

Grange Files Initiative to Add New Severance Tax on Timber Cut

Calling for a severance tax of 25 cents per thousand board of merchantable timber harvested in the state, an initiative petition was filed Monday, January 26, by the Oregon State Grange calling for a vote on the proposed measure at the November, 1948, general election. Revenues from the proposed tax, according to

Grange officials, would be used to reforest and otherwise rehabilitate areas such as the Tillamook burn, provide additional fire protection for state, county and privately owned timber lands, carry on forestry and wood utilization research at Oregon State college, and provide technical forestry assistance to small timber lot owners.

The petition was filed as a result of action by the delegate body of the Grange at its convention at Bend last summer, which directed the State Grange executive committee to take tiscours h eof action after the 1947 legislature refused to enact a similar measure proposed by the late Governor Earl Snell.

Three-fourths of the proceeds from the tax would be given to the State Forestry Department for fire protection, reforestation, disease and insect control and management of state and county forest lands. The remaining one-fourth would go to the Oregon State college for research and for providing technical assistance to small timber lot owners.

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WASHINGTON WEEK

By The Hon. Harris Ellsworth
U. S. Representative

The first steps have been taken toward securing appropriations for further construction of dams and other work on the Willamette Valley flood control project and on river and harbor development. All appropriation bills originate in the House. The House Appropriations Committee has forty-three members. This group is divided into small subcommittees. Each subcommittee has the responsibility of holding hearings and making its recommendation on a specific appropriation bill. During the next few weeks, these subcommittees will complete their work on a total of twelve regular annual appropriation bills. Our flood control and rivers and harbors appropriations are carried in the bill known as the War Department Civil Functions bill, meaning the money to be expended by the Army Engineers on public works projects.

I appeared before the subcommittee and urged appropriations totaling \$36,000,000 for the Willamette project and \$5,395,000 for completion of the Coos Bay Harbor improvement and the harbor improvements at the mouth of the Umpqua and Chetco rivers.

In support of the request for these projects, I pointed out that they have long been authorized, and particularly with reference to the Willamette project, are so far along toward completion that it is simply good business judgment that they be completed as soon as possible so that the benefits to be derived may begin at the earliest possible moment.

Two of the Willamette project dams have been completed and have contributed substantially toward reducing the loss caused by the recent floods. The Army Engineers estimate that, had it not been for the Cottage Grove and Fern Ridge flood control dams, the flood loss this year would have been \$14,300,000 instead of the \$11,800,000 damage suffered. Construction on three other large dams has been started. Appropriations already made will bring the Dorena Dam to 67 per cent completion, the Detroit Dam to 13 per cent, and the Meridian Dam (officially known as Lookout Point Dam) to 12 per cent completion.

The President's budget included only \$14,753,800 for the Willamette project. I have urged, and will continue to battle for, substantially more than twice that amount for the simple reason that, to speed the construction

of these dams will not only save construction money, but their completion will make annual public savings of \$10,000,000 or more. In other words, I am fighting against the actual loss of government funds which would be caused by delaying the completion of this great project, now that it is so nearly finished. The same argument also applies to the consideration of the harbor projects on the Oregon Coast in my Congressional District.

The House of Representatives' action on an appropriation bill is but the first step in the Congressional appropriation procedure. After the bill is passed by the House, it is taken up by the Appropriations Committee of the Senate. The Senate Committee also holds hearings and reports the bill to the Senate. It seems to be something of a custom for the Senate to make some increases in appropriations for public improvements, especially with reference to western items. This is mainly due to the fact that, in the Senate, each state has exactly the same voting power. For example, in the Senate the State of Oregon has the same strength as the State of New York, whereas the very large delegations of the populous eastern states tend to dominate in the House of Representatives. Also, the House Appropriations Committee traditionally does not approve an increase in the Budget figures submitted by the President, whereas the Senate does not feel bound by any such rule or tradition. Consequently the Senate version of flood control and rivers and harbors appropriations will likely be considerably different from the bill passed by the House. After the Senate passes a bill, the differences are then ironed out in a conference between the House and Senate Committees. Actually, the Conference Committee action is not

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only almost the final step in the process, but is a vital step.

I recite the details of Congressional appropriations procedure for the purpose of pointing out that you cannot be certain what the actual appropriations for Oregon projects are going to be until the bill is finally passed by both houses and sent to the President for his signature.

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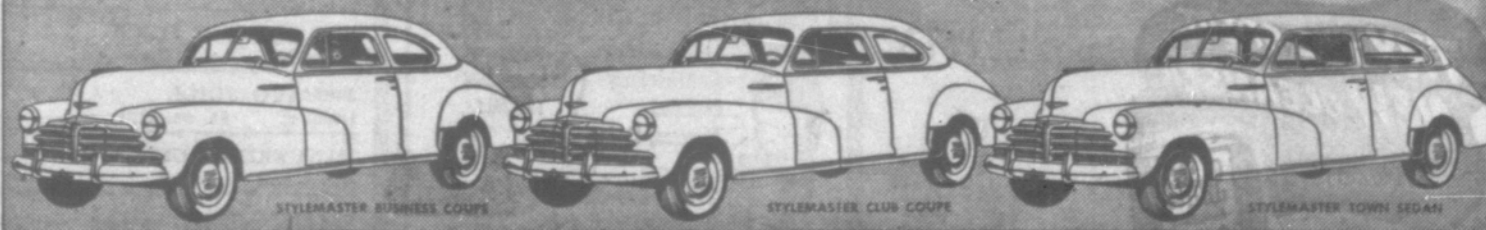
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