

Salem Scene

Injury Compensation Costs Producing New Controversy

A little-publicized storm is brewing among employers of the state's working men and women.

In the eye of the storm is the more widely publicized liberal nature of government in Oregon.

And though until recently considered only a mild disturbance, it suddenly has the makings of a gale-force controversy.

As with any storm, the issues behind the problem have been around for a long time. But it's only been during the last couple of years that those issues have combined to produce power sufficient for a full-blown tempest.

The subject involves types and amounts of compensation paid to workers injured in job-related accidents — coupled with the rates employers must pay for insurance to provide injured worker compensation.

Statutorily, injured workers are compensated depending on the severity of the injury and its lasting effect on the worker's ability to remain gainfully employed.

This is called workmen's compensation and the system evolved in Europe apace with the industrial revolution. It was embraced by the United States government in 1911 and administration of workmen's compensation insurance programs is handled by the individual states.

In Oregon a three-member board administers a system by which employers must provide insurance purchased from the state, from private insurance companies or a system of self-insurance. Employers are required to purchase so much insurance per \$100 of payroll

and the amounts, or rates, vary across more than 500 different job classifications.

Historically, rates charged are dependent upon the amount of payroll an employer generates, the hazardous nature of his enterprise as far as worker safety is concerned and his experience rating — the frequency of accidents in job classifications within his business.

Rates generally are established by the national council on compensation insurance and deviations from NCCI recommendations may be enacted by the various state legislatures.

As a rule, a workman sustaining a slight injury that produces minimal time-loss from his job and who returns to work promptly following treatment receives MO—medical compensation only.

A worker with a time-loss injury is declared TTD—temporarily totally disabled. He receives medical compensation and also a percentage of his wage while off the job.

A worker who becomes partially disabled as a result of his accident, may be declared PPD and receive a lump sum compensation for that disability in addition to medical payments and a percentage of his wage until able to resume employment.

The employee who is judged incapable of resuming his job as a result of injury is classified PTD—permanently totally disabled. He is compensated for the rest of his life and compensation continues for surviving spouse and children.

The rates employers pay for this insurance becomes a cost of doing business, the same as any other overhead expense. Rates in Oregon today range

from a low of 21 cents per \$100 of payroll for telephone exchange operators to a high of \$79.46 per \$100 of payroll for building wreckers.

Because they are a cost of doing business, these rates constantly are scrutinized by employers. And the current controversy arises from the fact employers of agricultural workers began to wonder why their rates were approaching those paid by employers of workers in what they considered much more hazardous occupations.

There resulted several studies — the most recent of which was conducted by Dennis U. Fisher of the Dept. of Agricultural Economics at OSU.

His report indicates Oregon employers of nearly all types of workers are paying rates much higher than those paid in other states. It further shows those high rates have evolved from the amounts of compensation paid injured workers judged permanently, partially and totally disabled — PPD and PTD.

Twin reasons were discovered for the compensation in question — that in turn causes the relatively high rates. The reasons are the types of statutes enacted by the Oregon Legislature and the interpretation of those statutes by the courts.

Fisher was not charged with finding solutions to the problem. And the problem to a large degree affects an Oregon employer's ability to compete in the marketplace with employers in lower-cost states.

A philosophical question also arises, involving the extent to which an employer is responsible for the PPD and PTD case. Many workers in both categories are relatively unskilled, over-aged and under-educated. While their disability might not equally impair the working ability of a younger, better educated or more highly skilled workman, the liberality of their compensation is reflected in the rates all employers must pay.

On the other hand, there are those — and these include a liberal legislature and our courts — who have shown they believe the employer must carry the whole load.

Present court decisions emphasize this position and only by legislative action can the trend be changed. If it does not change, employers have few alternatives. They must accept this relatively high cost situation and look for other solutions.

The most obvious is through Oregon's Safe Employment Act, this state's statute complying with the Federal Occupational Safety Health Act. Extensive efforts are being made in this direction now. But other alternatives will be sought.

And the brewing storm will achieve greater intensity as rival forces clash — most likely in the next regular session of the Oregon Legislature.

GATES

Joyce Presler — 897-2707

Ruby Brisbin was picked up by her brother George and his wife Dorothy Authurs and spent Thanksgiving Day with her son and wife Ansel and Clara Hayward in Hubbard. She returned on Friday.

Spending Thanksgiving Day at the home of Luther and Ethline Yates were their son-in-law and daughter, Paul and Jackie Clarke from Long Beach, Wash. Their children, Sandy and Mark accompanied them on their Wednesday to Friday visit.

About 20 ladies attended the Avon Tea given by Millie Seales at her home on Nov. 28, between 10:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m.

Gates City Council meeting this Thursday evening, Dec. 6, 7:30 p.m. at the Gates Fire Station.

Home extension will have their monthly meeting next Thursday, Dec. 13, 10:00 a.m. at the Gates Community Center. This month a Christmas party will be held in lieu of a study extension program.

Mr. and Mrs. G. T. Geston spent this past weekend at Cottage Grove. While there, they visited friends, Mr. and Mrs. Braxton Fouts, their son and wife, Charles and Mary Jacobs; their granddaughter, Mr. and Mrs. Herb Williams and family; their grandson, Mr. and Mrs. Jacobs and family; and their youngest granddaughter, Mr. and Mrs. Dave Owens and family.

