

STATE CAPITAL NEWS

- Insurance Cost
- Traveling Board
- Tax Inequalities

By A. L. LINDBECK

Salem.—Residents of Oregon paid out \$22,306,929 in life insurance premiums during 1940, according to the annual report of the state insurance department. Claims paid by insurance companies on policies held in this state totalled \$12,192,409, the report shows. Life insurance in force in Oregon on December 31, 1940, totalled \$756,087,530 compared to \$729,379,073 on December 31, 1939. Oregon automobile owners paid out \$2,433,870 in premium for liability insurance, with the companies paying \$1,071,534 in losses during the year. Premiums paid on automobile property damage insurance amounted to \$794,216 with loss payments totalling \$353,083. Automobile collision insurance premiums for the year amounted to \$467,342 with losses totalling \$202,773.

Two acts of the recent legislative session designed to purify Multnomah county's voter registration lists are now under attack via the referendum. One of the measures provides for investigation of voters now registered. The other provides for the investigation of voters who register after January 1, 1942. Both measures were bitterly opposed by democratic and Commonwealth Federation members in the house and senate. The referendum attack is sponsored by Walter W. Whitbeck of Portland.

The capitol has been pretty well deserted by high ranking officials and department heads this week. Governor Sprague, Secretary of State Snell, State Treasurer Scott and State Engineer Strickland went to Bend Monday to inspect the Tumalo irrigation project, going to Redmond, Prineville and Madras Tuesday for an inspection of irrigation projects in those sections. While the other members of the party returned to Salem the governor continued on to The Dalles for an inspection of the eastern Oregon tuberculosis hospital. At The Dalles the governor was joined by Lt. Col. Elmer V. Wooten for a trip to Hermiton and Pendleton for an inspection of the army ordnance depot and army air field. From Pendleton Governor Sprague and Colonel Wooten are scheduled to go to Fort Lewis, Wash., for an inspection of Oregon troops with the 41st division and to witness the corps review comprising troops of the 3d and 41st divisions on Friday afternoon. David Eccles, state budget director and the governor's executive secretary, left Monday for the national capital for a series of conferences with federal officials and department heads on defense problems.

The increased demand for skilled workers in industry is making it easier to place parolees from the state prison in good jobs, according to Fred Finsley, state parole director. Whereas previously placement of parolees was confined largely to farm jobs now many jobs are opening up for men with experience, Finsley said.

A sharp increase in traffic fatalities during April all but wiped out the gains previously recorded this year in the traffic safety campaign. Deaths due to traffic accidents last month were up, according to reports compiled by Secretary of State Snell.

The new prima facie speed law which becomes effective June 14 featured the discussions at a three day conference of state police captains, meeting in the capitol with Superintendent Charles P. Pray last week.

Gross inequalities in assessments are being revealed by field men employed by the state tax commission in appraising properties throughout the state.

These inequalities are not confined to any particular county or group of counties but are found in every county, in some in greater de-

gree than in others and are believed by the commission to be due largely to the use of part-time local assessors, a practice which is now gradually giving way to the use of better trained, full-time assessors.

As an example of some of the inequalities being exposed by the commission's appraisers it is pointed out that a residence property in a Willamette valley county admitted by its owner to be worth \$1200 was carried on the assessment rolls at a valuation of only \$40—three percent of appraised value. At the same time the adjoining property was being assessed at 40 percent of its assessed value.

A residence property in another county appraised at \$2400 was being assessed at \$100—four percent of actual cash value—while another residence in the same block, appraised at \$570 was being assessed at \$250—nearly 50 percent of its cash value.

While these are extreme cases, they are by no means isolated cases but are fairly typical of inequalities in assessments found to exist throughout the state.

In its effort to equalize assessments of properties within the counties the state tax commission started the work of appraising individual properties in 1939. So far these appraisers have "sampled" practically every county in the state. During 1939 and 1940 these appraisers covered approximately 25,000 properties ranging from as few as 20 in some of the smaller counties up to as many as 5000 in the larger counties.

Some opposition on the part of county assessors was experienced by the commission in the early years of this work but now the cooperation of the commission is welcomed by the assessors with more requests for state appraisers coming in than the commission is able to meet with its small force now numbering nine full time appraisers.

In spite of the fact that the cash balance in the state treasury recently hit a new all-time high at \$19,278,000, State Treasurer Scott hastens to explain that the state has no surplus cash. Once before when the treasury announced a huge cash balance the department was flooded with suggestions as to how the extra money might be used. Most of this cash balance, Scott explains, is earmarked for specific purposes—highways, soldiers' bonus loans, industrial accident funds, etc. Only \$6,000,000 of the huge total is credited to the general fund out of which appropriation supported state activities are financed, and this balance, built up by the recent flood of income tax payments is now rapidly dwindling under constant demands of established governmental functions.

A federal census bureau report just received by the executive department here shows that the number of persons 65 years of age or over in Oregon has increased 37.6 percent since 1930. The census bureau figures show that in 1940 Oregon had 49,572 males and 43,063 females in that old age group.

