STATE CAPITAL NEWS

- More Road Funds
- White Successor
- Power Switch

By A. L. LINDBECK

Salem.—While Oregon will receive only $410,000 out of the $25,000,000 recently appropriated by congress for the improvement of strategic state highways the state will receive other substantial sums from funds set aside in the new highway appropriations measure for the construction of access roads and flight strips adjacent to public highways in the opinion of R. H. Baldock, state highway engineer.

Should the war department decide to construct the proposed cantonment in the Benton-Polk county area, as now seems probable, any relocation or widening of the west side highway necessitated by this project will probably be financed out of the new federal appropriation. Likewise highway improvements necessitated by construction of the cantonment near Medford would also come in for federal aid as an access road.

Most of the $410,000 this state is expected to receive for use on strategic highways is expected to go toward the strengthening of bridges in order to stand the strain imposed by heavy military equipment.

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Governor Sprague has let it be known that he will be in no hurry to appoint a new adjutant general to succeed the late General George A. White. Inasmuch as the national guard is now in federal service the state has no great need for the services of an adjutant general and such routine duties as are required are now being performed by Lt. Col. Elmer V. Wooten in his dual capacity of state director of selective service and acting adjutant general. Incidentally, when the governor does get around to making this appointment it is believed that the plum will fall either to Wooten or to Brigadier General Thos. E. Rilea, commander of the 82nd brigade (Oregon infantry troops) with the 41st division now stationed at Fort Lewis, Washington.

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Unemployment compensation benefit payments during the first ten months of 1941 were the lowest in the four years' experience of this commission, totalling only $2,193,745, or $1,600,000 under the 1940 figures for the same period.

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Final payments for the 1940 flax crop purchased by the prison flax industry were made this week. Flax farmers of the mid-Willamette valley section who sold their crop to the state received $60 for number 1 straw and $48 for number 2 straw, the price corresponding with that paid by the several cooperative associations to their members. The price, incidentally, is more than double the price paid for the same quality product two years ago.

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There is no indication of any intention on the part of Oregon motorists to conserve on the nation's gasoline supply. Sales of gasoline in Oregon during October totalled 27,377,376 gallons, a gain of 4,162,433 gallons over the record for October, 1940. Gasoline sales for the first ten months of 1941, according to records compiled by Secretary of State Earl Snell aggregated 251,324,777 gallons, an increase of 31,102,388 gallons over the record for the same period last year.

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Whether Oregon will switch from Portland General Electric to Bonneville power for use in its numerous buildings and institutions in the Salem area will depend largely upon what kind of a proposition the Bonneville administration has to offer.

Last week Paul J. Raver, Bonneville administrator, was quoted as saying that the use of Bonneville power would result in a saving of from $28,000 to $35,000 a year to the state. Inasmuch as the state's annual "juice" bill under its PGE contract amounts to only $62,000 a year the Bonneville offer, on its face at least, sounds very attractive. Engineers in the employ of the Public Utilities commission had estimated the saving to be realized by the state thru the application of Bonneville wholesale rates as in the neighborhood of $15,000 a year.

Just what the Raver proposal includes is not clear to the board of control whose members want more light on the situation before making any move. For one thing, they want to know if Bonneville is prepared to deliver the electricity to the point of use, as is now being done by the private utility at the advertised saving. Or does the saving include only delivery to its substation in Polk county from which point it would have to be distributed by the state. In that event the prospective saving would dwindle materially inasmuch as it is estimated that it would cost the state $165,000 to build the 25 miles of power lines necessary to serve the several state buildings and institutions, not to mention a very substantial annual operations and maintenance cost to keep such a distribution system in working order.

Should the board of control decide to buy Bonneville power and find it necessary to build any distribution lines it is beleved there is ample authority for such a program under an act of 1935 empowering the board to construct or acquire a power plant and necessary distribution lines, the cost to be financed through savings to be realized from operations of the state-owned plant. That act was passed at a time when the board of control was considering the construction of a power plant at the state prison to be operated with convict labor.

