

## REVIEW OF WORK OF OREGON LEGISLATURE

### No Important Measures Introduced in Initial Week of Session.

Both Houses Organize Speedily—Few Bills As Yet Have Appeared in House—Senate Bills Number 58—Work on "Bone Dry" Amendment—Committees Consider Legislation Before Introduction—Elimination of Some Commissions Considered.

Salem.—While very little of importance was accomplished aside from organization during the first week's session of the state legislature, yet if the celerity with which both houses organized is an indication of the manner in which the business of the session is to be conducted, it augurs well for a successful session. R. N. Stanfield, of Umatilla county, was elected presiding officer of the house and Gus. C. Moser, of Multnomah county, selected to preside over the senate without opposition, desk clerks chosen and all details of organization completed without a bit of bickering.

One of the remarkable features of the initial week was the small number of bills introduced in the house as compared with previous sessions. With four and a half days of work only 64 bills and a few routine resolutions appeared on the calendar, while two years ago 102 bills appeared during the same period. If the house keeps up this record it will have approximately 650 bills before it, whereas during recent sessions the bills introduced have approximated one thousand, and should this proportion be kept up during the session, the present house will have established a record for having introduced fewer bills than any house in the past decade.

#### Bills Come in Slowly.

But all this seeming slowness is to the credit rather than the discredit of the house, for it is not the quantity but the quality of legislative work that the public is interested in, and a great multitude of measures usually means feverish haste, tumult, logrolling and riot in the closing days of the session.

Speaker Stanfield has been urging members to get busy and introduce their bills, believing that if they are going to introduce bills they should get them in and out of the way before the important work of the session is taken up.

In the senate no encouragement for the introduction of bills is needed, as the record is slightly greater than two years ago. There were 58 bills on the senate calendar as compared with 49 at the previous session.

#### First Measure is Dry Memorial.

The first measure of any kind considered by both houses at this session was the joint memorial, by Senator Eddy, petitioning congress to vote the District of Columbia dry. The senate put it through unanimously, but seven representatives voted no.

None of the important measures that are sure to come up made their appearance during the first week.

The joint committees on alcoholic traffic, roads and highways and insurance have been worrying over the

various relative problems confronting them under this same plan. The committee on alcoholic traffic expects to unify all the conflicting suggestions and proposals that have sprung up surrounding the proposed bone dry measure. It will sit in open hearings to hear and discuss the various arguments that may be presented for or against the measure, either by members of the legislature, or the general public.

#### New Insurance Code Scanned.

The insurance committees of house and senate have been scanning the insurance code prepared by Insurance Commissioner Harvey Wells, and are now ready to hold open hearings on that measure, section by section and class by class.

The committees of the two houses are following a new course this year, sort of a reversal of previous practices, and it is proving to be a decided improvement. The committees are considering the proposed legislation in advance of its introduction. This is true of the military committee, the insurance committee and, to a certain extent, the alcoholic traffic committee. It always has been the practice of the ways and means committee to discuss appropriations before the bills providing for them have been introduced.

The advantage of this plan is that time will be saved on the floor of the two houses. When the insurance code, the military code, the prohibition bill and some of the road bills come before the house and senate the committee members will be fully informed on them and will be able to advise other members.

#### Consolidation of Commissions Likely.

Every indication points to the fact that the legislature means business on the question of consolidation of commissions and the elimination of duplicating features of the work of such boards.

The question of consolidations and abolishments of departments or commissions also will enter into the calculations of the two committees and it is probable that they will make an effort to save money in this direction, in order that more funds may be secured for meeting institutional needs.

Joint meetings of the two committees will begin this week and a steady grind will be kept up until all the appropriation bills have been prepared and submitted. An effort will be made by the joint committees to get the appropriation bills into the house at as early a date as possible in order that they will not be caught in the usual rush at the end of the session.

#### Appropriation Bills to Be Hurried

No stone will be left unturned to grind out the great grist of business before it in a rapid-fire manner, according to a decision reached, by the joint ways and means committee. Chairmen Wood and Kubli have agreed to hold a session of the joint committee each working night of the legislative session until all the business of the committee is transacted and the various officials will be called before the committee to make their statements as early as possible.

The present committee probably will depart from old-time custom of passing on some requests for appropriations and pruning them without giving a hearing to the persons interested. It is understood that all of the officials and institution heads will have "their day in court" and that before any changes are made in re-

quests a complete defense of such requests will be allowed.

#### Homestead Exemption Law Proposed.

A more workable homestead exemption law than the one now in force is proposed by Senator Olson. He says that while the present law contains a \$1500 exemption clause, property valued at \$100,000 can be claimed as a homestead and held out on creditors in case of bankruptcy. Also that a mechanics lien for repairs can be defeated by claiming the property as a homestead. Remedies are provided for these exemptions in the Olson bill, which was introduced and passed in the house last session, but lost in the senate during the closing hours.

#### Illegitimate Child Given Recognition.

Two bills relating to the illegitimate child were introduced in the senate. Senator Olson introduced a bill providing for the prosecution of the father of such a child if he refused to make a settlement with the mother or provide for the child's maintenance, while Senator Smith of Josephine introduced a bill providing for a forced marriage of the parents of an illegitimate child.

Both bills give such a child the same rights of inheritance of the property of its father as are accorded a legitimate child.

#### Would Make Streams Log Highways.

To open the streams of Oregon as public highways for the rafting and floating of logs and other timber products, is the apparent purpose of a bill introduced in the senate by Senator Olson of Multnomah.

The bill provides that all corporations organized for the purpose of driving, catching, booming or rafting of logs or other timber products shall be under the jurisdiction of the public service commission, which shall provide a method for marking logs for identification and prescribe reasonable rates for floating logs.

#### Would Know About Traveling Money.

The house passed, under suspension of the rules, a resolution directing every state official, department, board and commission, from the governor down, to furnish a "complete, detailed statement of all money expended in the payment of traveling expenses during the years 1915 and 1916, with the date of expenditure, by whom expended, and for what purpose." This information is requested not later than January 18.

#### Legislative Brevities.

Sentiment in both senate and house is strongly in favor of any law that will be acceptable to the prohibition forces.

The first money bill to make its appearance from the hands of the ways and means committee came into the house in the shape of an appropriation of \$25,000 for the payment of mileage and per diem of the members of the legislature.

Oregon's normal school at Monmouth will receive an appropriation of \$81,000 for the biennial period beginning this year, according to a bill introduced by Representatives Staffin and Fuller, of Polk county.

After a lively debate the senate adopted a resolution authorizing the employment of G. Walter Griffin, a prominent Eugene business man, to serve as clerk for Senator Bingham, who is in New York, and will not be in attendance during the session.

Members of the senate went on record as favoring prohibition when, without argument or discussion, the joint memorials introduced by Sena-

tor Eddy, asking congress to prohibit the use of the mails for liquor advertising purposes, and one for the submission of a national prohibition amendment to the states, were adopted unanimously.

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