

STATE CAPITAL NEWS

- Cities' Tax Levies
- Largest Payroll
- Utilities' Share

By A. L. LINDBECK

Salem.—The city of Heppner with a combined tax levy of 54.5 mills is one of 112 Oregon cities to show a reduction in the rate over 1940, according to a survey by State Treasurer Leslie M. Scott. Heppner's 1940 combined tax levy was 56.9 mills.

Granite, a small community in Baker county, enjoys the distinction of the lowest combined tax rate, with a total of only 18.1 mills for all purposes, city, county, school and state.

Bay City, in Tillamook county, on the other hand, has the highest combined tax rate in the state, 127 mills.

Lexington's combined levy is 50.9 mills compared to 49.1 mills in 1940. Ione has a combined levy of 34.7 mills compared to 37.9 mills in 1940.

A total of 111,553 taxable returns were filed with the state tax commission by income tax payers this year, an increase of 17.9 per cent over 1940 returns. Another 57,546 individuals filed returns but paid no taxes. A preliminary check completed by the tax commission indicates that total collections from income taxes this year will exceed those of 1940 by 33.4 per cent. First half payments reported by the commission totalled \$6,483,687. The big increase in tax collections is explained as due entirely to improved economic conditions.

Without committing itself to any future course of action the Board of Control has authorized John R. Wald, industrial engineer, to make a survey of employment conditions at the state prison and to submit his recommendations as to what industries would best fit into the picture at the Oregon institution. Wald told the board that automobile license tags are now being manufactured by prison labor in 34 states. Other industries suggested by Wald as suitable for prisons include a paint and soap factory, a tobacco factory and a mattress factory.

The Board of Control has accepted the resignation of Dr. W. D. McNary as superintendent of the Eastern Oregon State hospital at Pendleton effective May 1. Dr. McNary, however, will remain with the institution in an advisory capacity until October 1 by which time the board expects to name a new superintendent. In the meantime Dr. Donald Wair, assistant superintendent, will officiate as acting superintendent.

Referendum petitions are now being circulated by the State Retail Grocers association in an effort to place the cigarette tax act on the ballot at the next general election. Success of the referendum sponsors in filling their petitions by June 13 will mean that the cigarette tax will not become effective until after the voters have approved the measure.

State officials have joined owners of other property in protesting against the construction of a service station on property adjoining that occupied by the capitol group. The protest is in line with a resolution adopted by the legislature at its 1939 session opposing the location of any business buildings in the vicinity of the capitol.

One-sixth of all property taxes paid in Oregon are contributed by public utilities which this year will pay a total of \$6,915,816 toward the support of governmental activities—state, county, city, school, etc.—according to a report by the state tax commission.

Electric utilities will pay \$2,699,496 in property taxes this year to top the list, with steam railroads in second place with payments totalling \$2,594,565.

More than one-third of the taxes paid by public utilities in this state are collected by Multnomah county which this year will receive \$2,744,390 from this source. Utility taxes to be collected by other counties

include: Baker, \$168,910; Benton, \$53,340; Clackamas, \$417,920; Columbia, \$126,633; Coos, \$196,485; Douglas, \$162,862; Hood River, \$104,862; Lane, \$271,900; Josephine, \$105,400; Malheur, \$122,324; Marion, \$236,498; Morrow, \$77,736; Polk, \$51,240; Sherman, \$30,954; Umatilla, \$192,540; Wasco, \$175,649; Washington, \$124,342; Wheeler, \$2400.

Construction work on the new treatment hospital at the state hospital for insane will not be started until next fall the Board of Control decided this week after a conference with Dr. J. O. Evans, superintendent of the institution. The board hopes that by delaying construction work on the new building for a few months labor and material prices will have come down from their present high peak to which they have been pushed by the defense program. The recent legislative session appropriated \$325,000 for construction of the new building which will be the first of a new group to be located north of the main hospital building.

The state prison flax plant is getting ready to handle one of the biggest flax crops in the history of that crop in Oregon, according to L. L. Laws, manager of the prison industry. Present prospects, Laws said, are for a better flax crop than last year although a prolonged spell of dry weather could seriously damage the crop.

Oregon's 1942 automobile license plates will consist of white letters and numerals on a dark blue background, it was announced this week by Secretary of State Earl Snell. This combination reverses the one used in 1940, Snell pointed out.

Physicians and surgeons who are subject to the military draft are being urged by Lt. Col. Elmer V. Wooten to apply for commissions in the medical reserve rather than wait for drafting into regular military service.

Industrial payrolls in Oregon for the eighth month period ending March 1 were the largest in the state's history, according to records of the state industrial accident commission. Total industrial payrolls for the eight month period were \$118,910,257 compared to a previous high record of \$110,688,986. An average of 130,649 men were employed during the period at an average daily wage of \$4.55, an increase of 14 cents.

Four women are included in the list of 98 law school graduates who have applied to the state supreme court for permission to take the state bar examinations July 8 and 9.

Water Said Ample For 55 Pct. of Lands

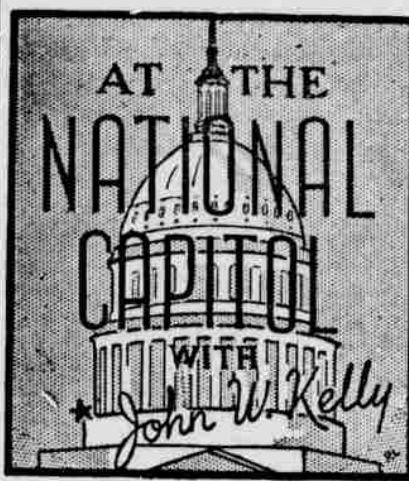
Approximately 55 percent of the irrigated lands of southern and eastern Oregon for which water forecasts are made will have ample water for irrigation this season, according to a summary made by R. A. Work, Medford, in charge of snow surveys and irrigation water forecasts for the Soil Conservation service and the Oregon Agricultural experiment station.

