

County Property Taxes Boosted By Schools

Sherman county property taxpayers got a 1949-50 \$324,228 tax bill from Santa Claus this year, for all county, city, school and other local purposes a 15.4 per cent increase over the last fiscal year according to Oregon Business & Tax Research, the state taxpayer association.

Sherman county's property tax increase was due principally to a 51.1 per cent increase for school costs, 15.1 per cent increase in taxes levied for general county purposes. A 6.1 per cent decrease was shown in cities and towns, according to the county assessor's tax summary.

Steady increases in cost of local government, much of it voter approved (generally few voters vote at special elections), is shown by the 14 per cent increase in total 1949-50 property taxes levied in Oregon, from \$79,179,455 for 1948 to \$90,274,329 for the current 1949 tax year, a jump of more than \$11,000,000. This amount is another all-time record tax load on property in Oregon.

Home, farm and business property owners have one Yuletide consolation, the taxpayer association pointed out. The jet-propelled upswing in property taxes (none are levied for state purposes) slowed down this year! The 1948-49 total zoomed about 24 per cent over 1947-48, versus a modest 14 per cent bulge this year.

Hood River and Harney counties won the \$64 question by being the only counties in Oregon wherein total local property taxes were less this year than last. Clatsop and Columbia counties had small-scale increases, only 4.7 and 3.1 per cent, respectively.

Schools for Oregon's kiddie crop spent 70 per cent of all the 1949-50 Oregon property tax bill, over \$53,000,000, or 21 per cent (\$9,200,000 plus) more than was levied last year for "little red school houses" (now neither little nor red), the state taxpayer association summary of 36 county assessor tax summary statements cited. The \$53,000,000 total for school costs does not include about \$20,000,000 of state income tax cash diverted to local school districts.

Douglas county has the dubious honor of having the largest over-all property tax increase, slightly more than 52 per cent over the 1948-49 levy.

Heavy tax levies for road reconstruction, due to the 1949 freeze, and new hospital projects in a few counties (under a federal match-money deal), accounted for increases in some counties.

Many counties are "squeezed" for elbow room within the 6 per cent limitation law to raise tax cash for general purposes. Much of the current year's \$11,000,000 property tax increase was due to levies voted by a few people at special elections, costs some times forgotten when tax bills are opened. County courts are urging that property tax cost of public welfare be levied outside the 6 per cent limitation, to make room for mandatory tax costs pushed onto counties Business & Tax Research tax by the legislature, the Oregon summary report mentioned.

LOCKWOOD REAPPOINTED

At the regular meeting of the Oregon State Game Commission, December 10, the Oregon State Game Commission voted unanimously to reappoint Mr. Charles A. Lockwood to the post of State Game Director. Lockwood's appointment would have terminated at the end of the year.

Lockwood is a veteran employee of the commission having served in nearly every department before becoming State Game Supervisor in 1947. The 1949 legislature changed the position to State Game Director, and since that time, Lockwood has held the new post.

Mr. Lockwood, at the present time, is president of the Western Association of Fish and Game Commissioners and holds an office in the International Association of Fish and Game Commissioners.

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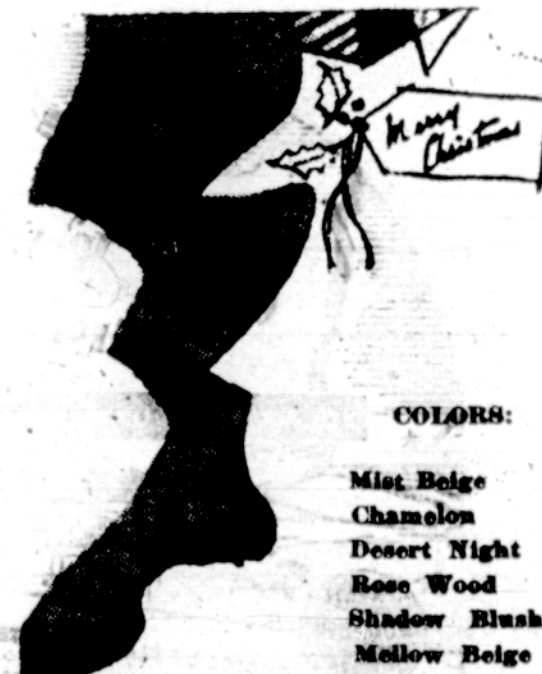
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