

## STATE CAPITAL NEWS

- 1-Room Schools
- Gas Masks
- Road Improvement

By A. L. LINDBECK

Salem.—More than 1100 one-room schools in Oregon have closed their doors in the past 20 years through consolidations and suspensions, according to records compiled by Rex Putnam state superintendent of public instruction.

Whereas there were 1950 one-room schools in operations in the state in 1918 there were only 806 operating on June 30, 1941, Putnam's report shows. At the same time the number of school districts in the state was reduced from 2556 in 1918 to 1972 in 1941. Consolidations and suspensions of schools have been especially numerous during recent years. The school year 1940-41 saw the total number of districts reduced by 43 while the year 1938-39 saw a decrease of 52 in the number of districts.

Pension payments to Oregon's needy aged in 1941 totalling \$5,580,172 were the highest in the history of the state, according to a report by State Treasurer Leslie M. Scott. In 1940 the state paid a total of \$5,200,196 to its needy aged and in 1939 pension payments totalled \$5,349,677. At the same time general assistance payments show a gradual reduction from \$2,774,344 in 1939 to \$2,411,204 in 1941.

Reports that every resident of Oregon will soon be provided with a gas mask were discounted as without foundation by Jerrold Owen, state coordinator of civilian defense, this week. Owen pointed out that it would require the entire Japanese air armada to bring sufficient gas bombs to this coast to effect material damage and that military authorities are agreed that space in enemy bombers is too valuable to the Japanese on the long carry across the Pacific to waste on gas bombs. This does not mean,

however, Owen explained, that gas may not be used by the Japs in an effort to demoralize the civilian population. In such an event the public is urged to keep cool, go to the upper floors of buildings, close all windows and doors and wait. Non-persistent gases normally are dissipated in ten minutes.

Oregon's school districts have reduced their outstanding bond and warrant indebtedness by nearly 50 percent in the past ten years, according to a survey just completed by Rex Putnam, state superintendent of public instruction. This debt burden which totalled \$24,225,411 in 1932 was down to \$13,803,179 in 1941. The warrant indebtedness of the state's public school system which hit a peak of \$6,051,427 in 1933 was down to \$1,077,582 on June 30, last, while the outstanding bonds which totalled \$19,558,944 in 1932 had been reduced to \$12,636,002 as of last June.

A total of 264,533 men and women were placed in jobs by the state employment service during 1941, according to L. C. Stoll, director. This was an increase of \$91,709 over the 1940 record. Reflecting the improvement in the employment situation only 28,781 workers had job applications on file at the close of 1941 compared to 42,013 at the close of 1940.

Still further reflecting the improvement in the employment situation benefit payments to jobless workers in 1941 totalled only \$2,450,862 compared to \$3,916,922 in 1940 and \$5,815,568 in 1939.

James D. Olson, former Portland newspaperman, has been appointed to the post of assistant coordinator of the Oregon State Defense Council.

Expenditures of the state highway department for 1941 aggregated \$17,755,190, according to a report by R. H. Baldock, state highway engineer. Of this grand total \$8,523,603 went into new construction of roads and bridges and another \$4,053,525 into maintenance of the state highway system. Purchase of new right of way took another \$1,176,758 and administration and general supervision, \$468,523. The department retired \$2,150,000 of its outstanding

bonds and paid coupon clippers \$589,085 in interest.

During the year the department surfaced eight miles of road with cement concrete, 24 miles with asphaltic concrete and 59 miles with bituminous macadam. Oil mat treatment was applied to 235 miles of state highway and 312 miles was rock surfaced and another 312 miles was graded in preparation for surfacing. Twenty-seven bridges were constructed during the year and three grade separation structures.

Of the 7203 miles of highway on the state's primary and secondary system 5420 miles are now paved or oiled, 1077 miles have been rock surfaced, 334 miles have been graded and only 372 miles remain unimproved.

In order to overcome the threatened shortage of labor for the harvesting of spring and fall crops Rex Putnam, state superintendent of public instruction, is advising schools in the affected areas to rearrange their schedules so as to release school children for this work without interfering with their educational program. Inasmuch as the needs for labor vary in different parts of the state, Putnam points out that no state-wide program would be practical but that the problem must be worked out by each district based upon the local conditions. Among other steps that may be taken to meet the situation, Putnam points out that extended vacation periods and school days taken for county institutes may be eliminated and that provision may be made for making up school work for individuals missing school in the fall or anticipating absence in the spring. Putnam, however, calls attention to the fact that the Oregon law forbids the conduct of school on Saturday and requires that a full year of school must be taught.

Oregon householders will set their clocks ahead one hour on the Morning of February 9 in conformity with the national program for daylight saving. Governor Sprague decided that Oregon should cooperate in the move to conserve daylight after conferring with the governors of Washington and California both of whom favored the plan.

