify for reinstatement of their driving permits.

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