

BEAVERTON ENTERPRISE
Friday, October 18, 1946

BEAVERTON ENTERPRISE
Stanley W. Netherton, Publisher

Published Friday of each week by the
Pioneer Publishing Co., at Beaverton,
Oregon. Entered as second-class mat-
ter at the postoffice, Beaverton, Ore-
gon.

Beaverton Office, Enterprise Bldg.
Phone Beaverton 2021

Subscription Payable in Advance
One Year \$1.00

Member
OREGON NEWS PAPER
PUBLISHERS ASSOCIATION

Babson Discusses A Challenge To Free Enterprise

by Roger W. Babson

En Route to Central West, Oc-
tober 15 — As this is being pub-
lished I am on a railroad train
making my annual inspection of
our U.S. Well, my first thought
is that the railroads are racing
toward government ownership! It
is not entirely the fault of man-
agement, although the lack of in-
terest in the railroads, financial
and otherwise, on the part of di-
rectors and officials is no doubt
a contributing factor. A railroad
or any other business can not be
expected to operate at a loss. Yet
today, in the greatest period of
peace-time railway traffic, most
of the railroads are operating at
dangerously high costs and are
crying for higher freight rates
which only postpone the day of
recovery.

The railroads, today, need many
high-cost replacements. It is es-
timated that from four to six
thousand locomotives will need to
be replaced within the next few
years, many now being over 25
years in service. There is great
need for new passenger and
freight cars. Are the railroads to
continue to operate with the same
equipment until eventually it
falls apart and we have no
railroads? Or are they going to
manage to operate with a profit
large enough to attract investor
interest and thus with the in-
creased capital so obtained per-
mit replacements and improve-
ments?

Need for Economy

The only real hope for continued

solvency of the railroads is a
concerted campaign to reduce
costs. We have examples of such
savings in the new vapor season-
ing method for ties and timbers,
which reduces checking and split-
ting more effectively than the old
air seasoning process. Further,
it reduces the time necessary to
accomplish the seasoning from ap-
proximately 15 months to less
than a day. End hardened and
welded rails help to reduce high
maintenance costs. The use of
longer-lived materials results in
greater rigidity and permanence
of track.

Partly because of higher labor
costs, many maintenance-of-way
departments are using more pow-
er-operated machinery than ever
before. With machines, three to
four times more track can be laid
in the same time than can be laid
manually, and maintenance costs
materially reduced. The protec-
tion of ties from mechanical dam-
age, caused by the higher speeds
and the heavier loads and motive
power of today may be effected
by the installation of larger tie
plates. An authority on the sub-
ject states that the installation of
such large plates, even though the
heavier rails are not now to be
installed, will produce a savings
per track mile of \$500 to \$1500
annually. But all these improve-
ments cost money and where will
the money be found? I fear that
Uncle Sam who controls the rates
must provide it.

Management's Responsibility

Directors and officials of rail-
roads should have a greater fi-
nancial interest in their compa-
nies. If the present management
is to continue to operate the
railroads, it is up to an active
managing interest to avail itself
of all known and new methods
of economic operation. Further-
more, labor must cooperate toward
a fair relation between labor costs
and freight and passenger rates;
and in addition must find ways of
encouraging thrift and responsi-
bility for a full day's work by all
of the railroad employees.

If management does not fight
for its rights to make and keep
the railroads a profitable busi-
ness, government ownership is
likely to result. A fair example
of what this might mean can be
seen in Mexico where the rail
transportation of the country is
close to breaking down and where
the government-owned roads are
being controlled and operated by
the labor unions. And this brings
me to my final statement, namely,
that the labor unions are running
the railroads. With an exception
of a dozen, I don't want a penny
invested in the remaining 200
roads.

County Red Cross Has New Secretary

A new executive secretary has
been elected by the Red Cross
board of directors to take over
the duties of Miss Joyce Beadles,
who tendered her resignation ef-
fective December 1. Miss Beadles
will be married in January. Mrs.
W. R. Manley will become ex-
ecutive secretary on December 1,
after a month's Red Cross train-
ing course at Berkeley, Cal. Mrs.
Manley left Tuesday for Berkeley.

Dr. J. O. Robb was elected
chairman of the civilian blood
donor project to fill the vacancy
caused by the resignation of Mrs.
F. Abendroth, who was chairman
of the blood plasma committee
during the war. Rev. Clifford
Trout has been elected as home
service chairman. Rev. Trout was
a chaplain in the army and is
familiar with that work.

John Kovaly, county Red Cross
chairman, stated that some changes
have been made in the civilian
blood donor service and a thor-
ough study would be made of the
project.

