

STATE CAPITAL NEWS

- Thanks Day
- Carnival Gambling
- Retirement Plan

By A. L. LINDBECK

Salem—Governor Sprague is not inclined to quarrel with President Roosevelt over the date for the annual Thanksgiving feast. If the president wants to advance the date a week, as announced, Oregon will fall into line and be thankful with the rest of the nation. There will be no double observance of the holiday as was the case in 1894 when Governor Sylvester Pennoyer refused to cooperate with President Cleveland and Oregon folk gave thanks with the balance of the nation on the last Thursday of November and then had a private Thanksgiving day of their own again a week later on the first Thursday in December.

Oregon municipalities that seek to enrich their coffers by winking at gambling concessions at carnivals need count on no cooperation from the state police. Superintendent Pray warned this week that his men would enforce the law wherever they might find it being violated. Pray's statement was occasioned by complaints of alleged gambling at the recent Taft Red-head Round-Up where state police were on duty. At that place, Pray said, his men were engaged in handling traffic while local peace officers policed the carnival. Hereafter, in order to avoid possible criticism, state police will take over the entire job of policing when their services are called for to assist local officers in handling celebrations of this character.

The humble prune gained official recognition this week when Governor Sprague appointed a committee to work out a program for marketing this year's Oregon crop. Appointment of the committee followed a meeting in the capitol attended by more than 200 growers and canners in which the plight of Oregon prune growers was declared to be desperate. Prices being offered for this year's crop it was said would not justify picking and many growers declared they would let the crop "rot on the trees" rather than sell at prices which would not pay for picking and hauling to market. Many growers face the loss of their farms because of the demoralized market conditions while a number at the conference frankly admitted they would be unable to pay their taxes.

The Oregon Hydroelectric commission in its adverse report on the proposed Scappoose peoples utility district did not hold the project to be unfeasible but held that it was unnecessary as the drainage district, already organized, is authorized to do the thing which sponsors of the proposed PUD want to do.

One of the biggest jobs cut out by the last legislature is that reposed in the merit rating council appointed only this week by Governor Sprague. The pros and cons of merit rating were debated at great length before committees of the recent legislature without any signs of progress, hence the interim council or committee which is to make a study of this problem and report back to the next session with its findings and recommendations. Many employers of labor contend that their contributions to the unemployment compensation fund should be based upon the employment experience of the individual employer. Others insist that contributions should be based upon the employment experience of the industry as a whole. Other states are engaged in similar studies in an effort to evolve a system of contributions that will encourage stabilization of employment without crippling the jobless insurance fund.

Even before it gets under way Governor Sprague's retirement plan for public employees has run into difficulties. Leaders of the so-called Pension Friendly group in the state meeting in Salem Saturday night demanded that more adequate pensions for the needy aged be included

in any program that might be evolved for pensioning of employees on the public payroll.

Furthermore, there has been a general lifting of the eyebrows over the governor's action in inaugurating the study into a retirement plan for public employees among those who recall that a resolution providing for just such a study was killed by the last legislature, presumably at the governor's direction. The committee which the governor has set up for this study is lacking in any legislative authority and must pay its own expenses unless a way can be found to finance these out of the \$10,000 fund given to the governor for research in lieu of the appropriation asked for by the old state planning board which was abolished at the governor's request.

Sixty thousand patrons of electric utilities in Oregon have shared in rate reductions aggregating \$300,000 a year, which have been put into effect since January 1, according to O. R. Bean, public utilities commissioner. All of these rate reductions, Bean points out, have followed informal conferences between the commissioner and officials of the various utilities.

Representatives of the League of Oregon Cities found plenty of sympathy but little encouragement when they brought their street financing problems to Governor Sprague in a conference here this week. Mayor H. W. Hand of Corvallis told the governor that many Oregon cities are experiencing difficulty in financing street improvements and suggested that the state highway department might come to the rescue. The governor told the delegation that all funds of the highway department are already allocated for this year.

Of 65,750 Oregon school children examined during the past two years 3,182 were found to have defective hearing according to a report by the State Board of Health. The examinations, conducted by the division of maternal and child health, were carried on in 32 counties and part of Portland.

The pension proposal initiated by Tom Monks of Portland is almost identical with a measure introduced in the last legislature by Representatives Engdahl of Umatilla, Carter of Curry and McAllister of Marion. The Monk measure, designed after the Indiana gross sales tax, provides for a levy of two per cent on all retail sales and one-fourth of one per cent on wholesale transactions. The money would be used in financing pensions of \$30 a month for persons over the age of 60 years and \$35 a month for persons 65 years or over. Any surplus would be divided, 75 per cent to reduction of property taxes and 25 per cent to the irreducible school fund. The measure was defeated 39 to 19 in the House but Monks is convinced that the people will approve the program if given the opportunity.

More than 80,000 persons have viewed the "New Oregon Trail" in the highway department's little theater in the Oregon exhibit at the San Francisco fair, according to Harold B. Say, in charge of the department's travel bureau. San Francisco radios and newspapers will be utilized in a four-day "Travel to Oregon" campaign August 23 to 27, Say announced.