Before the board enters upon any construction program, however, in the event it is decided to buy Bonneville energy efforts will be made to persuade Bonneville to build the necessary lines, or failing in that, to contract with the private utility to "wheel" the electricity from the point of delivery by Bonneville to the several points of use.

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Announcement by Governor Sprague that he had appointed Ernest R. Fatland to the post of state liquor commissioner came only as confirmation of long standing rumors. Fatland succeeds Lowell Stockman of Pendleton who resigned from the liquor commission to seek the republican nomination for congressman from the second Oregon district.

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The marked improvement in the employment situation has not served to lighten Oregon's relief burden, indicating that persons on the state relief rolls are not employable. While general assistance costs remain practically unchanged over a year ago, aggregating $2,037,696 for the first ten months of 1941, old age assistance benefits increased by $230,000 in the same period, totalling $4,603,287 for the first ten months of the current year.

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Ensign Wayne Morris Seeks Wings

Wayne Morris, recent star of "I Wanted Wings," became a member of Uncle Sam's Navy in May, 1941, when he was appointed to the rank of Ensign.

When asked what he thought of the United States Navy, Morris said, "I think every man who is considering joining a military service should look into the 'chance of a lifetime' which the Navy and Naval Reserve offer to get into the big-pay field of the future—aviation. In the Navy you can attend the finest flight training schools in the world, and receive instruction from Navy pilots who introduced dive bombing, aircraft carriers and catapult take-offs to the rest of the world. Also, there are opportunities in Naval Aviation for men who don't want to fly. They can be trained as aviation machinists, metalsmiths, photographers, observers, or they can receive instruction in many other trades. It's a great life in the Navy."

Ensign Wayne Morris is pictured here in his line of duty as a member of the Naval Aviation Cadet Selection Board at the Long Beach Naval Reserve Air Base.

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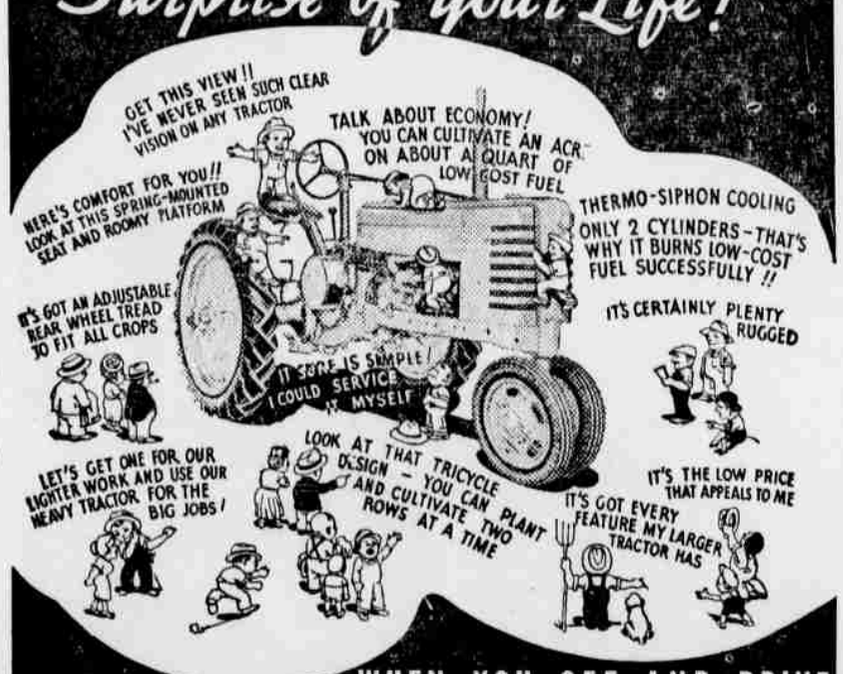

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