Oregon motorists set a new high record for gasoline consumption during 1941 when they used a total of 297,966,614 gallons, according to Secretary of State Earl Snell. This was a gain of 14.2 percent over the figures for 1940. Gasoline taxes paid to the state by Oregon motorists during 1941 totalled \$14,898,331, an increase of nearly \$2,000,000 over the figures for 1940.

The state supreme court which heard arguments in the mandamus suit against the cigarette tax last Friday is expected to hand down its decision promptly because of the importance of the case. Should the court refuse to issue a writ collection of the tax will continue uninterrupted. If the writ is issued placing the tax act on the November ballot collection of the tax will be automatically suspended pending the decision of the voters.

### No Change Planned In Potato Sacks

No changes in potato sack regulations are contemplated at this time, the state department of agriculture plant division has replied to queries which have been received from growers and dealers.

Some concern has been expressed that the burlap supply will be exhausted to the point that new or No. 1 second sacks will not be available for No. 1 grade potatoes. The law requires that the top grade potatoes be sold or offered for sale in such sacks.

The officials point out that the latest word apparently is that the government will not use light burlap in its war effort, which would leave such burlap available presumably for sacks for various agricultural commodities.

Until it has been demonstrated that new or No. 1 second sacks cannot be secured, the department will continue to enforce this provision of the state potato law. The Oregon standard containers for potatoes include also wooden boxes of certain sizes, and some paper bags are also in use. Marking requirements—name and address of grower, shipper or dealer, grade and net weight—will continue to be enforced, of course.

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### Soil Improvement Course Vital This Year

This year's soils short course at Oregon State college, scheduled for January 29 to 31, is even more important this year, in view of the necessity for maximum production, than ever before, in the opinion of Dr. W. L. Powers, head of the soils department here who has just released the detailed program. Outstanding specialists of the college staff, neighboring states and the United States department of agriculture, as well as representative successful farmers from many parts of the state, are listed on the program.

The opening session Thursday will be devoted to soil survey, classification, and land use. Peat land utilization will be given special attention in the afternoon. Friday afternoon will be devoted to pasture and meadow improvement, with the afternoon featuring miscellaneous subjects but emphasizing irrigation and water control. Soil improvement and fertilizers will be discussed on Saturday, with special attention being given fertilizers needed to increase the production of vegetable and cannerly crops needed in the war emergency.

Dean William A. Schoenfeld will discuss the work of the state land use planning board at the Friday noon luncheon, while on Saturday noon Marshall N. Dana, editor of the editorial page of the Oregon Journal will speak on reclamation and national security.

### BASIC SCIENCE EXAM SET

Corvallis—The first examination in the basic sciences in 1942 for those seeking permission licenses to practice healing arts in this state will be held Saturday, February 14, in the main library building in Portland, announces Dr. Nathan Fasten of O. S. C., chairman of the examining committee. Other examination dates for 1942 are July 11 in Corvallis and October 31 in Portland.

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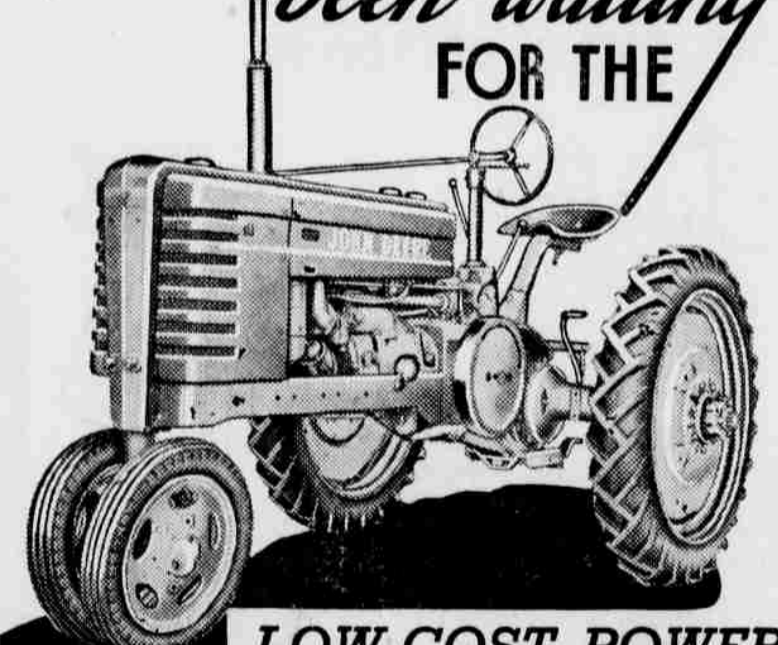
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