



Washington, D. C., Aug 12—Rumor has it that Alvin J. Wirtz, recently appointed by Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes as a consultant on power matters, will put in considerable time in the northwest. Wirtz, who was an under-secretary of the interior in 1940-41, is a protégé of "Honest" Harold, who placed him in charge of the Bonneville power administration during that time. Mr. Ickes believes Wirtz knows as much as anyone about the electric power situation in Washington and Oregon. Among other things, the consultant will make a further report on the contemplated Umatilla rapids project, which has been in the blueprint stage for years. Another look-see will also be made of Grand Coulee by Mr. Wirtz.

The story goes that Secretary Ickes is not too well pleased with the progress made in the northwest by the public power advocates, who have been defeated time after time in their attempts to take over the private utilities. The voters in most all such elections have said No. Another source of information says that ex-Congressman Walter Pierce who during his 10 years as an eastern Oregon representative, packed the torch for public power, will join the Bonneville staff. Pierce, who is an experienced campaigner along such lines, also has a wide acquaintance in the northwest and it is understood his talents will be used in that direction.

To the degree that agricultural conditions may be judged by a survey of conditions in 35 counties in various parts of the United States, just completed by the department of agriculture, the American farmer is far more prosperous than the attitude of farm lobbyists and farm bloc congressmen would indicate. According to this survey, northwest farmers are buying better food, better clothing and banking more savings than they did in the boom

days of world war No. 1, and this situation is said to exist nationally. Figures released by the federal farm loan bank show current payments have been met and considerable amounts of money have been deposited for future payments. One reason advanced for larger savings entering farmer savings accounts is that farmers have been unable to buy new machinery and in other ways have been forced by circumstances to limit their spending.

It should be understood, of course, that conditions in 35 counties do not necessarily present a true picture of the nation-wide agricultural situation, but officials in the department of agriculture assert that with a national farm income this year greater than the 1942 record of \$18,628,000 there can be no question but that, in a broad way, agriculture is prospering.

The old story about the city slicker taking the farmer is working in reverse these days, according to high officials in the department of agriculture. Farm land prices have gone sky-high and many farmers are unloading at unheard of prices. It is feared a price collapse will result after the war, unless steps are taken to curb the boom, such as happened after world war No. 1. After the last war flocks of insurance companies, mortgage loan associations, private investors and others were left holding the sack on farm loans from coast to coast, which resulted in serious losses and wrecked many financial institutions. A repetition of such a happening is the thing the department of agriculture wants to avoid. It is said legislation in some form will be asked by the department by which farm land prices can be controlled.

Secretary of the Treasury Morgenthau still insists a steeper income tax is the proper answer to his prayer for \$12 billion more revenue. Tax experts, on the other hand, say any such increase in taxes will fall squarely on the middle income groups, the white collared worker, whose salary has not increased anything like others but whose living costs have. All tax men agree corporations and others in the higher income brackets are now paying the limit, which is from 40 to 90 percent on their incomes. Many members of the house ways and means committee have remained here all during the recess, wrestling with the new tax bill which they hope to have ready for the house hopper, come Sept. 1. However, several key men on

the committee are of the opinion by far the larger amount of Morgenthau's additional \$12 billion will have to come from some other source than income taxes. They argue the only out, so to speak, is a sales tax which would raise the additional amount of money needed. These same congressmen are frank to say they doubt very much if the house will accept any bill which has for its purpose heavier income taxes, at least until all other expedients for additional revenue have been exhausted.

#### VISITING IN PORTLAND

Mr. and Mrs. Clair Ashbaugh are among Heppner people visiting in Portland. They drove to the city Sunday expecting to spend most of the week there. They were joined by their daughter, Mrs. Boyd Redding, at Hood River, who drove to the city with them.

#### VISITING HERE

Mr. and Mrs. William Blake have been spending a few days in Heppner with relatives, the Earl Blake and David Wilson families, coming from San Jose, Calif., where "Bill" recently completed a course with the army signal corps. He is expecting call to regular service soon.

#### GOES TO SEA

Friends have received word that Clyde Pettyjohn recently completed his training course at Orange Tex., naval training station and is seeing service on the high seas.

#### UP FROM PORTLAND

Mrs. Everett Harshner returned from Portland Sunday accompanied by Vera McDaniel who is in the personnel department of one of the ship yards. Miss McDaniel is visiting her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Lester Robinson at Hardman.

#### SPENT WEEK IN PORTLAND

Lowell Ashbaugh returned to Heppner Thursday after spending a week in Portland.

#### PORTLAND VISITORS

Albert Rea and Harley Matteson were Portland visitors a few days the past week.

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