

STATE CAPITAL NEWS

- Revenue Split
- Tire Metering
- Fag Tax Anomaly

By A. L. LINDBECK

Salem.—Some time between now and June 30, State Treasurer Leslie M. Scott will send the county treasurer of Morrow county a check for \$7,530.92. The amount will represent the county's share of a \$960,944 dividend declared by the state tax commission last week out of surplus revenues from income taxes and will be the state's contribution toward the support of elementary education in lieu of property taxes heretofore levied for that purpose. It will be the first time in Oregon history that all state needs, including the elementary school levy, have been met by revenues from income taxes.

Faced with prospects of a tire famine Governor Sprague has appointed a committee headed by O. L. Price of Portland to supervise the rationing of this and other commodities on which the federal government may later restrict distribution as a war time measure. Advices from Washington indicate that distribution of tires will be confined exclusively to certain commercial vehicles, ambulances, fire apparatus, essential road maintenance equipment and workers whose services are essential to the public welfare. County rationing committees consisting of two men and one woman will be appointed by the governor to supervise distribution of rationed commodities in local communities.

Careless driving is held largely responsible for a substantial increase in grade crossing accidents during 1940 over 1939, according to Public Utilities Commissioner O. R. Bean. In his annual report on railroad operations in Oregon, just out, Bean records a total of 247 grade crossing accidents for 1940 compared to only

159 in 1939. Eighteen persons lost their lives in grade crossing accidents during 1940 compared to 10 in 1939 with the number of injuries jumping from 38 to 63. Most of the crossing accidents happened on well established and well travelled highways, the report shows.

Because of the war two recently issued regulations of the state department of agriculture have been cancelled. One of these called for the use of a new type sanitary milk bottle cap which would protect the pouring lip of the bottle. No effort will be made now to enforce this regulation which was to have become effective on January 1, J. D. Mickle, state director of agriculture, said. The other regulation which was cancelled this week called for the use of a certain type of lighting in dairy barns. Blackout requirements have made it advisable to cancel this requirement for the time being, according to Mickle.

O. R. Bean, public utilities commissioner, came to the aid of cupid this week when he lifted the ban on the employment of married women. Hereafter, Bean ruled, girls employed in the department may remain on the job after they marry, provided the husband is called into military service. Otherwise the ban still stands.

Governor Sprague this week extended his emergency proclamation to include the war against Germany and Italy. Originally it applied only to the war against Japan. The people of Oregon are especially enjoined to remain constantly on the alert to every possible danger from enemy action, to report any signs of such activity to the proper authorities, and to perform faithfully such tasks as may be assigned them by military and civil authorities.

Failure of the legislature to include any appropriation to cover the cost of administering the new cigarette tax act has placed the state tax commission in a most embarrassing position.

Before the commission can start enforcement of the law it must set up the machinery. That means the employment of a staff to administer the act and the purchase of supplies

including stamps to be affixed to the cigarette package or carton. This involves expense. In lieu of an appropriation the legislature which passed the act authorized the commission to pay necessary administrative expenses out of revenues accruing from the tax. That would be all right except for the referendum. Although the attorney general has held the attack against the tax act to be faulty and not entitled to a place on the ballot the referendum sponsors still have recourse to the courts. Should the courts reverse the attorney general and direct the secretary of state to place the measure on the ballot and the voters, in turn, kill the law the commission would find itself in the position of having incurred a considerable item of expense which it could not pay.

Administration of the act is by no means as simple as it might appear on its face. The law provides for a tax of one-tenth of a cent on each cigarette selling at not more than one cent. On cigarettes selling for more than one cent the tax jumps to 20 per cent. An investigation by the commission has revealed the need for at least 20 different denominations of stamps ranging from a low of 1.2 cents to as high as 48 cents for certain imported brands pt up in packs of 100.

