

STATE CAPITAL NEWS

- Two More Measures
- Gas Supply Knot
- Tax Stand

By A. L. LINDBECK

Salem.—Two more initiative measures were started on their way toward a place on the November ballot this week with the filing of preliminary petitions with Secretary of State Snell.

One of these measures, sponsored by the Oregon State Teachers' association, would divert all income tax revenues in excess of \$7,750,000 a year to support of the public school system. Under the plan proposed by the teachers this excess revenue would be apportioned among the local school districts on the basis of school attendance and would be used to offset property taxes for support of the school.

The other proposed initiative measure involves four major changes in the present set-up for administration of public welfare funds. Whereas under the present law the state welfare commission consists of seven members appointed by the governor the proposed amendment would require that these seven members be selected from members of the various county courts. The measure would also abolish the post of relief administrator and do away with the four citizen-members of county welfare commissions. It would also eliminate from the law the requirement that relatives of needy aged persons be required to provide for their care when financially able to do so.

The impracticability of supplying the three Pacific coast states with gasoline by railroad or truck lines is shown in a study just completed by Ormond R. Bean, Oregon's public utilities commissioner. Bean's study shows that it would take 226 tank cars or 452 trucks to supply the gasoline needs of the three states for a single day. This is based upon an average daily consumption of

816,347 gallons for Oregon, 1,132,436 gallons for Washington and 312,232 gallons for Idaho. The figures cover only gasoline needs and do not include fuel oil, diesel, lubricating oil or kerosene. The study was prompted by suggestions that rail and truck lines should take over the job of supplying the Pacific northwest with its gasoline now that tankers are being diverted to supplying the military forces.

The old pioneer atop Oregon's capitol will continue to shine in all its gold-leaf splendor. The fourth interceptor command has advised that the reflection from the statue is not deemed a military hazard that would necessitate the use of camouflage.

Some idea of the extent to which the state has curtailed automobile travel since tire rationing went into effect can be gained through a report just issued by R. H. Baldock, state highway engineer, which shows that the highway department has reduced its automobile mileage by 37 percent. Employees of the department who heretofore travelled by automobile now go by stage or train, Baldock said.

Public servants in Oregon who enter the armed services either thru voluntary enlistment or through the draft are automatically granted leaves of absence under the state law, according to Attorney General Van Winkle. The leaves, however, only cover the period for which officials are elected or appointed.

Savings of nearly \$5,000,000 a year are now being enjoyed by consumers of electricity in Oregon as a result of rate reductions put into effect in the past seven years, it is revealed in a report made to Governor Sprague this week by Utilities Commissioner Bean. Rate reductions put into effect in the past three years, Bean pointed out, account for savings to consumers of more than \$3,500,000 a year.

The state tax commission is being condemned by some critics as heartless bureaucrats for their refusal to grant a moratorium on income tax payments.

But in their stand, it should be



remembered, the commission was only standing squarely on the law as laid down by the legislature. That is also true of the commission's stand for "uniform" assessments for which it has also been roundly condemned especially by political demagogues seeking to attract the support of Portland home owners whose taxes were increased by the uniform assessment order.

In this connection it might be pointed out that it is always the hit dog that howls. While hundreds of properties were hit by the readjustment of assessment rolls to conform to the "uniform" order other hundreds actually benefitted from the reshuffle of valuation but such is human nature that none of this latter group has taken the trouble to express their support of the commission's position.

The demand for an extension of time for payment of the state income tax would appear to have been prompted only by a desire to embarrass the commission. Certainly there was no crying need for any moratorium. As the commission pointed out in its statements rejecting the suggestion for a moratorium there is ample provision in the law for granting relief to individuals whose circumstances warrant an extension of time for the payment of their tax. Hundreds of taxpayers who have been able to show "good cause" have already been granted more time in which to file their returns. "Good cause," the commission explained, includes illness, absence from the state, inability to close his books or some other valid reason. Furthermore the commission is authorized by law to waive penalty and interest charges against delinquent taxpayers who are able to show that they were unable to pay their tax within the specified time "without undue financial distress." So that there does not seem to have been any legitimate excuse by which the commission might have been justified in granting a blanket moratorium at this late date, especially since 75 percent of the taxpayers and these mostly in the lower income brackets, had already filed their returns and paid their tax.

In calling upon Oregon motorists to observe President Roosevelt's request for a 40-mile speed limit Governor Sprague appealed to the patriotism of the motorists in the absence of any legal authority for enforcement of the reduced speed. However he did throw out a hint that those who were unwilling to cooperate in this move to conserve on the nation's rubber supply might find themselves called on to account to some police judge for other infractions of the law. These could include improperly adjusted lights, faulty brakes and even a slight excess over the legal speed of 55 miles an hour which in normal times is obligingly overlooked by the guardians of the law who patrol the highways.

Plans for the extension of fire prevention and suppression program to all rural areas in the state were made at a meeting in Salem this week attended by representatives of the state forestry department, the U. S. forest service, Indian and grazing services, state fire marshal's office, state defense council and the extension service of the state college. The primary objective of the program, it was explained, is the protection of farm crops, improvements and equipment. The program calls for no special funds from gov-

Turkey Outlook Favorable Even With Expansion

Favorable market demand conditions for turkeys are expected to continue during the 1942-43 marketing season, despite prospects for increased production of turkeys, chickens and other meats, according to an analysis of the turkey outlook for 1942 which has been released by the agricultural extension service at O. S. C. for distribution by county agents. The report also points out that costs for producing and marketing turkeys will be somewhat higher owing to increase in wage rates, feeds and other items.

The indications are that turkey production will be substantially greater than in 1940 and 1941 when record sized crops were produced which were twice as large as in 1929. In the country as a whole growers reported intentions to increase turkeys 8 percent, but the number of turkey hens to lay eggs was only 5 percent greater than a year ago.

The price of turkeys per head was practically the same for the crop of 1941 as for that of 1929 when the supply was only one-half as large and the purchasing power of consumers was also at a high level. A steady increase in the per capita consumption of turkey meat in the United States has occurred since 1929.

With respect to chickens and eggs, the report contains data showing an increase of 12 percent in the country's laying flocks compared with a year ago, with producers indicating intentions to purchase 12 percent more baby chicks this year.

In terms of grain-consuming animal units, the total number of livestock on farms at the beginning of 1942 was 6 percent greater than a year before. These conditions suggest a material increase in the meat supply, but on the other hand demand for meat is unusually great and the purchasing power of consumers is high.

The extension service report also shows a favorable potato outlook for 1942 and gives information on the horse and mule situation. That further decrease in work animals will take place is indicated by the fact that only 6.5 percent of all horses and mules are under two years old, compared with 13 percent in 1920.

ELECTED TREASURER

University of Oregon, Eugene, April 2.—(Special)—John Crawford of Heppner has been elected treasurer of Sigma hall, it was announced here this week following the spring elections of living organizations at the University of Oregon.

ernmental sources and no employment of additional personnel. Preliminary organization work has already been completed in some counties.

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