

Letter from Washington

Harris Ellsworth, M.C.
4th District, Oregon

Since this will be the last Letter from Washington for some time, I will make a quick summary of the work of this session which directly concerns Oregon and the Fourth District.

LEGISLATION—Two bills of vital interest to the Fourth Congressional District, introduced by me, were passed during this session. One was the bill directing the Veterans Administration to use the Camp White Hospital as a domiciliary home. This bill was introduced in the Senate also by Senators Morse and Cordon. The passage of this bill not only saves the federal government some \$ million dollars, but provides immediately a much needed facility for the care of veterans.

The other bill opened the Oregon and California land grant lands of Western Oregon for mining exploration and entry. Senator Cordon had a companion bill in the Senate. As the result of this legislation, 2½ million acres of mountains, mineral-bearing lands, which had been closed for ten years, are now open for prospecting and development.

Other legislation directly concerning Oregon, in which I took an active part, involved authorization of river and harbor improvement projects on Coos Bay, Smith River, Charleston Slough, Coquille River, and the Umpqua Harbor. The federal highway bill, authorizing a continuation of the federal aid program for highways, was enacted. I cooperated with state highway officials toward the passage of a suitable bill.

POWER—The appropriation for the Bonneville Power Administration for the coming year is larger by far than for any previous year and double what it was last year. Construction on the second high-power transmission line from Bonneville to Eugene will be expedited as will the line from Eugene to Reedsport by way of Mapleton, and from Reedsport to Coos Bay.

Perhaps the most important victory, so far as power is concerned, was the inclusion of the appropriation item for the power line extension down the Coast to Gold Beach. When the Bureau of the Budget refused to approve that extension, I felt the possibility of obtaining the appropriation this session was somewhat dim. Nevertheless, I made a long statement to the House Appropriations Committee regarding it. Although the House bill did not carry this item, Senator Cordon succeeded in having it put in the bill in the Senate, whereupon the members of the House Conference group were prevailed upon to allow it to stay in the bill. I have been greatly concerned over the lack of adequate power facilities in the Coastal area, but now I am sure this

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area will have access to power within a reasonably short time.

WILLAMETTE FLOOD CONTROL—Considerable progress has been made during the last three years in obtaining more satisfactory appropriations for the Willamette project. The House bill carried only 6 million dollars for this great project in 1947. However, total appropriations for that year were finally advanced to \$9,520,000.

This year the total appropriation for the Willamette project in the House bill was \$11,722,000, and the figure finally agreed upon by the conferees was \$12,222,000.

Other food control items included \$93,000 for the Coquille River and \$116,000 for the Umpqua River and its tributaries.

COOS BAY HARBOR—Work on the deepening and improvement of Coos Bay Harbor will be carried on

rapidly during the coming year with a total appropriation of 1½ million dollars.

ROADS AND HIGHWAYS—Another last-minute appropriation victory for Oregon and Western States was a deficiency grant of 15 million dollars for forest highways. Although 25 million dollars is authorized and

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PHONE 302 CENTRAL POINT

nually for this work, the appropriations have been very niggardly. This year, the example, the Bureau of the Budget recommended only the \$5,300,000 in the regular appropriation bill. A number of us complained at the meagerness of this appropriation, with the result that a supplement Budget figure was sent up later, and an additional 15 million dollars for forest highways was passed in a deficiency bill. This will enable the Oregon State Highway Commission to do some needed work on Oregon primary and secondary highways, such as the Willamette Pass and the Tiller Highway.

OREGON TRAFFIC NOTES

Motor vehicles bearing Oregon license plates continued to increase last month as the number of registrations reached 537,388 at the end of May. Secretary of State Earl T. Newbry has reported.

This is a 10 percent gain over the number registered in the first five months of 1947 and represents an increase of 10,627 vehicles of all types since April 30 of this year. Passenger cars accounted for three-fourths of the total.

"Registrations have been climbing steadily month by month," Newbry

said. "The summer travel season now under way will see more cars on the road than ever before."

He called on vacationing motorists to remember that four out of every five Oregon traffic deaths have been taking place on the open highways outside the limits of any city or town. Newbry said that highway speeds make any driver-error much more likely to be fatal than the same error at relatively slow city speeds.

Of the 35 persons killed in May smash-ups, 33 died in rural area accidents.

Astoria was the first white settlement in the Pacific Northwest when fur trappers established a fort in the 1800's. This vast region became the

Oregon territory in 1848 and today is composed of Oregon, Washington, Idaho and portions of Wyoming and Montana. Territorial centennial celebrations are being held throughout Oregon this summer to observe the anniversary.

The lumber yield in Oregon during 1947 was sufficient to build more than 400,000 five room houses.

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