

85th Congress Has Makings of Productive One for Northwest

By A. ROBERT SMITH
Mail Tribune Correspondent

Washington — This 85th Congress, about six weeks from adjournment time, has all the makings of one of the most productive in many years in its output of legislation having a substantial effect on Oregon.

Congressional repeal of the 3 per cent tax on freight shipments is expected to have a beneficial effect on the Oregon economy. Northwest senators, representing the region most benefited by the repeal and most discriminated against by the tax, have sought its repeal for years.

This year they had help from Sen. George Smathers (D-Fla.), who earlier led the fight for legislation to aid the railroad industry. After the House passed the excise tax extension bill without touching the transportation tax, Smathers got the Senate to knock it out of the bill by a big vote, as well as the 10 per cent tax on passenger tickets.

Proposal Offered

In the conference committee where a compromise had to be worked out, Smathers offered the House members a proposal to reduce the freight tax in two steps, 1 1/2 per cent each time for the next two years. They held out against repeal.

Then he offered to give ground on the passenger tax, but insisted on retaining the freight repealer. When the Florida senator made it clear that he would tie up any agreement past June 30 until the House members gave some ground, they finally agreed. If the bill hadn't been agreed to before July 1, all the excise taxes would have expired and the government would have started losing millions.

The result means that the cost of getting Oregon products to eastern markets—a major factor in the state's economy—will be reduced 3 per cent. Likewise, eastern goods shipped in Oregon will cost that much less in freight charges.

Major Housing Bill

Earlier this spring, Congress passed a major housing bill providing additional funds for the federal housing agencies to underwrite private financing of new housing construction. Housing since then has picked up and is showing a strong recovery from the slump of the past year or more—and Oregon's lumber industry is showing signs of renewed health in due proportion to the spurt in home building.

It seems certain now that President Eisenhower will this time sign an omnibus rivers and harbors bill, vetoed earlier in different form, and thereby permit authorization of two new coastal navigation projects for Oregon—Yaquina bay and Siuslaw channel. Congress this past week finished work on the new harbors bill.

Two less significant bills, but each of widespread Oregon interest, were enacted earlier this year—the Ft. Clatsop Memorial legislation, sponsored by Sen. Richard L.

Neuberger (D-Ore.) and Rep. Walter Norblad (R-Ore.); and the Oregon Centennial proclamation resolution, sponsored by Rep. Edith Green (D-Ore.).

Doubtful Status

Two or three major bills have passed the Senate but are in doubtful status in the House, where action in the next six weeks will tell the final story. They are the Klamath Indian measure, piloted through the Senate by Neuberger and being pushed in the House committee by Rep. Al Ullman (D-Ore.); the labor union welfare and pension fund bill, and the recently-passed labor rackets bill, which Sen. Wayne Morse (D-Ore.) was instrumental in fashioning.

Appropriations for Northwest projects are in better shape, in relation to the president's budget request, than in many years. The anti-recession attitude toward federal spending has made most members of Congress more generous than usual. Rep. Charles O. Porter (D-Ore.) succeeded early this session in getting added funds transferred to Hills Creek dam on the Willamette river to prevent it being shut down. Northwest senators hope in the next few weeks to get funds to start several new dams not listed in the budget.

Hells Canyon Death

The 85th Congress marked the death, finally, of the high Hells Canyon dam bill, as well as the birth of the Columbia River Development Corporation bill sponsored by all Northwest senators. Preliminary hearings were held by Neuberger on the latter. More polished legislation, based on these hearings, will be introduced next year.

The Senate has passed Sen. Warren G. Magnuson's bill for granting federal aid to each state for educational television facilities. Oregon would get up to \$1 million to purchase TV equipment.

Magnuson's commerce committee has approved Neuberger's bill for requiring approval of fish passage facilities before dams can be built under federal licenses. This is designed to prevent the Federal Power commission from licensing Nez Perce dam without regard to migratory fish damage.

Passes Porter's Bill

The House has passed Porter's bill for granting to Douglas County Historical Society the Lillie Moore property in Roseburg, which was willed to the government for a museum. Another Porter bill, to increase mileage allowance for rural mail carriers, has been enacted.

Both Porter and Neuberger were instrumental in enactment of the bills increasing both postal rates and the pay of postal employees, although Porter did not favor the higher postal rates advocated by the administration and backed by Neuberger.

Finally, the 85th Congress appears on the threshold of admitting Alaska to the Union—the first time a new state has been added since 1912. The House passed the bill in May. A Senate vote is expected this week. Oregon interests, with commercial ties with Alaska, have long favored making Alaska a state and opening it to greater economic development.

Traffic Uses New Interstate Bridge

Vancouver, Wash. — (UPI) — Traffic began moving across the Columbia river on a new bridge today following dedication ceremonies for the \$7,500,000 span.

The old bridge was closed to traffic for remodeling, expected to be completed by the end of next year. Tolls will

not be collected until the old bridge is remodeled.

The new bridge will handle both northbound and southbound traffic until the remodeling is finished.

The ceremony opened at 10 a.m. with an air salute featuring the new jet fighter planes at Portland Air Force Base. Helen Kiggins McAleer, Vancouver, and Eleanor Holman Burkitt, Portland, who cut ribbons to open the old bridge in 1917, repeated the ceremony today.

Above Normal Rain In Northwest Area

Washington — (UPI) — The Weather Bureau's 30-day outlook for July:

"Temperatures to average above seasonal normals in the southern half of the country from the Rockies to the Atlantic.

"Below normal temperatures are anticipated in the Plateau region and also in states along the northern border from the Great Lakes to the Pacific. In areas not

specified temperatures should average not far from normal.

"Rainfall is expected to exceed normal in the upper Mississippi valley, Northern plains and Pacific Northwest. Near normal amounts are predicted over New England, the Great Lakes region, the Central plains, and the Gulf and South Atlantic coasts. In the remainder of the nation subnormal rainfall is in prospect."

Columbia Land Opened for Farms

Portland — (UPI) — Fourteen full-time farm units totaling 1,612 irrigable acres located on the Columbia Basin Project southeast of Pasco, Wash., will be sold by the Bureau of Reclamation, the Department of Interior announced today.

Veterans will have preference in applying for all units not allotted to exchange appli-

CLOTHING MAN DIES

New York — (UPI) — Murray Weinstein, 67, vice president of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America, died Monday. A native of Russia, he co-founded the union with the late Sidney Hillman.

Under the act of Aug. 13, 1953, officials said. A 45-day filing period opened today at 2 p.m. for the filing of applications for the 14 farms. Applicants should apply to the Bureau of Reclamation office at Ephrata, Wash.

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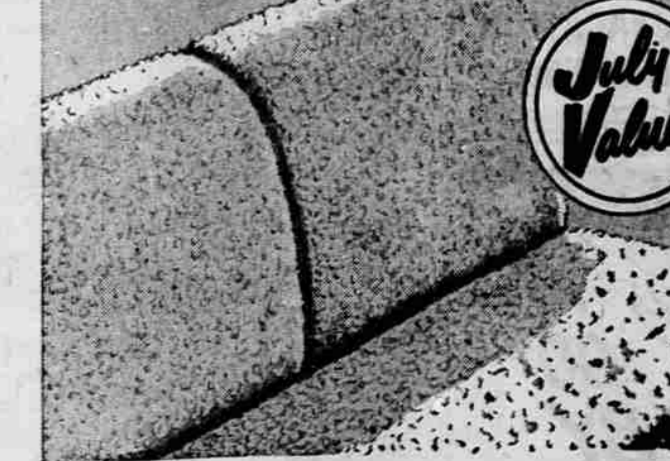
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