

## STATE CAPITAL NEWS

- Budget Proposals
- Townsend Block
- License Drawing

By A. L. LINDBECK

SALEM.—When the state legislature meets in regular biennial session in January its members will be confronted with requests for direct appropriations aggregating \$17,918,657.52, all bearing the approval of Budget Director Wallace S. Wharton. This figure, according to Wharton, represents a reduction of \$2,323,578.96 from the budget requests filed with his department by the state's numerous activities which are supported by legislative appropriations.

Of the approved appropriations approximately \$4,000,000 represents the recommended budget for relief purposes to be financed out of profits of the State Liquor commission. The remaining \$13,918,657.52 is to be financed out of the general fund. With revenues accruing to this fund totalling \$14,397,687 during the biennium there remains a surplus of \$529,509.98 to meet other needs than those included in the budget—providing, of course, that the legislature follow the recommendations of the budget director.

Included in the recommendations of the budget director is an item of \$661,688.36 for the state system of higher education over and above the millage levies. If this item or any portion of it is approved by the legislature it will be the first time since the session of 1929 that higher education has received any state aid other than that provided by the special levies.

General fund appropriations approved by the budget director for 1937-38 exceed by approximately \$2,350,000 the appropriations voted for the current biennium.

Budget requests of the 11 state institutions aggregating \$5,069,185.92 were reduced by the budget director to \$3,770,142.52, a reduction of more than \$1,299,043. At that the recommended appropriations for these institutions exceed by more than \$370,000 the appropriations voted for the current biennium. Permanent improvements at state institutions as approved by the budget director call for the expenditure of only \$346,173.68 during the biennium. No major improvements are included in the list, the largest single item being that of a receiving ward at the eastern Oregon State Hospital at Pendleton, which, together with remodeling of the living quarters at that institution is estimated to cost \$68,000. Other buildings included in the list are two physicians'

cottages at the state hospital in Salem to cost \$15,000; two residential cottages at the state prison, \$10,000; two physicians' cottages at the tuberculosis hospital, Salem, \$15,000; new heating plant and laundry at the eastern Oregon Tuberculosis hospital at The Dalles, \$51,400. It is hoped that federal aid to the extent of 45 percent may be secured in financing the biennium's building program, reducing the cost to the state to \$190,395.

"Millions for the relief of Oregon's needy citizens but not one cent for the support of alien paupers." Not in so many words but in effect that was the reply of Governor Martin to delegations which picketed the state house week and called at the executive department in search of financial aid for destitute refugees from the states of the middle west. The governor declared that financial aid would be provided in returning destitute families to their home states but that they could not be given relief since they were not citizens of this state and Oregon already had enough needy people of its own to take care of.

A delegation representing the Oregon Tuberculosis association which appeared before the state board of control in behalf of a new tuberculosis hospital to be located in Multnomah county received plenty of sympathy but no encouragement of support for their program at this time. Members of the board admitted the need for additional hospital facilities for the care and treatment of tuberculosis victims but expressed the opinion that the recently established institution at The Dalles should be completely rounded out before a new institution was started. Sponsors of the new hospital estimated \$300,000 as the cost of a hospital with a capacity of 150 patients.

That the Townsend "bloc" will be a factor in the forthcoming legislative session is generally admitted. Just how much influence this bloc will exercise over the session remains to be seen. The first test of Townsend strength is expected to come in the organization of the House where a number of Townsend-endorsed representatives are candidates for the Speakership.

Dr. Ralph I. Shadduck, big chief of the Townsend movement in Oregon, has already let it be known that with 22 Townsendites in the House his organization is going to have a lot to say about what goes on in Salem during the forthcoming session. If Dr. Shadduck's estimate of Townsend strength is correct, then, indeed, his organization should have no difficulty in dominating the proceedings of that body. In that event the mantle of the Speakership should descend on

one of the Townsend-endorsed candidates—either Barnes of Multnomah, Eull of Union, Hoesch of Deschutes, or Hyde of Lane.

