

STATE CAPITAL NEWS

- Next Move
- Wives' Skirts
- Valuation Rise

By A. L. LINDBECK

Salem.—The next move in the controversy over the cigarette tax is now up to the state supreme court. That tribunal has taken original jurisdiction in a mandamus suit brought by the State Retail Grocers association in an effort to compel Secretary of State Snell to restore the referendum against the tax act to the November ballot. Arguments in this suit will be heard by the court Friday (January 23) and because of the importance of the case an early opinion is expected.

In the meantime the state tax commission which started to enforce collection of the tax on cigarettes on January 8 is continuing with this program with revenues from this source rolling in at the rate of more than \$1000 a day. Should the court grant the writ of mandamus as petitioned for by the Retail Grocers it is expected that collection of the tax will be halted immediately at least until the voters pass judgment upon the legislative act next November.

In this connection the question has been raised as to what will be done with the taxes collected in the event the voters reject the act—assuming they get a chance at it. Some authorities argue that it would then be up to the state to refund the taxes paid. But this again raises the question as to whom he taxes would be refunded. While the state holds the cigarette tax dealers responsible for payment of the tax these dealers act only as collection agencies for the state, passing the tax on to the consumer in the form of an increase in the price of cigarettes. Therefore they can hardly be said to be entitled to a refund of a tax which they have not paid. In all fairness any refund that might be made in any such a situation should be made

to the people who pay the tax—the smokers, but inasmuch as their number will run into the thousands with no record of their purchases and tax payments the impracticability of any such a program is at once apparent.

Men of military age are no longer to be allowed to hide behind their wives' skirts in their efforts to dodge the draft. New draft regulations just received by Lt. Col. Elmer V. Wooten, state director of selective service, show that men who married after the United States declared war on Japan on December 8 are not eligible to deferment. Furthermore men who married since the selective service act became effective on September 16, 1940, must prove that they did not take a wife in order to evade the draft in order to gain deferment. Neither will married men of military age whose wives are employed be eligible to deferred classification under the new regulations, which are expected to make thousands of men heretofore listed in class 3 available for immediate induction into the army.

The board of control has approved the plans for the new medical center and treatment dormitory at the state hospital in Salem. Immediate construction of the building, however, is now up to the contractors. If the building can be constructed within the cost limits set by the legislative appropriation of \$325,000 the board is ready to go ahead with the job. Otherwise it will probably have to wait until labor and material costs return to normal unless the next legislature is willing to increase the appropriation. The building, a two- and three-story fire-proof structure will serve as the medical center for the entire institution which now houses more than 2500 inmates. In addition it will provide dormitory space for 50 additional beds.

Women and children must be prepared to volunteer for service in the harvest fields of Oregon this year to take the places left vacant by men entering the military service and the defense industries. Governor Sprague told a conference of agriculturists here last week. Plans were made at the conference for a house-to-house canvass of the state

to enroll 300,000 women for farm work, the survey to begin February 16.

For the first time in many years the assessed valuation of property in Oregon is again on the upgrade. Valuations on the 1941 roll show an increase of approximately six per cent over those of 1940, according to a summary just released by the state tax commission. This summary shows the assessed value of all property in Oregon on the 1941 roll to be \$960,944,739.66 compared to \$295,787,005.95 in 1940.

The valuation of property assessed by county assessors increased from \$736,802,585.50 in 1940 to \$792,083,486.50 in 1941 while that of public utility property assessed by the state tax commission increased from \$159,984,420.45 to \$168,861,253.16.

While the valuation of tillable and timber lands for tax purposes show sharp decreases valuation of all other classes of property show increases.

Plans for securing more federal funds for public lands counties were considered at a conference in Salem this week attended by delegates from most of the western states. The conference gave its endorsement to a bill introduced by Senator McNary which provides for the payment of two percent of the fair value of public lands in lieu of taxes that would be paid for these lands if in private ownership.

Employer contributions to the unemployment insurance fund in 1941 were 27 percent greater than for 1940 while at the same time benefit payments to jobless workers were reduced by 39 percent. As a result the unemployment compensation trust fund increased during the year by \$6,322,229 to reach a total of \$16,378,561 at the close of the year.