Initiation of the tax is still further complicated by the fact that large supplies are now in the hands of more than 40,000 dealers—large and small—all over the state. As soon as the commission is in position to begin enforcing the act all of these packages must be stamped before they can be sold. After the current supplies in dealers' hands are disposed of it is expected that the work of stamping the packages or cartons will be handled by the distributors which will greatly simplify administration of the act by confining collections to comparatively few sources.

A statistician in the employ of the commission has estimated that Oregonians consume some 60,000,000 packs or 1,200,000,000 fags a year. That would be at the rate of 170,000 packs or 3,400,000 cigarettes a day. This estimate is based upon the experience in the state of Washington, according to which Oregon would realize approximately \$1,200,000 a year from this tax—\$1,000,000 for old age pensions and \$200,000 for the support of vocational education.

Increased costs of old age pensions for the first 11 months of 1941 were approximately offset by reductions in costs of general relief, according to a report by Leslie M. Scott, state treasurer. Scott's report shows that Oregon's needy aged drew a total of \$5,071,932.66 in 1941, to November 30, compared to \$4,776,986.06 for the same period in 1940. General relief payments, on the other hand, dropped from \$2,492,081.94 in 1940 to \$2,195,285.68 in 1941.

The cow that jumped over the moon did not have much of an edge on her 1940 descendants when it comes to high hurdling. Records of the state purchasing department show that beef prices have jumped from \$10.79 per hundred pounds to \$14.81 in the past nine months. Bacon prices have increased from \$18.64 to \$25.98 in the same period and ham is up from \$17 to \$29.90 or 75 per cent. Lard prices have increased 117 percent from \$5.85 to \$12.70. State institutions consume more than \$100,000 worth of meat annually.

PEACH DISEASE SERIOUS

Spread of the so-called "X" disease of peaches in Oregon has become a matter of major importance to the peach industry. Dr. S. M. Zeller, plant pathologist at the O. S. C. experiment station, told extension and research men gathered on the campus for the annual conference. This disease, which is found in many parts of the United States, is as yet confined to the territory east of the Cascades so far as Oregon and Washington are concerned. It was found there first in 1939, since when a number of large commercial orchards have been infected to the extent of more than 50 per cent of the trees. No control has been found other than complete removal of infected trees, said Dr. Zeller. A mimeographed circular on the subject is in course of preparation.

The best medium for selling or trading is a G-T want ad.

TRAFFIC TIPS AND QUIPS

DEATH TAKES NO HOLIDAY— BUT IT DOES TAKE A LOT OF HOLIDAY DRIVERS!

NATIONAL SAFETY COUNCIL

Holiday traffic in Oregon is from 15 to 17 percent above normal, the state traffic safety division warns holiday drivers.

During these holiday periods, drivers were advised to exercise additional care to avoid being involved in accidents. In long lines of cars, drivers should avoid taking dangerous chances in order to pass, the division warned. Speed should be reduced, especially at night and in heavy traffic. The driver must keep on the alert at all times.

Special care is required when approaching and passing recreation areas during holiday periods in order to avoid accidents involving pedestrians or cars entering or leaving the area.

New Hybrid Wheat Makes Good Yield

A new hybrid wheat obtained by crossing turkey red and federation outyielded all other varieties grown in eight outlying cereal nurseries in Wasco, Sherman, Jefferson, and Gilliam counties in 1941, according to M. M. Overson, superintendent of the Moro branch experiment station. This is one of the several new and promising hybrids that are being tested in an effort to improve still further Oregon's wheat varieties.

Most sought characteristics now are smut-resistance and good milling quality, combined with high yield. None of these new crosses are ready for general distribution.

Game Commission Sets Angling Meeting

The Oregon State Game commission will hold on January 10 at the office in Portland, its annual meeting to determine the angling regulations for the ensuing year.

Seasons, bag limits, and other regulations affecting sports fishing will be considered. The meeting will be open to the general public and representatives of sportsmen's organizations and other interested organizations are invited to attend.

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