

Voter's Legislative Report

(This is the fourth in a series of articles taken from The Oregon Voter in regard to legislative procedure and organization.)

ASSIGNMENT OF BILLS

In Oregon the presiding officer of each house may refer a bill to any committee he chooses. It is customary for the introducer of a bill to indicate his preference to the presiding officer, and if the introducer is not too far on the "outside" of the organization, or is not suspected of an improper motive, the presiding officer is guided by his necessarily casual glance at a bill. It is not often that a capable presiding officer will fail to grasp the purpose of a measure and see to it that it is referred to a committee where it belongs. An arbitrary presiding officer, for political purposes of his own, may refer a bill to a committee where it does not belong, but this has not happened often in an Oregon legislature. On the whole, except as to bills involving expenditure, reference to committee has been unobjectionable, although on a few occasions there has been complaint by an introducer alleging favoritism or manipulation with the purpose of bringing about the defeat of his pet measure.

Each house has its own rule pertaining to bills which involve state expenditure for which provision must be made in the state budget as reported in separate appropriation bills by joint ways and means committee. The general practice is to refer a bill affecting an expenditure to the committee which is identified with the general subject, and then, should the bill be reported

favorably, to the house, it is referred to ways and means. Thus, a bill to increase the salaries of judges, is likely to be referred first to one of the law committees, and a bill relating to old-age pensions is likely to be referred to a committee on public welfare. In either of such cases, much feeling develops against referring to ways and means after the original committee has put a lot of time on it and has developed its own positive ideas.

Usually the lawyers, being numerous, are able to obstruct the reference of a judges salary bill to ways and means, and occasionally the bill will get through both houses and become law without having gone to ways and means. The joint ways and means committee has to provide the funds for the necessary increase without having considered it on its merits in relation to other public salaries or the balancing of the budget.

In old-age pension bills, the disappointment of members of a public welfare committee is acute. Most of them are members of far less experience than are members of ways and means, and they resent having their pet bill, into which they may put weeks of hearing and consideration item by item and page for page, sent to the "dictator" committee, which will rewrite it to fit into the general budget policy and send it back to the house in form that is hardly recognizable to its welfare committee sponsors. A similar situation exists as to a bill for a state levy for basic school purposes. The conflict of jurisdiction then is between education committees and tax committees of both houses. Usually the school people are so strong in membership and in lobby pressure that the education committees win, or, if the bill gets to a tax committee, it gets there so late in the session with so much determination behind it that tax committee members feel hopeless about attempting to revise it, and it gets sent to the house "without recommendation," with the conviction that it will be passed regardless of its effect on tax policies slowly developed by a tax committee.

Because of its relationship with the budget and the necessary delays in balancing the budget, joint ways and means committee occasionally is referred to as "The House of Lords," and any reference of a controversial bill to that committee by a presiding officer is likely to be viewed with suspicion as a "Kiss of Death." A similar feeling exists against both tax committees, as the tax committees and ways and means must more or less "get together" on budget balancing that may involve change in revenue laws in order to provide enough money for the appropriations.

As revenue-raising bills must originate in the house, and the senate tax committee must work for many weeks before the principal house revenue bills get to it, the school interests and veterans organizations are much concerned to have their revenue bills referred to their friendly committees and holding them there until the time comes when the house tax committee is unable or unlikely to mutilate them too much. The later they get to the senate, the less chance there is for the senate tax committee to do much about them, either in revision, or in holding

State Can Prevent Wills Made To US, High Court Rules

Washington, March 14—(U.P.)—The Supreme court today ruled that a state can prevent its citizens from willing property to the United States.

The government asked the court to overrule a decision made in 1876 on this issue but was unsuccessful.

Speaking for a 7 to 1 majority, Justice Stanley H. Reed said "a state's close relationship with its residents and their property permits it to limit requests if it wishes. Justice Hugo L. Black dissented. Justice William O. Douglas did not take part.

The ruling involved requests by the late Gustave Burnison, San Francisco, and Emily P. Sanborn, Los Angeles county. Burnison died Feb. 23, 1946, leaving \$22,668.70 in property to the United States. Thereafter three brothers, one sister, and 13 nieces and nephews tried to break the will.

Emily P. Sanborn died Feb. 4, 1945. Under her will all her U.S. savings bonds and real property went to the United States. The bequest was challenged by Annie L. Harris, an heir.

The heirs acted under a California law naming parties who may benefit by wills. The United States is not mentioned. The government pointed out, however, that it has been accepting such gifts since its earliest days.

