

STATE CAPITAL NEWS

- Forester's Goat
- New Commission
- Martin "Plague"

By A. L. LINDBECK

Salem—If Governor Sprague desires the political scalp of State Forester J. W. Ferguson—and it is pretty well understood that he does—it begins to look as though he would have to first make a few changes in the board of forestry. Ferguson, it should be understood, is an employee of the forestry board. This board is composed of nine members. The governor and the dean of the school of forestry at Oregon State college are ex-officio members of this board. The other seven members are appointed by the governor from lists supplied by seven lumber and livestock organizations. All seven serve at the pleasure of the governor.

Dean George W. Peavy of the OSC forestry school is understood to yearn for Ferguson's scalp just as greatly as does Governor Sprague. The forester, however, is fairly popular with the other seven members of the board, or at least with enough of them to retain his scalp for the time being. While the governor would like to get rid of Ferguson he hesitates to disturb the board in order to gain this end but it would be not at all surprising if the political fires now being kindled under the forester do not bring the situation to a head within the next few weeks.

Six hundred Oregon motorists have had their operators' licenses revoked or suspended already this year according to Secretary of State Earl Snell. Revocations and suspensions under the safety responsibility act totaled 458. Drunken driving accounted for 381 of the revocations.

Robert H. Warrens of Forest Grove was elected chairman of the newly created Soil Conservation commission at an organization meeting here Saturday. Frank Ballard of Oregon State college was elected secretary. Other members of the commission include Dean Wm. A. Schoenfeld of Oregon State college; Chas. A. Stricklin, state engineer, and G. W. Franklin of Enterprise. Created under an act of the last legislature, the commission will cooperate with the federal government in setting up soil conservation districts. Two proposed districts have already indicated an interest in the soil conservation program, according to Ballard. One of these is in Tillamook county where beach sand is blowing in badly onto farm lands. The other is in Baker county.

William Winston Churchill, 91 a new arrival at the Oregon penitentiary, claims two distinctions. He is the oldest prisoner ever received at the institution and he claims to be the only living man who ever shook hands with Abraham Lincoln. Churchill also claims to have been a close friend of the James boys, notorious Missouri bandits, and to have been present at the funeral of Jesse James at Liberty, Mo. Churchill was received at the Oregon prison from Jackson county to serve a term of three years for forgery. He has a long prison record including terms in the Colorado and Oklahoma penitentiaries.

The Oregon prison flax plant is preparing to handle another normal crop this year, L. L. Laws, manager of the plant, told the Board of Control this week. Laws says fields under contract to the state plant will yield about 4000 tons of flax straw this year.

Sigfrid Unander of Portland was added to the staff of the executive department this week as research director. Unander will function as executive secretary to various legislative interim committees and will also do research into various public problems under the direction of Governor Sprague.

The Salem printer who inadvertently substituted a "g" for a "q" in the headline announcing "Plague in Statehouse Will Honor Ex-Governor" wrought far better than he knew. For it has proven to be just that, a

plague to Secretary of State Snell, this plaque which admirers of former Governor Martin want to place in the new capitol.

When the capitol was completed its architects advised against the addition of any embellishments other than the murals. Yielding to the pressure of various patriotic groups, however, Secretary of State Snell set aside the first floor corridor as a "memorial hall" to which plaques and memorial tablets were to be confined. Three such plaques now adorn the walls of this corridor.

Sponsors of the Martin plaque, however, are not at all satisfied with this arrangement. The corridor is too dark and dismal for one thing and too isolated for another, they say. They want the Martin plaque placed in a more conspicuous location—preferably in the reception room of the governor's suite. Whitehouse & Church, supervising architects on the capitol, have advised Snell that this request might be acceded to without doing too much violence to the building "if it does not establish a precedent."

But that is just the rub. Snell fears that it will set a precedent. If the Martin plaque is hung in the executive suite friends of other governors will insist upon the same recognition for their idol until in time the walnut panels of the reception room will be completely hidden behind bronze plaques, even as the walls of the legislative chambers in the old capitol were cluttered up with the horrors that passed as portraits of former governors.

And there the situation rests. The plaque is ready to be placed but until the custodian of the capitol and the plaque's sponsors can get together on a location no plans can be made for its dedication.

State Treasurer Walter A. Pearson opines that it would be good advertising for the state if an attractive hostess could be employed to meet and greet visitors to the new capitol, of whom there are several hundred every day. Governor Sprague agrees with him. So also does Secretary of State Snell. But, Secretary Snell points out there are no funds out of which a hostess could be paid. Again Governor Sprague agrees. So also does Treasurer Pearson. So it appears, barring the advent of some philanthropist or some patriotic group willing to shoulder the cost, visiting tourists will have to find their way around the new statehouse without benefit of a hostess as they have in the past.

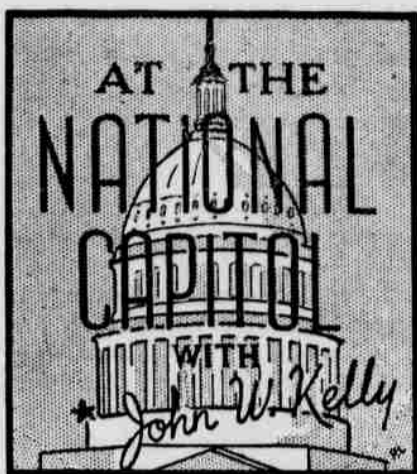
Nearly \$9,000,000 in unemployment insurance has been paid out to jobless workers in Oregon since benefit payments were started 18 months ago, it was reported this week by Unemployment Compensation commission.