Dr. Robb says that in starting
the campaign throughout the
county, individuals between 20
and 45 may be enrolled to serve
as donors of blood in case of an
emergency. "The idea is to make
a file of names of those avail-
able. This file will have the
names, addresses, telephone num-
bers, blood types of all so that
in case of need they may be
called upon. This movement will
have a double advantage, not on-
ly will it make available blood
donors, but these prospective do-
nors will also know their classi-

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fications in the event they should
meet with disaster.

"The Red Cross hopes in this
way to keep up its record of ser-
vice to the community in the im-
portant work of blood transfu-
sion. For further information in-
quire of your own doctor. All
the physicians in the county are
actively behind the move and each
will be pleased to explain anything
that is not understood, said Dr.
Robb.

The month's report follows:
Balance forwarded, \$24,435.79;
campaign fund, \$19; total, \$24,454.79.
Cash paid out — Home service,

\$185.26; disaster relief, \$64.65; pro-
duction, \$21.56; administration,
\$167.30; campaign fund, \$108.48.
Total, \$547.25.

Bank balance October 1, 1946,
\$23,898.54; Junior Red Cross ser-
vice fund, \$491.69; Total chapter
funds, \$24,390.23.

Home Service report — Army
personnel and dependents, 22; Na-
vy personnel and dependents, 8;
ex-servicemen and dependents, 53;
civilians, 4; total case load, 87.

Financial assistance given \$58.70.
repayments \$15.00.

A college Red Cross unit is be-
ing organized at Pacific univer-
sity, Forest Grove. Miss Edna

Tarr is faculty advisor. Jim Ru-
fus is student chairman.

OSC DADS DAY NOV. 2-3
OREGON STATE COLLEGE —
Dads' week end has been set for
November 2 and 3, the former

being the date of the O.S.C.-Stan-
ford football game. An additional
feature will be the first post-war
horticultural show to be staged by
students in that department Fri-
day night and Saturday, Novem-
ber 1 and 2.

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DOWN
DOWN
DOWN

Latest rate cut will save PGE customers \$345,000 yearly

Almost everything else that people buy is costing
more, yet electric service goes down in price!

Effective with meter readings taken on and
after October 23, PGE customers previously
billed under Residential Schedule No. 8, Com-
mercial Schedule No. 33, and Large Industrial
Schedule No. 83 will benefit from new reduced
electric rates. While individual savings will vary
depending on the amount of use, homes and
farms consuming 100 kwh., per month will save
approximately 5 per cent, and commercial-
industrial customers a similar percentage.

On a yearly basis, combined savings for all
affected customers will amount to \$345,000.
Added to two previous rate reductions in the
last 12 months, the savings reach \$1,180,000!

Four reasons why electricity is your biggest bargain

1. **Increased Use.** PGE customers use over
twice as much electricity as the national average,
and right now their use is increasing at an
extremely rapid rate. Greater volume of use
lowers the unit cost, and the savings are being
passed on to you.

2. **Low-cost Bonneville Power.** PGE is the
largest distributor of Bonneville power. Over
two-thirds of all the electricity consumed by
PGE customers comes from the Bonneville-
Coulée projects.

3. **Local, Non-Political Management.** PGE
is an Oregon electric system managed by Oregon
people who are your neighbors. They are as vitally

interested in the welfare of the state and the
community as you, and they believe that the
production of cheap, efficient and dependable
electric service provides this area with one of its
most valuable advantages.

4. **Rates and Earnings Regulated by Your
Own State Government.** While PGE has
made many rate reductions voluntarily, strict
regulation by your state government insures that
PGE earnings are limited to a fair return on
properties used in the public service. The present
rate reductions were ordered by the Oregon
Public Utilities Commissioner when it appeared
that PGE's 1946 earnings would make them
possible.



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From where I sit... by Joe Marsh

Want a Vacation
from Marriage?

Alvin Blake went south on his va-
cation, for some fishing, and left his
Missus to enjoy a vacation from the
corn-cob pipe, clothes in a heap, and
solos on the harmonica.

First few days, Martha enjoyed
it—house neat and quiet, top back
on the toothpaste, no morning mess
from Alvin's midnight snacks (Al's
partial to a bit of cheese and beer
at bedtime).

Come the end of the week, she
began to fidget; couldn't even read
the *Clarion*, it looked so unsmug;
didn't have any appetite with no-

body to cook for. She was about to
wire Al, when he barges home a
week ahead of time, and she almost
cries for gratitude. ("Felt the same
way myself," says Al.)

From where I sit, those differ-
ences of habit and opinion—
whether they have to do with corn-
cob pipes, a glass of beer, or play-
ing the harmonica, seem mighty
trivial when you're separated. And
they are, too!

Joe Marsh

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