

Salem Scene

by Robert H. Elsner

Modernization Proposed for Industrial Accident Program

Oregon's workmen's compensation law has been in effect for 50 years. It provides payments to workers involved in industrial accidents, through an employer-paid insurance program.

Some legislators feel the 1913-vintage system is no longer adequate for either employee or employer, and that the Oregon law has not kept pace with most other states. As a result, two proposals have been introduced which—according to their proponents—would revise and "modernize" the state's workmen's compensation program.

One bill, S.B. 30 (often called the "competitive" bill), was introduced by the Senate Labor and Industries Committee. We asked its chairman, Sen. Walter Pearson (D-Multnomah), to describe the problems in the present system.

"Primary problem is the existing law, itself," he said. "It was one of the earliest laws of its type, written at a time when no one knew much about workmen's compensation."

He explained that it originally was designed to apply to hazardous industries only, with only one source of insurance—a state fund, administered by the State Industrial Accident Commission. An employer had a choice of either accepting or rejecting this coverage. But he could not obtain insurance from any other source.

If an injured worker for a non-covered employer could, in a lawsuit, prove negligence, he was entitled to collect damages.

S.B. 30, explained Sen. Pearson, would inject competition into Oregon's workmen's compensation system, "to the advantage of workers and employers."

"It retains the state fund as an insurer," he said, "and also permits employers to obtain coverage, if they wish, from a private insurance source, or through self-insuring." Private industrial accident insurance is available in 43 states. In 33 of these, state insurance is non-existent.

The bill also calls for "universal" coverage for all workers—hazardous and non-hazardous—with very few exceptions.

"S.B. 30 also provides a better appeals system, as well as an independent hearing board on claims," he added. "The present system is bad, because the State Industrial Accident Commission is confronted with many conflicting functions. It now acts as the insurance company, regulatory agency, court, judge and jury."

Benefits now paid to injured workmen under the SIAC "insurance monopoly" system were criticized by Sen. Pearson, who claims they are "too low" in comparison to the rates, and barely adequate for a person to live on. He says a competitive system would provide "better benefits and have little effect on the rates."

Under S.B. 30, insurance rates would be based on an employer's accident and safety experience. It also offers "a better safety and workman rehabilitation program," Sen. Pearson claims. The latest improvements in safety techniques from throughout the nation will be available to Oregon workers and employers if private insurance companies are allowed to provide coverage in the state, he points out.

Another bill, S.B. 370, has been introduced following many months work by a specially-appointed "Governor's Advisory Committee on Workmen's Compensation." This group, selected in 1961, consisted of representatives from management, organized labor and the state.

Also intended as a cure for the state's antiquated workmen's compensation system, this bill doesn't go far enough, according to Sen. Pearson. It does parallel S.B. 30 in some respects, however.

"But S.B. 370 would still leave

the state with an insurance monopoly, even though it claims to open the door for self-insurers," he said. "Due to its rigid requirements for these self-insurers, it would limit this to a few major employers." It does not provide for private insurance.

Organized labor generally supports S.B. 370. Management has come out in favor of S.B. 30. Latest developments in the Senate Labor and Industries Committee has been to urge representatives from both groups to meet and attempt to reach a compromise.

Sen. Pearson predicted a compromise bill will result, "incorporating the best parts of both bills—particularly regarding administration, appeals and hearing boards, safety programs and rehabilitation procedures."

He believes a compromise bill will call for universal coverage, but that it will be a "2-way" bill. This means employers will have a choice of insuring through the state or through self-insurance by posting a large bond. However, in the latter instance, they will probably have the right to re-insure their liability with an outside (private) carrier, he felt.

"In its final form," Sen. Pearson concluded, "the compromise bill will more closely resemble the original intent of the 'Governor's Advisory Committee' proposals. This was not the case in the language of S.B. 370 as it was introduced."

Deposits Reach \$6,148,471 Total At First National

First National Bank of Oregon reported record high deposits and loans for the first quarter of the year, President Ralph J. Voss announced.

Deposits of \$970,190,000 were reported March 18, as compared with \$893,760,887 in March of last year. Loans outstanding among the banking system's 91 offices totaled \$568,559,531 for a gain of \$66,487,013 over the March, 1962 figure. Resources topped the \$1 billion mark.

Figures were announced in response to the quarterly call for statements of condition by the Comptroller of the Currency.

The Heppner branch of First National reported first quarter deposits of \$6,148,471 and loans outstanding of \$3,484,512, according to Branch Manager J. H. Bedford.

Comparable totals for the branch a year ago were \$5,178,748 in deposits and \$2,657,867 in loans.

During the first quarter of 1963 the First National Bank added the University Branch in Eugene to the statewide system, Voss said.

Five new branch offices currently are under construction, with opening dates set for this year. The new Madras branch will open in April and Portland offices at Burlingame, 5th and College Street and the new Standard Plaza will open later. Construction of a second Springfield branch was started this month.

Club Hears Reports

April 2 was the date of the meeting held at the Pine City schoolhouse by the Buttercreek Junction Livestock club. The club heard two reports. One was by Jim Ashbeck and Allen Witherrite on "How to Disinfect a Hog House," and the other was by Carla Luciani on the "Junior Leader's Duties." Sharon Witherrite and Tom Ashbeck were the visitors.