The California Supreme court decided in favor of the heirs. The justice department appealed to the U.S. Supreme court.

Water Rates, Golf Course, Up For Study

Ashland, Mar. 14—Two subjects which have been considered time and again by the Ashland city council will be up for discussion again at a special meeting of the city fathers at 8 p. m. today. They are the proposed upward revision of water rates, particularly for agricultural purposes, and the lease of the Ashland municipal golf course.

Councilmen say they are anxious to come to a decision in regard to the water rate proposal because it is closely connected with city budget matters, which must be voted upon in the May 19 election.

Truck Driver Held On Mail Theft Charges

Portland, Ore., Mar. 14—(U.P.)—A young truck driver was held on mail theft charges today. His wife and a friend were charged with receiving stolen goods.

Police said Robert B. Helms, stealing a mail pouch February 18 containing \$3,200 in cash and a \$400 diamond ring. His trucking firm delivered mail by contract.

them in committee until after the legislature is ready to adjourn. (Tomorrow—Committee procedure.)

Surplus Storage Costs Expensive

Washington, Mar. 14—(U.P.)—The government is paying about \$10,000,000 a month to store its vast holdings of farm surpluses, agriculture officials estimated today.

This is part of the cost of farm price supports. The government now has about \$4,000,000,000 invested in 31 farm products held off the market to bolster prices. That's about double the investment a year ago.

No exact estimate of storage costs is possible. Such costs are not kept separately on the government's books but are lumped in periodically as part of the government's "investment" in each of the surplus crops.

But officials estimate the rate at which these costs are running now probably is about \$120,000,000 a year.

WEATHER

By United Press
Northern California: Partly cloudy this forenoon Monterey bay area and Stockton north, with a few widely scattered showers. Clearing this afternoon and fair tonight and Wednesday, except for partly cloudy Eureka north and along Oregon border Wednesday. Little temperature change. West to northwest winds off coast 10-20 m.p.h.

EUGENE TO GO ON DST

Eugene, Ore., Mar. 14—(U.P.)—Mayor V. Edwin Johnson broke a 4 to 4 stalemate in Eugene's city council last night and voted for daylight saving time, starting April 30.

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FENCE KILLS DEER

Lapeer, Mich. (U.P.)—One day after the hunting season ended, a buck fawn, carefree once again, killed itself jumping over a farm fence. Three other deer escaped injury. They jumped a little bit higher.

INVENTIONS NOTED

Boston (U.P.)—Russian is replacing German as a "must" language for scientists, according to a Boston university instructor. "More and more inventions are being announced in Moscow," said David H. Kraus, "but it

often takes months or even years before they are translated, and even then they may well be inaccurately interpreted."

The horse-breeding industry in the United States is valued at \$200 million.



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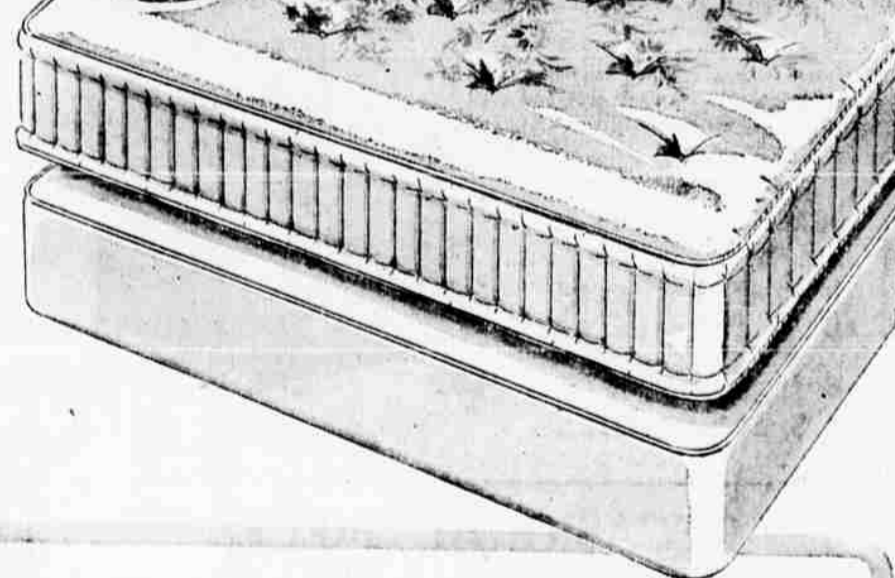
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