

LEGISLATIVE HIGHLIGHTS

By A. L. LINDBECK.

Salem.—Old age pensions continue a major source of worry for the Oregon legislators as the session grinds on toward the end of the 40-day period for which the lawmakers can draw their \$3 per diem.

Governor Martin's budget makes provision for pensions only to needy persons 70 years of age or over. There is, however, much sentiment, especially among House members, favorable to reducing the age requirement to 65 years. This would increase the cost to the state and the several counties by more than \$3,400,000 for the biennium. Savings resulting through removal of the needy aged from direct relief would amount to approximately \$1,000,000 for the biennium. This would still leave a net increase of \$2,400,000 in the relief-pension burden. One-half of this increase, or approximately \$1,200,000, would fall on the state. The other half would be borne by the counties. Without additional revenue than that now available, such a program would plunge the state deeply into the "red." Several proposals for new revenues to cover pension needs are also before the session, including an increase in income tax rates, taxes on fuel oils, etc. But Governor Martin has warned against new tax laws as well as against any deficit in the general fund and any measure involving either of these programs would probably encounter his veto.

The House, strongly pro-Townsend in its sentiments, might pass a bill reducing the age requirement in spite of its financial aspect in fulfillment of the pre-election promises of many of its members. The Senate, however, more conservative in its make-up, could be expected to block any such program or at least to uphold the governor's veto if it should reach that point.

As a compromise it is now being proposed that this session content itself with reducing the age of pension beneficiaries to 68 years with a gradual reduction to the 65 year minimum effective January 1, 1940, when this provision will be necessary in order to conform to the federal requirements.

A bill by Senator Balentine which would have made the school superintendents in Hood River, Lincoln, Crook and Klamath counties elective was defeated in the senate Saturday. These four counties operate under the county unit system of school administration and under the present system the superintendent of schools is employed by the school board whose members are elected by the voters of the county.

It now appears as though the voters of Oregon would have to pass on the milk control act regardless of what the legislature might do about that problem. C. A. Townsend of Portland is understood to be heading a movement to refer to the people an amendment to the milk control act which would take from the control board the authority to fix the retail price of milk.

The State Fair, Pacific International Livestock Exposition and state association of county fairs are lined up in opposition to the proposal to increase the state's "take" from pari-mutuel betting and let in a number of additional fairs and rodeos on the "cut." The proposal was originally made by the Portland Rose Show which wants to be cut in on the spoils to the extent of \$10,000 a year. In order to make the "pot" big enough to go around it is proposed that the state take five percent out of the bets placed on dog and horse races instead of the present two and one-half percent. The Astoria Regatta, Lakeview Round-Up and Redmond Potato Show have joined in the demand for a share of the spoils and it is understood that others are willing to participate including the Independence Hop Fiesta, Molalla Buckaroo, Siletz Rodeo and Taft Red-head Round-Up. Present beneficiaries of the betting money, however, are fearful that if the state's "take" is increased it will discourage betting.

The American Federation of Labor has its headquarters in the A. F. of L. building, Washington, D. C.

First 1936 AAA Money Sent Out to Counties

Checks for the benefit payments earned under the 1936 agricultural conservation program are now being mailed daily from the branch disbursing office in Portland and will probably continue for a couple of months, according to N. C. Donaldson, secretary of the state AAA committee in charge of the state office at Oregon State college.

The first checks, totalling more than \$70,000, went to 233 farmers in Sherman and Baker counties. They varied in amount according to the acres diverted from soil depleting to soil building crops and the extent of soil building practices carried on last season. Through a coincidence, the first checks were distributed the same week that the first community meetings to organize for the 1937 program were called.

The state office at Corvallis has been busy since the close of last year's cropping season carrying on the detailed clerical work that is required where federal payments are involved. Every application has been closely checked with the report of compliance and with all data concerning the farms involved. At that payment was greatly speeded up compared with former years because of a branch of the general accounting office which was established at Corvallis to audit the claims which were then turned over to the branch disbursing office in Portland, hereby avoiding the long delay when claims were handled through Washington, D. C.

Three Oregon men were invited by Secretary Wallace to go to Washington, D. C., to take part in the national farm leaders' conference called early in February to consider and make recommendations concerning an ever-normal granary plan and other proposals and policies affecting agriculture.

The men invited from Oregon to take part are Ray W. Gill, Portland, master of the Oregon State grange; William H. Steen, Pendleton, member of the state AAA committee; and A. R. Shumway, Milton, head of the North Pacific Grain Growers' cooperative.

Much County, State Land Off Tax Rolls

Tax reverted lands in Oregon now compose 1,195,675 acres, valued at the time of foreclosure at \$12,475,024, it was revealed in a report just completed by the Oregon State Planning board, entitled "Statistics of Tax Reverted Lands in Oregon."

