

STATEHOUSE SPECIAL

By
Marguerite W. Wright

The key bill before the Oregon Legislature has passed the Senate by a cliff-hanging one-vote margin and is now in the House.

This is Senate Bill 334—the "Three-Way Bill" which provides for three ways to insure workers against industrial accidents: the present coverage under the State Industrial Accident Commission, self-insurance by industrial firms, and coverage provided by private insurance companies.

Why is this one bill so important, when there are many other bills dealing with taxation, education, government reorganization, legislative reapportionment, etc., which would seem to be so much more important to all of the people of Oregon?

To some observers the Three-Way Bill is what the 1961 Legislature is all about.

Lobbyists busy for insurance companies and the Associated Oregon Industries group probably are spending more money, time and effort to get this bill passed than any other piece of legislation this year.

This bill could mean millions of dollars in profits for the insurance companies. The Three-Way Bill is one of the "Big Three" financial issues in this session, the other two being the timber tax proposals and the proposal to reduce the weight-mile tax for the big trucks. (The timber tax bills involve millions for the giants of the forest industries—Weyerhaeuser and Georgia-Pacific—and the weight-mile tax would save trucking firms an estimated million dollars.)

Sponsors of the Three-Way Bill include some of Oregon's most experienced and toughest politicians, notably Sen. Walter Pearson (D-Portland). They want very badly to see the bill passed, and they play for keeps.

Observers are now watching to see what lengths the Three-Way Bill supporters will go to get the bill through the House and onto the governor's desk for signature.

(Gov. Mark Hatfield, who has indicated he is not in favor of the Three-Way Bill, has not said he would veto it. Chances are he will sign if it passes both Houses.)

Part of Strategy
Since planning by lobbyists for the Three-Way Bill got underway more than a year ago, there is a suspicion in some quarters that Sen. Pearson's maneuvering to get his candidate, Sen. Harry Boivin (D-Klamath Falls) elected as president of the Senate was only a part of the over-all strategy in behalf of the Three-Way Bill.

So, the strategy has worked so far.

Boivin, by appointing Pearson chairman of the Senate State and Federal Affairs Committee and shunting much of the other important legislation to this committee, has enabled Pearson to boss the Senate pretty much as he pleased. The closeness of the Senate's vote on the Three-Way (16-14) shows, however, that Pearson isn't as powerful as the effectiveness of the Conservative Democrat-Republican Senate coalition heretofore has led some to believe.

Leader of the Senate opposition against the Three-Way Bill was Sen. Alfred Corbett (D-Portland) who ran unsuccessfully against Boivin for the Senate Presidency and who has announced his candidacy for Senate President in the 1963 session.

If the bill had been defeated in the Senate, this legislative session might have been shortened considerably because Pearson, having failed in his big project, probably would have been ready to call it quits and go home.

Could Die in Committee
Now, however, the fight continues in the House, and that is why I said above that SB 334 is the key bill. As long as SB 334 remains in the mill,

the legislature will stay in session.

The Three-Way Bill could be allowed to die in committee (House Labor and Industries Committee headed by Rep. W. O. "Bun" Kelsay, D-Roseburg), never reaching the House floor.

But there is increasing pressure on committee chairmen, House and Senate, to report bills out and onto the floor so that they may be debated there and voted upon forthwith.

For example, the House State and Federal Affairs Committee passed out the weight-mile truck tax reduction bill with a do-pass recommendation but one of the committee members—Rep. Carrol Howe (R-Klamath Falls)—voted in committee for the bill only to give the House a chance to debate and vote on the floor, reserving for himself the right to speak and vote against the bill on the House floor.

The decision of whether to let the Three-Way Bill die is largely up to House Speaker Robert B. Duncan (D-Medford).

And that decision involves many considerations besides the relative merits of the Three-Way Bill itself.

It involves bare-knuckled power politics among those who know what makes the world go 'round, separating the men from the boys, the professionals from the amateurs.

It involves much of the other important legislation which actually is not even remotely connected to workmen's compensation.

Process Illustrated
It illustrates, in a nutshell, the realities and complexities of the lawmaking process in the deliberative and representative body which is the 51st Legislative Assembly.

It shows how government of, by and for the people works when you look inside the inspiring smooth white marble exterior to see the clanking machinery, the grinding, exceedingly-fine wheels, the fuel tanks and the oil pans.

And something more: it helps to strip away the superfluities and reveal how impressively difficult the job of legislative leadership can be.

The problem for the Speaker is no simple matter of determining how he personally feels about the Three-Way Bill.

Suppose Boivin and Pearson lay down an ultimatum to Duncan, threatening to kill off in the Senate any House legislation which House members seriously want to become law, unless Duncan facilitates passage of the Three-Way Bill?

In Lap of Gods
While the bill is still in committee, its fate is in the hands of the committee chairman and the Speaker. Once sprung out, its fate is in the lap of the gods, with House supporters of the bill having a slim but nevertheless real chance to stir up a good debate and a favorable final vote.

So the problem for Duncan becomes the delicate matter of determining which, if any, House legislation is worth bleeding and dying for.

When it comes down to trading, Duncan has one big advantage: the Senate leadership wants the Three-Way Bill a lot more than the House leadership wants anything.

Furthermore, Duncan has a reputation for being adverse to trading votes on the grounds that vote-trading is the way bad legislation gets enacted into law. He has stated often that each bill should stand on its own merits.

If Duncan is opposed to the Three-Way Bill as it is passed to the Senate (and he appears to be, although he favors other amendments to the present workmen's compensation law),

any efforts by senators to use the vote-trading lever with him seemed doomed to failure.