Approval of the creation of a peoples utility district in Hood River county, outside the city of Hood River, was given by the Oregon Hydro-electric commission this week. Sponsors of the project told the commission at a hearing in Salem several weeks ago that if the district was approved it was their plan to purchase the distribution system of the Pacific Power & Light company and to serve the city as well as the rural areas.

FOREST FUNDS DUE

Washington, D. C., Aug. 10—Every county in the Pacific Northwest from which revenues are derived by the forest service of the department of agriculture will soon receive a kick-back from the government. The 20 forests in Oregon and Washington contributed most of the \$1,785,611 which came from sale of timber, and of the \$2676 which resulted from sale of Christmas trees. The states within which the forests are situated will receive 35 per cent of the receipts; to be apportioned to the counties; 25 per cent goes to school funds and 10 per cent into a fund for construction and maintenance of forest roads. Secretary Wallace says that in some places, county returns from national forest receipts amount to more per acre than assessed taxes on similar privately owned lands surrounding the forests.

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Washington, D. C., Aug. 10—Of Oregon's owner-operated farms 49.8 per cent are mortgaged. Only 12 states have a higher percentage of mortgaged farms. Records for the sister state, California, are identical with the percentages in Oregon, and Washington state having 47.7 per cent of its owner-operated farms carrying a plaster. Considering that these three Pacific Coast states are blessed with abundance of water, unsurpassed climate, rarely cursed with crop failure and the people have one of the highest cultures in the Union, the number of mortgages is intriguing. For the entire United States the percentage of these mortgages is 41.5.

Farm tenancy in Oregon is 21.7 (California the same), with Washington 20 per cent. Farm tenancy is highest in the west in Idaho, 28.5 per cent. Heavy tenancy is in the south where the share-croppers' plight caused the administration to launch its Farm Security administration through which loans are made to tenants to purchase farms.

For the 1939-40 year, FSA has \$39,000,000 to carry on this farm-purchase program. Out of this sum, Oregon is allocated \$148,116; Washington, \$184,296, and Idaho \$155,601. Officials expect to make 18 loans in Oregon, 23 in Washington and 17 in Idaho. More than 600 loans to tenants will be made in Alabama, Texas, Georgia, Mississippi. Average loan in Oregon and Washington is expected to be \$8000; in Idaho \$9000, as compared with \$4000 loans in Alabama, Texas, etc. Reason: farms in the Pacific Northwest are more valuable.

It was a young school teacher, member of congress but seven months, who has saved the taxpayers more than 2 billion dollars. It was his analysis of the \$800,000,000 slum clearance bill that exposed the real innards of the measure and proved that the 800 millions was not a self-liquidating loan but would cost the treasury three times that sum. This slender young chap demonstrated that a freshman member of congress, without being spectacular, can render great service to the nation.

Representative Albert Gore, age 31, is a farmer in Tennessee as well as a school teacher. He showed that while the \$800,000,000 would be returned by the cities in a period of 60 years, at the same time the USHA would make a contract paying the municipalities a sum to subsidize low rents to people who could not afford to pay rents. In other words, although the cities would repay the 800 million, the subsidies would so exceed the repayments that eventually the government would be out of pocket 2 billion dollars with nothing to show for it, not even a copper cent. One single speech by the young farmer-teacher disclosed a situation that had escaped the other 530 lawmakers.

Interest slashes by HOLC and FHA will affect thousands of Pacific Northwest property owners whose homes have been refinanced by HOLC or are under the insured mortgage system of FHA. These government agencies have reduced interest from 5 to 4 1/2 per cent. Interest rates prevailing in Oregon and Washington (all types), range from 5 to 8.5 per cent, the average being 6.3 per cent.

In Oregon alone 8700 loans are benefitted by the reduced interest by HOLC. It is estimated that 6.7 per cent of the urban families are paying off debts on homes through this agency. Henceforth interest will be saved on one-half of one per cent on approximately \$13,000,000.

Lower interest rates on every-

thing was one of the earliest objectives announced by President Roosevelt in 1933, and since his inauguration there has been a general reduction in the cost of borrowed money.

There is a possibility of Willamette valley being included in sugar beet acreage when the present sugar quota expires and a new allotment is permitted. The large sugar refining company, located at Nyssa, is interested in the proposition and has been corresponding on the subject. Domestic production is now under rigid control by the department of agriculture, the control extending down to the point of designating wages for pickers.

Efforts to develop the shipbuilding industry on the Columbia river and Puget Sound have received little encouragement from the Federal Maritime commission and it has awarded contracts for five cargo carriers to be constructed in southern California. Every proposal suggested for the establishing of yards north of San Francisco bay has been discouraged by the commission and where there are no facilities the commission declines to award bids.

One of the essentials of war is tin. The administration favors exploring the United States in the hope of developing a supply. Government officials say traces have been found in Washington, Idaho, Nevada and California—all around Oregon, but no trace in Oregon.

Politics played a large part in the recent congress, but when something affected the country and was not tinged with politics, White House and Congress were as united as Siamese Twins—the 2 billion dollars voted for national defense, as an instance.

Although congress has adjourned, one man's job continues. He is the chap whose duty it is to see that all the clocks in the capitol, senate and house office buildings, keep running and also keep time even though no one sees them but the janitors and charwomen.

Dehydration of Oregon grown corn has been proved by experimental work to be a money-saving enterprise, says Everett Davis, extension agricultural engineer at O. S. C. Oregon at the present time imports most of its corn, transportation charges averaging \$10 per ton. Experimental results indicate that locally grown corn can be dried at a cost of only \$4 to \$5 per ton.

Washington, D. C., August 10—All members of the Oregon and Washington congressional delegation have received a petition from the Washington state grange asking for a law to require a majority vote of all eligible voters in the United States before the United States can enter an armed conflict on foreign soil.

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