The information, which includes complete details on tax reverted lands for every county in the state, was compiled for the special committee on timber taxation, appointed by Governor Martin in 1936. The data formed the basis for legislative recommendations made by this group. Material for the report was gathered by N. S. Rogers, of the state tax commission, and J. E. Badley and Warren P. Smith of the planning board's research staff.

Reverted lands now total 2.95 per cent of the total rural area of Oregon, the report shows. The ratio of privately owned lands to the tax-reverted area is approximately 14 to one.

Tax reverted lands in Morrow county total 70,500.27 acres and 1,032 city lots. The total assessed value of this property is \$180,820. Charges against the property total \$28,581.72.

Of the total value of \$12,475,024 of tax reverted lands in Oregon, rural real estate is valued at \$8,684,134, an average assessed valuation of \$4.84 per acre. The total assessed valuation of city lots amounted to \$3,790,890, an average of \$24.65 per lot.

The total taxes, penalty, interest and other costs due the counties on the rural lands at the time of foreclosure amounted to \$3,558,705, an average of \$1.98 per acre. The total of taxes, penalty, interest and other charges standing against the city lots at the time of foreclosure amounted to \$3,592,669, an average of \$23.36 per lot. The grand total of delinquent taxes, penalty, interest and other costs resting against all these tax reverted lands as of time of foreclosure is approximately \$7,151,374.

There is not yet any adequate classification of the rural acreage,

the report points out, but estimating from the data which could be secured, it was found that approximately 19,987 acres had at one time been assessed as tillable. About 326,054 acres contain timber of merchantable quality, and 116,178 acres are listed under reforestation. Of the remaining acreage listed as non-tillable, there is doubtless a large area which is unsuitable for agricultural use or for otherwise returning to private ownership, says the report.

Bridge Souvenir Coins Available

Silver half dollars, minted to commemorate the completion of the San Francisco-Oakland Bay bridge, can be secured this week at The First National Bank of Portland and may be ordered through any branch of this bank. The coins sell for \$1.50. Only 100,000 were minted and all unsold by February 15 will be returned for re-melting.

Jacques Schneider, famous young California sculptor, designed the coin with the grizzly bear, emblem of California, on one side and on the other the great bridge, which opened last November and is reputed to be the longest bridge in the world. Minting of the commemorative coin was authorized by Congress in a bill introduced by Senator Hiram W. Johnson of California and was approved by President Roosevelt on June 6, 1936.

State Owned Radios Help During Big Snow

Corvallis.—Both KOAC and the short-wave station operated by the physics department at Oregon State college were active during the recent snow storm which disrupted other forms of communication and traffic throughout western Oregon.

In accordance with the amateur station rules an operator stood by on the short wave set throughout the critical period of the storm and relayed messages to localities otherwise isolated. Press reports were taken by short wave and rebroadcast over KOAC and turned over to local newspapers. A message relayed by the local station, operated by E. A. Yunker, was the first to get into Eugene after wire communication was down.

KOAC broadcast all news that could be obtained for the benefit of those otherwise out of touch with the world, sent out pleas from the bureau of biological survey for help in feeding game and song birds, and kept all listeners informed as to the progress of opening roads and highways.

Linn 4-H Work Grows Fast.

Albany.—The enrollment in 4-H club work in Linn county has grown from 51 boys and girls in 1920 to 1,114 in 1936, records in the office of County Agent F. C. Mullen show. Oscar Mikesell is now 4-H club agent in Linn county.

LEGISLATURE SHORTS

The measure intended to close all coast streams except the Columbia to commercial fishing has been definitely postponed by the senate. The fishing committee disapproved it.

There will be no coloring matter in sausage permitted in Oregon, if the senate approves a bill adopted by the house.

Tenants must still give 30 days notice to landlords that they are giving up their tenancy. The house has killed by indefinite postponement a measure to cut the time to 10 days.

House joint memorial No. 2, petitioning congress to provide for amortization of land bank commissioner loans over longer periods of years and at reduced interest rates, has been approved by the senate.

PORTLAND MARKET.

Termination of the Pacific coast's longest maritime strike had a tendency early this week to bolster market prices and demand. Abnormal weather conditions had something to do with prices, but movement was the controlling factor. Meat prices were firm with fancy veal selling at 15½ and 16 cents. Fancy block hogs moved at 14 cents and lambs at 15. Poultry was accepted by the urban housewife as the best buy in meats. The butter market was firm and a good shipping demand noted for 90 and 91 score. All grades of eggs declined one cent. Prunes lead the fruit market.

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