Ed French, reporter

Bob Mahoney and fiance, Sherrie Wager, Pacific University, are visiting during spring vacation with his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Phil Mahoney.

Services Held at Monument for Richard Robertson

By MARTHA MATTESON

MONUMENT—Funeral services for Richard Earl Robertson, Burns, were held Thursday, March 28, at the Monument Presbyterian church, with the Rev. Frank Goodwin, minister of the Burns Christian church, officiating. Mr. Robertson died March 25 at 9 p.m. at Burns, at the age of 54 years, 4 months.

He was born November 3, 1908 at Monument; the son of the late Clarence and Effie Viola Ervin Robertson. He was married to Anne E. Robertson at Fossil on May 20, 1929, and spent most of his life in the Monument area and in Wallowa. They moved to Burns in July, 1962, where he was a maintenance carpenter, member of Lumber and Sawmill Workers Local Union 2902, Burns.

Surviving relatives include his widow, Anna E.; his mother, Effie Viola Lovely; three sons, Robert, William and Richard; four daughters, Carol Doherty, Anna June Niswender, Irma Irene Doble, Clea and Donna

Robertson; one sister, Rozella Roza; four brothers, Zirl, Lewis, Leonard and Lyle; 15 grandchildren; an aunt, Minnie Gamble of Monument.

Mr. and Mrs. Henry Martin drove to Heppner last Friday on business.

Mr. and Mrs. Fred McWillis spent March 27 and 28 visiting in Redmond.

Mrs. Theo May Johns and two children of Prairie City visited recently with her father, Chuck Van Detta and family and friends.

The Stanley Boyer family spent the week-end of March 29, 30 in Salem where they attended the wedding of Mr. Boyer's niece, Miss Nancy Healy. The bride is the daughter of Mrs. Herb Copeland of Salem.

Mrs. Stella McCarty drove to Portland March 30, returning home with her daughter, Miss Aleanne Reynolds, who has finished her course at Beauty School in Portland.

Mr. and Mrs. Henry Martin returned March 27 from Sacramento, Calif., where they had spent 10 days visiting their daughter and family, the Charlie Williams.

D. L. Matteson of Milton-Freewater were recent visitors with his folks, the Elmer Mattesons.

The American Legion Auxiliary held its birthday party Saturday night, March 30, in the Legion-Grange hall. Cards followed a potluck dinner at 7 p.m.

Mrs. Jessie Scott drove to John Day March 28, taking little Dianne Hinton over to see her folks. Mr. and Mrs. H. D. Hinton. Mr. Hinton is a patient in the Clinic Hospital.

Gary Martin of Prineville visited recently with his grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. Henry Martin.

Mrs. Doris Vinson and Mrs. Thelma Williams took care of the Boyer Store, while the Boyers were in Salem recently.

Mr. and Mrs. Ansil Martin and son Henry and Miss Arvela Hunt of Prineville were weekend visitors with their folks, Mr. and Mrs. Ernie Johnson and Mr. and Mrs. Henry Martin. Gary, son of the Ansil Martin's, returned home with them.

Maynard Hamilton received word from his niece, Dorothy Merrell of Boise, Ida., last Monday afternoon that his sister, Evelyn Banta, was to undergo surgery last Wednesday. Mr. and Mrs. Verne Wiese took him to John Day to take the bus to Boise to be with the family.

Miss Margaret Martin and her aunt with whom she lives in the valley while going to college were here to visit the Henry Martins recently.

Mrs. Mildred Cowden of Portland spent Palm Sunday here with her four grandchildren and their mother, Mrs. Francis Nolan.

Mr. and Mrs. Ansil Martin and two sons, Gary and Henry, and Miss Arvela Hunt all of Prine-

ville, spent three days here visiting.

Mr. and Mrs. Roger Howell of Portland arrived Friday for a visit with his uncle and aunt, Mr. and Mrs. Frank Howell.

Verne McCarty drove to Heppner Friday on business. Maynard Hamilton went to Boise, Ida. last Monday evening to be with his sister and family Wednesday morning when she went into surgery. He returned Thursday evening.

Mrs. Jessie Scott and her mother, Mrs. Elmer Matteson, drove to Burns last Wednesday morning where they met Mrs. L. J. Matteson and brought back the two grandchildren, Martha and Ralph, to care for them while their father is in the hospital in Cederville, Calif.

Mrs. Stella McCarty and daughter, Elaine Reynolds, drove to John Day Monday on business.

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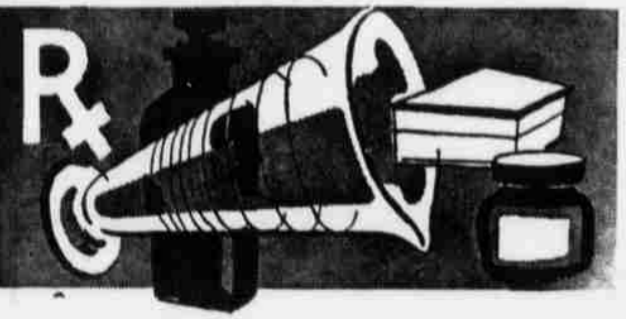
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