Considering the complexion of the Senate, House leaders see little hope of getting much significant legislation through this session, anyway. But some individual House members, with favorite pieces of legislation they want to get through the Senate, may be more vulnerable to the vote-trading sales talk. Also, of course, there are a number of members who already favor the Three-Way Bill.

Besides the time-honored practice of trading, one little-known means of exerting force is the authority of the House and Senate presiding officers to appoint members to legislative interim committees, including such statutory committees as Interstate Cooperation, Emergency Board, Legislative Fiscal, etc. Appointment to some of these is much sought-after, carrying such fringe benefits as expense-paid junkets. Obviously, a presiding officer can reward his friends and chastize his enemies thusly.

Meanwhile, lobbyists for the Three-Way Bill undoubtedly now will redouble their efforts. Indications are they will put to use their dossier of personal information about legislators, and begin to apply pressure in the more sensitive areas such as lawmaker's hometown where he makes his livelihood.

Legislative leaders of both parties and individual members can expect the screws to tighten on their thumbs during the next two weeks.

Salem Hiker in Iowa En Route To Saudi Arabia

Des Moines, Iowa—UPI—A 45-year-old hiker in search of a job marched through Central Iowa today on his way from Oregon toward the oil fields of Saudi Arabia.

Harry Johnson of Salem, Ore., left the Pacific Coast Jan. 14 and headed toward the oil fields where he worked as a plant guard from 1949 to 1953. He said he wanted his old job back.

After a 50-mile practice hike, Johnson began his transcontinental trek. He said he averages 3.7 miles an hour on the road and has slimmed down from 165 to 145 pounds.

Stops for Work
Johnson left Florence, Ore., with \$62 and stops for a day or two now and then to work at various jobs. He refused offers of rides.

Johnson said when he arrives at the Atlantic coast he hopes to line up some kind of transportation to Arabia.

In his 9-pound pack, Johnson carried two bottles of Pacific Ocean water. He said he will present one to Mayor Robert Wagner of New York and the other to the King of Saudi Arabia.

Washington—UPI—The Defense Department Monday ordered 250 physicians drafted into the Air Force, the first medical draft in four years. It said the draft was necessary because of the "failure of the year's intern group to volunteer for active duty beginning in July, 1961, in sufficient requirements of the military medical service."

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MEN'S CLOTHING
Main and Central

Russia Said To Be on Brink Of Putting Man Into Space

Moscow—UPI—The vice president of the Soviet Academy of Sciences today confirmed reports of other Russian scientists that the Soviet Union is on the brink of putting a man into space.

And another scientist, Norair Sisokian, said Russia has solved the problem of creating safe conditions for a human within a space cabin.

At a press conference sponsored by the academy today, prominent Soviet scientists said all technical problems for a manned flight have been whipped but some biological details are still to be solved.

They concluded that living organisms are not vitally affected if spaceships circle earth in orbits below its heavy radiation belts.

The academy vice president, Aleksandr Topchiev, said the time is close for man's first space flight.

Sisokian said, "Technically, man could have been flown into space last year."

Neither would predict more specifically just when the long-awaited venture could be expected.

Sisokian and academician Vasil Parin said studies of animals in previous flights showed Soviet spaceships are built to maintain normal conditions for living organisms in outer space.

They cited the pulse and heartbeat of the animals, plus temperatures, air pressures and humidity in the spaceships during orbit.

Dogs and biological matter successfully returned from recent space flights were displayed for Soviet and foreign press representatives at the conference.

Kerrville, Tex.—UPI—Roy Sinclair, player agent for the Kerrville Little League, figures umpires are going to have fits this baseball season.

"We've got three sets of twins this year," he said. "And they all have the same names—Ronnie and Donnie Martin, Ronnie and Donnie Miller and Ronnie and Donnie Kahlmbach."

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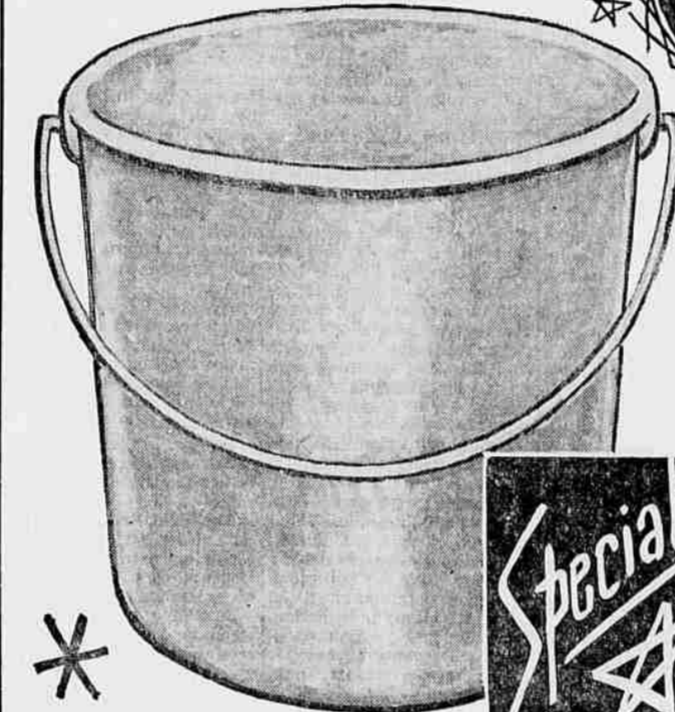
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