About 45 percent of the irrigated lands will experience various degrees of shortage this year, with some 28 percent expected to have a mild shortage which will permit the maturing of most crops. On about 17 per cent of the irrigated area of the state, however, the shortage is expected to become critical.

These percentage figures are based on records of irrigated lands by districts in the state engineer's office and are not issued as being accurate as to detail. They do indicate, however, the general condition of water supplies in the state in relation to total volume of irrigated lands, says Work. The figures do not include the irrigated areas of the Willamette valley or the coast region.

In general, the regions with ample irrigation water supplies are south and east of a line drawn from Upper Klamath lake to the western border of Wallowa county.

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Washington, D. C. April 17.—All of the high command in the national capital are doing their best to arouse the American people from their apathy on the subject of war and aid to the British. What the higher-ups know, from President Roosevelt down, is that the true seriousness of the situation is not recognized by the people. It is to this failure to understand that the United States is already in the war and that every ounce of production must be developed, that most of the strikes are attributed. From now on, the administration will bend every effort to educate the public as to the gravity of conditions.

This point of view is not confined to labor. It can be found among many employers and in the public generally. Not until something happens to an American warship or American soldiers, with resulting loss of life, will the man in the street come out from his indifference, his unconcern and his apathy. Pending the dramatic moment, it will be difficult to arouse workers in industry and the ordinary citizen.

One by one the upper-case officials have been changing their views. A few weeks ago Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox asserted that no more war vessels would be given to Britain; that convoy duty is war. Last week 10 coast guard cutters (two from Pacific coast waters) were given away, and in wartime the coast guard is part of the navy. No protest was made by Secretary Knox. His commander in chief had made the arrangements and had given the order.

President Roosevelt insisted that the United States would not be in war; that only profiteers wanted war; that there would be no United States warships convoy goods to England, for "a convoy means shooting and shooting means war." The president is shifting from his position and several balloons have been sent up by Admiral Land of the maritime commission, and others, to get public reaction on a convoy.

On the best authority in Washington today the statement is made that the British cannot win without help from the United States, and probably cannot win with such help. The authority are the ranking admirals and generals, who are better informed on the situation than the layman. In confidential sessions with congressional committees these statements have been made. It is because of this opinion, or belief, that the administration is so anxious that production attain top speed, and there is so little time in which to process and finish planes, tanks, munitions and other lethal weapons the British require.

At the moment, however, it is known that more important than weapons is food. It simmers down to "no food, no fight." Without a food supply the British cannot hold out, and the German submarines are sinking hundreds of thousands of tons. Transportation division of OPM is working 24 hours a day with railroads arranging for freight cars, thousands of them, to take food from interior points to ports of debarkation. Every boxcar that can be located is wanted, and the question is whether more should be built or run trains faster and obtain greater use of the present cars.

The government is purchasing gigantic quantities of food; condensed and powdered milk, lard, powdered eggs and other vital commodities, but no wheat. England can obtain all the wheat it requires from Canada and Australia. Wheat farmers of the Pacific northwest will not experience the high prices of the first world war, but those raising hogs will be in the money.

Consumers' division of OPM insists that there is no reason for food

prices increasing, and efforts are being made to peg prices of half a dozen commodities. With several million people returning to work at good wages, they can afford to buy more food and this is having its effect on the market; but the government wants no run-away prices, which would mean inflation.

Government wants more money for the farmers so, apparently, the distributing channel is the place where the prices will be held. Bernard Baruch, chairman of the war industries board in the other war, is a weekly White House visitor. He has suggested to the president a universal price control as the way to prevent inflation. Thus far the president has not accepted the proposal—it is too complicated—although a food administrator may later be appointed with powers such as were held by Herbert Hoover.

With defense orders the attitude of organized labor is this: A "closed shop," an opportunity to force industrialists into bargaining collectively, and jurisdictional strikes. On one point all administration officers are in agreement: a jurisdictional strike is nonsensical. The officers differ on the other two points raised by organized labor. Most of the strikes in Oregon and Washington have been jurisdictional. The president wants strikes stopped, as they interfere with the lend-lease plan, but he prefers to have congress take action in order not to offend organized labor, which consistently supported him in his three campaigns.

Fighting Forest Fires Takes Tall Financing

Coincident with the adoption of a comprehensive forestry program by the Oregon legislature, comes the publication of the results of a study by Dr. W. H. Dreesen, agricultural economist at Oregon State college, entitled "Financing Fire Protection for Timber Lands Under Oregon Laws." Some of Dr. Dreesen's findings, made available to publication, are reflected in the new legislation. This experiment station bulletin, No. 384, shows that a total of \$470,249.93 was collected in 1938 for fire protection purposes in Oregon. This fund was collected from "tax roll" lands, from members of protective associations, and state, federal, and county contributions.

Former Oregon laws required that all owners of timber lands should provide adequate protection against fire, while the recent bills just passed correct some of the weaknesses in the former laws, in the opinion of state and college forest officials.

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