There are plenty of certified teachers in Oregon, according to Rex Putnam, state superintendent of public instruction, but so many of them are being attracted to defense jobs and other positions offering high pay that public education in this state is facing a serious situation. If the schools are to hold competent teachers, Putnam points out, salaries must be increased to somewhere near a parity with those paid in other lines of employment.

The reputation of Oregon's civilian defense program has penetrated to the far corners of the nation. This week two high placed Nebraska state officials came to Salem to confer with Jerrold Owen, state defense director, about the civilian defense organization. Walter F. Roberts, Nebraska's civilian defense coordinator, told Owen that he had been informed that Oregon led the nation in its preparedness for protection of the civilian population in the event of an attack.

Receipts of the World War Veterans State Aid commission for 1941 totalling \$2,660,060 were the largest in the commission's history and \$265,000 above the receipts for 1940.

There were approximately 1500 fewer horses on Oregon farms in 1941 than in 1940, according to reports submitted to the state tax commission by county assessors. The state's swine population was also down but the number of cattle and sheep was substantially increased.

BETTER FEEDING PAYS

On the average farm approximately 50 per cent of the total cost of producing milk or butterfat is feed cost, according to the authors of a new bulletin on "Feeding for Milk Production," issued recently at Oregon State college. Under present conditions, when dairy product prices are relatively high, more seed can be used economically in many cases, however. Early preparation for providing an abundance of pasture and other succulent feeds this season to supplement hay and grain will insure both maximum production and maximum profits.

IS CAMPUS PHOTOGRAPHER

University of Oregon, Eugene, Jan. 21.—Don Jones, Heppner, a student in journalism at University of Oregon, has recently been appointed the new photo editor of the Oregon Daily Emerald, student publication. This announcement was made by Helen Angell, editor in chief, following an Emerald staff meeting at the beginning of the new term.

Rubber Yielding Plants Will be Tested By State College

Promising rubber-producing plants that might possibly be adapted for growing in Oregon will be tested here as soon as they are available, says G. R. Hyslop, head of the plant industries division at Oregon State college. Professor Hyslop recently returned from Washington, D. C., where he conferred with federal officials on this subject.

Interest in such plants was increased recently with announcement by the National Farm Chemurgic council that a form of dandelion known as Kok-sagyz is grown in Russia as a source of rubber. The suggestion was made that this plant could be grown in the midwest and possibly here on the coast.

As this announcement came while Professor Hyslop was in Washington, he immediately conferred with Senator Charles L. McNary, who is much interested in a new source of rubber. A conference was held with officials in charge of rubber plant investigations in the bureau of plant industry where it was learned that this particular dandelion plant while considered of economic importance under Russian conditions, would hardly be suitable here.

Reports obtained by these specialists show that the plant yields only 30 to 50 pounds an acre of rubber rather than the much higher yield suggested in the press releases recently issued Guayule a rubber-bearing plant grown now in southwestern United States, is considered much more practical for use in this country than the dandelion plant, Professor Hyslop learned.

Here in Oregon an arrangement has been made to have certain milky juice plants that grow readily here assayed for their rubber content as soon as plants are available. At certain stages in the lives of these plants the rubber content is rather low but as maturity is approached some of these shorter-lived plants show an increase in rubber content that may be of economic importance, says Professor Hyslop. A number of new milky juice annuals and perennials will be sent here for testing.

MORROW STUDENTS AT E.O.C.E.

Eastern Oregon College of Education, La Grande, January 21.—From Morrow county Ralph Skoubo of Boardman is a new student enrolled at the Eastern Oregon College of Education in La Grande, in addition to the five returning students from Morrow county. Returning students are Helen Lindsay, Ione, daughter of James Lindsay; Willard Jones, Irrigon, son of R. V. Jones; and Roy Partlow, Boardman, son of Paul Partlow; Ted Wilson, Boardman, son of Pat Wilson, La Grande; and Kathryn Parker, Heppner, daughter of Frank S. Parker.

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