But there are many who dispute Dr. Shadduck's claim. In fact a number of the Townsend-endorsed candidates have already publicly announced that in accepting the support of the Townsendites they made no commitment of support to the movement and do not feel themselves obligated to support either the candidates of the movement or its program. That being the case much of the influence of the Townsendites as an effective working "bloc" in the House can be discounted at the outset. Among those who discount the strength of the Townsend bloc are a number of supporters of Harry Boivin of Klamath county for the Speakership. These claim that Boivin, who has been actively campaigning for the honor for the past two years already has the job "in the bag" and that among his most ardent supporters are several members who gained their seats through the support of the Townsend organization.

Be that as it may the fact remains that there is plenty of political manipulation under way right now for control of the House. Howard Latourette of Portland who presided over the House at the last special session and has since assumed the role of democratic national committeeman is said to be anxious to dictate the organization, possibly with an eye on the governorship two years hence. John Beckman, chairman of the Multnomah county central committee, is also understood to be anxious to have a hand in the mixing of the political medicine that will precede the opening of the session. And of course it is inconceivable that the state administration will remain entirely neutral in the organization manipulations. While Governor Martin, himself, will probably remain in the background so far as any active participation in the organization is concerned his youthful aide and advisor, W. L. Gosselin, is not to be restrained by any considerations of official dignity or political modesty. It was largely through the activities of Gosselin in the pre-primary campaign that the Democrats presented a complete legislative ticket in the field this year. Many of the Democratic victors owe their presence on the ticket to the urgings of Gosselin and, from that fact alone, he has a right to expect that his wishes should be consulted on matters affecting the welfare of the state administration which he represents as political contact man.

Seating of the 60 members of the House of Representatives at the 1937 session will be arranged by Ronald E. Jones of Marion county and James W. Eckersley of Clack-

amas. Appointment of this committee was announced only this week by Howard Latourette who continues his role as Speaker of the House until the votes cast in the recent election are officially canvassed.

Drawing for low numbers on the 1937 automobile license plates will be conducted by Secretary of State Snell on Friday. Snell reports that applications for the new plates have been coming to his office in greater volume than ever before in the history of the department.

For the third consecutive month September gasoline taxes rolling in to the coffers of the state of Oregon exceeded the million dollar mark. Revenues from this source for the quarter ending September 30 totaled \$3,321,897 according to Secretary of State Snell. This brings the total for the nine-month period to more than \$8,000,000 as compared to \$9,150,229 for the entire 12 months of 1935.

A prediction in this column last week to the effect that property owners in Oregon could expect a material reduction in the state levy for 1937 has since been confirmed in a statement by Governor Martin announcing the complete elimination of the property levy for state purposes within the constitutional six percent limit. At the same time the governor announced that the state would end the current year with a surplus in its general fund, the deficit which fastened itself on this fund back in 1925 having been finally dissipated.

Pointing out that of the \$43,000,000 tax levy against Oregon property owners for next year only \$1,250,-

000 could be charged to the state, the governor declared that "we must put our local affairs in order as well as our state affairs."

The governor in announcing the improvement in the state's financial status credited the improvement to his insistence upon economy in all state activities and to the operations of the new budget control act. At the same time he warned against "any attempted raid on the treasury" by pressure blocs "for their own selfish interests."

Among the new activities for which the next legislature will be asked to provide financial support will be that of a state mining bureau. Sponsored by the state planning commission, this new department will seek an appropriation of \$50,000 to cover its operations for the forthcoming generation. The planning board's proposal calls for a governing board of three non-salaried members and a paid director to be selected by the board. A similar program was defeated by the last legislative session after a bitter fight in which the opposition was led by Senator Strayer, democrat, of Baker county.

The state has whittled \$14,500,000 off its load of bonded debt in the past eight years, according to Governor Martin. The state's bonded debt reached its peak at more than \$63,000,000 in 1928, the governor pointed out. Most of this debt was represented by bonds of the highway department and the bonus commission. Calling attention to the huge bond issues floated by both California and Washington during the past few years the governor declared that Oregon was "riding high, wide and handsome amidst debt-ridden states."

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