First Assessment Roll in County Cited

Following is the first recorded summary of Morrow county assessment rolls from the 1886 records in the assessor's office at Heppner: Acres of land, 50,987, value, \$318,185. Average value per acre, \$6.24. Town lots, value \$88,575. Improvements, \$115,744. Merchandise and implements, \$171,820. Money, notes, etc., \$214,750. Household furniture, etc., \$35,250. Horses and mules, 5288, value \$175,506. Cattle, 3780, value \$71,627. Sheep, 122,518, value, \$201,355. Swine, 1589, value, \$4412. Gross value of property \$1,221,145. Total taxable property, \$839,308.—Historical Records Survey, WPA.

For sale, Taylor's rooming house, good business. 231f



Washington, D. C., Aug. 24—State and county and other local relief agencies are having dumped in their laps the WPA workers who have received the pink slips of dismissal. By next week the last of 650,000 who have been on WPA for 18 months will be out. Share of this total for Oregon and Washington will run into several thousand. Reduction of WPA rolls affects every county and city in the Northwest and increases the problem of local relief officers. On the heels of WPA dismissals comes a 50 per cent slash, September 1, for the PWA employees and in a few months PWA workers will be as rare as the Dodo.

Congress refused to appropriate more funds to continue PWA, but gave the president every dollar he asked for WPA. What congress did, in effect, was to tell private business to resume spending its own money and not look to the government to continue indefinitely priming the pump. Prior to the depression, private business spent 15 billion dollars annually, then with the slump it husbanded its money and the government stepped in, spending an average of 3 billion a year. Now private savings have reached an all-time high and congress wants business to do its share of spending, to relieve the government of the hand-out policy. Business spokesmen who have criticized the administration for free-hand distribution of money are politely told to take over the job.

Perhaps congress assumed the correct attitude for government agencies announce the upturn of the first six months is skyrocketing in August. But for the immediate future, state and local relief agencies have a tough job.

One of the AAA plans which would have assisted Oregon and Washington farmers, particularly those growing hairy vetch, has gone haywire because owners of the seed asked too much for it. Instead of making cash payments to southern farmers under the conservation program of 1939, AAA proposed buying 5,512,000 pounds of hairy vetch and Austrian winter pea seed and have the farmers plant them. When the government officials asked for bids, the Oregon-Washington dealers asked \$10.10 to \$16 per hundred pounds for vetch, delivered in the south, and prices quoted for peas delivered ranged from \$5.22 to \$5.90 per hundred. AAA rejected the bids.

Everyone who has ideas on taxes is invited to present them in person or by letter to John W. Hanes, undersecretary of the treasury. Complete revision of federal taxes is in the making and for the first time Joe Doaks or any other citizen is given an opportunity to have his "say." Heretofore, tax legislation was written mysteriously, sent to congress with orders to pass it. If public hearings were held professional lobbyists and representatives of government bureaus were the only witnesses.

New tax legislation is not intended to remove the burden; taxes will not be reduced, but the spread will be different and prime purpose is to raise more money. What the committee making the study desires is for suggestions on new sources of revenue. Someone in the United States may have a bright idea and know of something that can be taxed. Oregon thought of the tax on gasoline, which has been a gold mine to states and federal government.

It appears almost certain that the base for income taxes will be broadened, which means that individuals whose income is now so small that they are not subject to this particular tax, will be compelled to con-

tribute. This will cause more argument than adding another cent to the tax on cigarettes—the most heavily taxed article on the schedule. Uncle Sam is in the hole 40 billion dollars and needs money and the only way he can get it is from you, and you, and you and your grandchildren. All the billions spent for WPA, grants under PWA, etc., must be repaid as it was borrowed money.

Douglas fir, pine and other lumber is needed in Spain for reconstruction but this business must wait until the Spanish government is prepared to consent to importation. Only basic raw material is permitted for the present and all manufactured articles are prohibited. Inquiry by the bureau of foreign commerce discloses that when Spain allows lumber to be imported it will draw the line at plywood products, such as doors. For years Spain held 13th position as market for American lumber. The market is expected to open probably next winter; the far east market when hostilities quiet down. Each country will require billions of feet of lumber from the United States, most originating in the Pacific Northwest. A delegation of Japanese business men recently visited the Northwest and made tentative plans to purchase a huge amount of Pacific Coast products.

Pay of the survivors of the Squalis was cut \$15 a month, dating from May 23 when the submarine failed to come up. Sailors on submarines receive \$15 a month extra because of the hazardous work and as their ship went out of commission they were automatically cut the \$15.

Garden Programs Scheduled for Season

A complete schedule for the KOAC Home Garden hours has just been issued showing a related series of programs starting September 7 and continuing through the end of June next year. The state-owned station, located on the campus of Oregon State college, cooperates each year with the Oregon Federation of Garden Clubs in the preparation and presentation of these programs. Each month features a related group of programs, such as garden planning in September, roses in February, flower arrangements in April, and perennials in June.

Many KOAC garden clubs have been organized in the past around this series of programs. Any group of at least five persons who agree to meet regularly at least once a month may form such a group and receive program outlines, report blanks, and other types of service. This adult education service is free, as one of the offerings of the general extension division.

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