New Treatment May Save Used Lumber

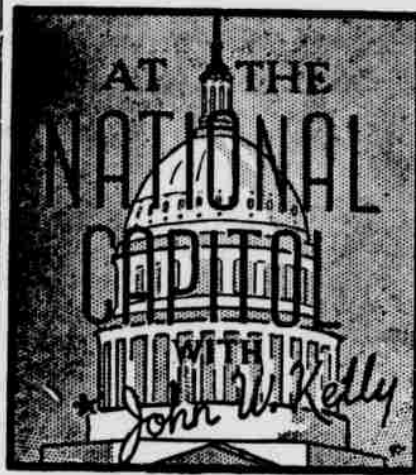
Oregon State College.—A new method of treating lumber slightly affected by fungous growth, which may result in salvaging large quantities of lumber now considered waste, has been developed by Glenn Voorhies, assistant professor of wood products in the school of forestry. The process was explained to leading lumber manufacturers and dealers at a conference on the campus, who showed considerable interest in it.

The lumber is kiln-dried to destroy all fungous organisms and then given a finish which brings out a distinctive and attractive pattern in the wood.

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Washington, D. C., May 8.—Investigation of national defense reveals that the army has fallen down; that it had no vision, no progress (other than M-day), and that the housing for 1,500,000 to 2,000,000 men was not anticipated. Army's explanation is that it never occurred to them that so many troops would be raised and the smaller number estimated for mobilization on M-day could be taken care of at race tracks at state and county fairgrounds. Army says that when congress, at request of the president, authorized a tremendously increased personnel it did a good job in locating sites for cantonments, letting contracts for the shelter.

To this the senate investigating committee inquires: What has the army been doing for the past 20 years? Committee asserts that a smart board of strategy would have years ago decided on locations and either acquired the land and held it in reserve or made arrangements to purchase, instead of waiting until the emergency and then having landowners tip up the price in many instances beyond reason. The army should have prepared blueprints of cantonments, with barracks, hospital, mess halls, roads, sewers and water—had everything prepared to swing into action at any time.

Lack of this forethought caused the army to pick sites recently which were in no way suitable for encampments; in swamps, in places where there was no water supply and to ignore old cantonments of world war No 1, where there were installations of roads, water and sewers. An army officer (retired) picked one site and shifted the location for a hospital in order not to interfere with a golf course used by officers. Estimates of cost have been invariably too low, which the officers explain was because they did not take time to prepare carefully drawn plans, and someone in Washington (whose identity has not yet been revealed) gave orders to construction quartermasters which greatly increased the costs. It can be stated that, aside from underestimates, there has been no indication of shenanigan on the west coast.

What took place in cantonments has been repeated in other directions. The plain fact is that no one, apparently, in the United States, realized 12 months ago that this nation would have to prepare for more than a moderate national defense. Britain was taking care of itself, purchasing goods in the United States, and aside from good wishes this country was regarding the European conflict in an academic manner. Of a sudden it was realized that if Britain was to win the United States must furnish the finances and the munitions, and a grand scramble started to locate and build factories; to expand existing plants, all with taxpayer money.

Germany's sinking of millions of tons of cargo ships resulted in the United States preparing the greatest shipyard activity in history, of acquiring every merchant vessel available with which to aid the allies. Survey, a year ago, disclosed that not enough powder was being manufactured for the fleet; therefore the government built plants and hired private concerns to operate them, for powder was needed for the navy, the army and the British. The same deficiency was noted in small-arms, small ammunition, tanks, bag loading plants and airplanes, both for training and fighting.

Only now is the United States beginning to come to life. The mass production will not attain its peak for another 12 months—and much can happen in a single year. The

first 30 ton tank was delivered to the army last week after long preparation in changing design, armor and equipment. On the assembly line these armed monsters will be rolling steadily for at least the next two years; tanks for national defense and tanks for the British.

Other changes are in the offing. Unless inside reports are incorrect, the boys of the national guard, now in federal service for a year, will not be released after their hitch. Draftees will not be sent back to civil life and instead of selecting older men (26 to 35) the army wants younger men, those from 18 to 25, youngsters who have not started on a career and who have no responsibility. Once trained, draftees are supposed to be held as a reserve for 10 years. A man of 35, after 10 years, is 45 years—too old to make a good soldier. Youngsters of 18 will be 28 in 10 years and still fit after a refresher course.

A potent reason for lowering the age of draftees is that in the pool from 26 to 35 are experienced mechanics and draft board ordering of these into service is handicapping industry, where they are needed. Another reason: There is a movement from farm to city where industry is paying good wages. Local draft boards are taking the boys who elected to remain on the farm, thereby increasing the shortage of farm labor and increasing the cost of production in the field of agriculture. Sailors are ignoring the sea and taking jobs as riggers in shipyards, where the pay is better. Furnishing crews for the hundreds of merchant ships now on order is one of the problems worrying the maritime commission.

RESOLUTIONS OF RESPECT

In memory of Sister Lena Fuchs. Again that unwelcome yet relentless visitor, Death, has entered the portals of our lodge room and summoned a sister to the home beyond. Her zealous work in behalf of our beloved order and her life laden with good deeds, has won for her the plaudit of the Master and will cause her name to be chiseled in the memory of our lodge, and

Therefore, be it resolved, that Sans Souci Rebekah Lodge No. 33 in testimony of our loss and expressing Rebekah love, drape its charter in mourning for thirty days, and that we tender to the family of our deceased Sister our sincere condolence, and that a copy of these resolutions be sent to the family.
Anna Brown, Ella Bengel, Ida Macomber, Committee.

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