An unexpected visit was bestowed upon Glen and Lola Henness when a former resident of Gates, Cecil Haun and his wife, came by. The Hauns are from Nebraska and have spent this past month on the west coast visiting relatives and friends.

David and Carman Barnhardt with their daughters Melody, Debra and Lisa spent Thanksgiving Day at the home of A. T. Barnhardt in Gates. Mr. and Mrs. Lloyd St. John from Willamina also attended the festivities.

On Wednesday, Dec. 12 the annual Kindergarten Christmas program will be held at the old Gates High School at 7:30 p.m. Parents and friends of students plus all interested public is invited to attend.

Remember: school vacation for Christmas through New Years will begin on Dec. 21.

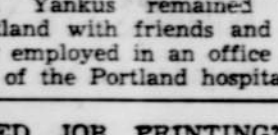
Alan Yankus Now In Sitka, Alaska

Spending the weekend at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Al Yankus were their son and daughter-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. Alan Yankus, and a friend.

Alan left from Seattle Monday for Sitka, Alaska where he will be playing with a dance band group known as the "Free Fall" for the next six weeks at the Kiksadi Club. Mrs. Yankus remained in Portland with friends and is now employed in an office of one of the Portland hospitals.

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Two Movies Viewed by Detroit Residents

DETROIT — Two great moving pictures, "Bigfoot, Man or Beast", and "Safari In Alaska", were viewed by many Upper North Santiam Canyonites at Detroit Grade School Gym Friday night.

These two shows have been shown in many theatres throughout the United States and have been overwhelmingly accepted wherever they have played.

Most of you have heard the story about Bigfoot/Sasquatch creature; reportedly a giant, human like creature that reportedly has been seen roaming the high mountain regions of our primitive lands.

Known to the Indians for over some two-hundred years, this creature has become a living legend in the records of early America and today has become the worlds most intriguing mystery.

The picture was produced on the true facts about this living legend and is high-lighted by the famous Patterson expedition that brought back the first photos ever taken of the elusive creature.

"Safari In Alaska" is the life story of an Alaskan Big Game guide who spent his entire life leading hunting parties into the wildernesses of Alaska. It was produced by Ron Hayes of Anchorage, Alaska. The motion picture took famed Alaskan guides over four years to produce.

Sunday School Planning Party

IDANHA — The Idanha Community Church Sunday School has slated Dec. 16, at 7:00 p.m. for their annual Christmas program.

The evening's program will include a selection of songs and recitations. Title of the program is "This Shall Be A Sign".

There will be a tree and treats for the children. Rehearsal for the "overall" Sunday school program will be held next Sunday at 2:30 p.m. at the church, and again at 2:30 p.m. on the afternoon of the 16th.

DETROIT IDANHA

Boots Champion

Earl (Mike) Michaelson, who annually sponsors a winter Pinochle Tournament, announced this week that interested people should call him at 854-3421 for enrollment. If enough people are interested, the first game is tentatively scheduled for the first Sunday in January at 7:00 p.m. in the club room of the Idanha Fire Hall. Trophies will be awarded to the winners.

Recent visitors at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Frank Hancock were Mr. and Mrs. Joe Muise of Port Orford, Wash. The Muises formerly resided at Detroit.

Thursday visitors at the homes of Mr. and Mrs. Jake Williams, Bill Waters and the Champion home were Mr. and Mrs. Ray Sophy, Sr. of Jordan Valley. Other visitors at the Champion home on Friday were Mr. and Mrs. Gudne Geston of Gates.

Sunday dinner guests at the home of Irene Stout were her nephew and wife, Mr. and Mrs. Milton Moen of Dallas, and Boots Champion.

Detroit Patio and Gift Shop is now open for business until Christmas. Sorry you will have to walk through remodeling which is not completed. Come in and see our lovely Christmas decorations and gifts. White-Fir Christmas trees are also available. The Christmas tree sale is a project of the Harold Hills children, Kevin, Anita, Jerry and Tony.

The Detroit High School

6—The Mill City Enterprise, Thursday, Dec. 6, 1973

Chorus will present a selection of pre-holiday songs Dec. 13 at 7:30 p.m. in the high school library.

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Detroit Woman Taken To Salem Hospital

DETROIT — A Detroit woman, Mildred Crump, was taken to Salem Memorial Hospital Emergency Center, by Idanha Rural Fire District ambulance about 2:10 a.m. Sunday morning following a fall.

Ambulance attendants said she sustained a broken bone above the left knee and a dislocated hip.

According to a report, she had fallen earlier in the evening and apparently did not realize the seriousness of her injuries until about three hours later.

Seven Detroit Students Attend School of Bible

DETROIT — Seven seniors of Detroit High School attended Multnomah School of Bible in Portland last weekend.

The group, which included Rick and Randy Roth, Sue Nightingale, Martha Rogers, Coleen Lynn and Sherlyn White, left here Thursday afternoon, returning home on Friday.

They were accompanied by Rev. Arvin Johnson, pastor of the Idanha Community Church, and Larry Poole.

Womans Mission Society Plans Auction

IDANHA — The Womans Mission Society of the Idanha Community Church has scheduled Dec. 13 for their annual Christmas auction.

The 7:30 p.m. function will be held at the Idanha home of Mrs. Dorothy Williamson.

The auction will feature handmade articles and baked goods.

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