They'll Do It Every Time — By Jimmy Hatlo

State Capitol: Revising Laws Handled by Legislative Counsel

By DICK HUMPHREY
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Salem—(UPI)—You may know that Oregon law makes it a crime to use obscene language. But perhaps you didn't know that there are at least three different provisions of law—with different penalties—that make it a crime.

This is just one of the things you learn by talking to Legislative Counsel Sam R. Haley who is one of the busiest men around the capitol in the wake of a legislative session.

The obscene language laws are an illustration of the need to change state laws by some regular process so they will keep pace with the times.

Committee Helps

Traditional law – making bodies are not equipped to do this, so the 1959 Legislature gave the job to the legislative counsel and the counsel committee of 11 members including Senate President Walter Pearson of Portland and House Speaker Robert Duncan of Medford.

The task is called "substantive law revision" which is a technical term describing the process by which the meaning and effect of existing laws are changed to meet changing conditions.

To date, substance law revision has been undertaken in only five other states—California, Louisiana, New Jersey, New York and North Carolina.

Haley says the New York program has been the most effective.

The process involves thorough research of selected areas of the law and recommendations to the legislature for change.

Divorce Laws Eyed

Among the areas which need wholesole revamping are divorce laws which, Haley says, place little emphasis upon the welfare of children of dissolved marriages.

Of course, Haley has another big job following each legislative session. He must completely rework the eight-volume set of Oregon Revised Statutes so that all laws added, repealed or changed by the legislature will appear in their proper places.

The 1959 legislature passed laws effecting 3,400 sections of the statutes so that some 3,500 pages must be changed.

New cross-references must be added and old ones eliminated. Publication of the new ORS is due sometime in November.

Also Draft Bills

Haley and his crew also are busy before the legislature convenes. They are a major source of bill-drafting talent for lawmakers.

During the 1957 session they drafted 1,032 bills and during the 1959 session, 1,006 bills. However, Haley said that bills were drafted earlier for the 1959 session and that more of them were actually introduced than in preceding legislatures.

The legislative counsel committee, hearded by Sen. Donald Husband of Eugene, plans to meet soon to get its substantive law revision program rolling.

One thing they will have to decide is what to do about people who own muskets or an old German firearm called a Yager.

Oregon law now says that if you've got one it is exempt from a court judgment obtained against you by a creditor.

The committee might start by changing that one.

New Assistant To Aid Program

Salem — The state department of agriculture has assigned a seasonal assistant to Ray Kelso, herbicide program supervisor, because of increased workload in this activity. C. L. Alexander, Milton-Freewater, has been transferred to Salem for this post.

Alexander has been in charge of the department's federal-state shipping point inspection office at Milton-Freewater, now closed until production of new orchards demands full-time services.

The herbicide (chemical weeed killers) application control program has grown 50 per cent in number of applicators licensed in the past six years. Also, the investigation of claims alleging crop damage is demanding more of the department's attention as result of amendments passed two years ago.

Alexander has been with the department at Milton-Freewater for 12 years. Until the office there is reopened, shipping point inspections will be serviced from another district. In his new work, Alexander will continue in charge of the herbicide district in Umatilla

Honesty Helping Credit Card Craze To Work Properly

Chicago—(UPI)—The United States is on a credit card jag the likes of which have never been seen—but it works fine because the plain fact is most people are honest.

An estimated 70 per cent of American families hold credit cards or have charge accounts of one kind or another. In modern America many's the man—and woman—who now carries cash only for tips and to buy the daily papers.

How does it work? A man who is up to his neck in the credit business, Carl Hobbet, general manager of the Credit Bureau of Cook County (Chicago) Inc., says 85 per cent of card holders pay their bills promptly.

Most Not Crooked

Of the other 15 per cent, most are not crooked, he says—just "problem children" who over-estimate what they can afford. A mere three per cent of credit card users, Hobbet estimates, are deliberately dishonest.

Hobbet's firm employs 140 persons to keep its files up to date on two to three million credit applicants. They check Federal tax liens and municipal court judgments, and clip newspapers for character revealing stories about drunken driving or refusal to testify before Congressional committees.

Last year the bureau investigated the records of 600,000 persons all over the country. If an applicant has established charge accounts, the procedure is comparatively simple. Within minutes a credit bureau can report the date the applicant was investigated, his largest purchase and his "pay habits." The bureau relays these and other pertinent facts, and the subscribing organization then decides whether its credit requirements are satisfied.

Referred to Bureau

Hobbet advises his clients not to explain why credit is refused, but to refer the applicant to the Credit Bureau "which is happy to go over the record with him. Sometimes we can straighten out why a bill hasn't been paid and reestablish credit," he said.

Wealth is not always a guarantee of good credit, he said.

Hobbet recalled an applicant with an annual income of $100,000 and a $50,000 home who was refused a charge account at an expensive Michigan Avenue store on the basis of the Credit Bureau's report. He arrived at Hobbet's office fuming and threatening suit.

"But he had to admit he had allowed his charge accounts to go unpaid for as long as 216 days," Hobbet said. "He said he wanted to make his wife worry about the bills."

Petroleum companies and organizations like the Diner's Club or American Express have the most rigid requirements, Hobbet said. Their credit cards amount to blank checks, he explained, with no security but the character of the applicant.

Risk Slips Scrutiny

Occasionally a bad risk slips past the Credit Bureau's close serutiny. One of the major oil companies now is trying to track-down a card holder who ran up a bill of $20,000 in one month, Hobbet said.

Credit bureaus increasingly are going into the collection business for their clients, he continued, but the day of the traditional bullying bill collector is past. The agent smiles as he requests payment of an overdue bill.

"The average person wants to pay his bills," according to Hobbet. "We're collecting over $50,000 a month just by salesmanship – selling the family on the idea that it's character that counts."

Rowell Heads Up National Survey

Salem – Paul T. Rowell, chief of the Oregon department of agriculture's division of market development, is again heading a nationwide survey on marketing activities under state legislation.

He was reappointed chairman of the National Association of Marketing Officials committee on marketing services and promotion of agricultural products. In the same capacity last year, he sparkplugged the first study of farm products promotion under authority of the various legislative bodies over the country.

The committee report will be completed in time for presentation at the NAMO annual meeting in October.

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