

State Labor Commissioner Enforces Oregon FEP Law

By PAUL W. HARVEY JR.
 SALEM (AP) — When Bill Kimsey reads in the papers about all the trouble over admitting Negro children to public schools in some states, he can't figure out what all the fuss is about.

Oregon not only doesn't have segregated schools, but it goes far beyond that. Under Bill's able administration, it has had a Fair Employment Practices Law for five years, the fifth state to have one. It has contributed much toward preventing racial troubles.

W. E. Kimsey, who first was elected labor commissioner in 1942 after being a Portland labor leader, leaves office in January.

He'll celebrate his 68th birthday next Saturday. He looks back with pride on what he's done to protect the rights of minorities, but it's his sleep of interest to see what it has done to Bill.

ministrator to enforce the new law, the job was given to Bill Kimsey.

Bill got the job of administering the FEP law chiefly because he didn't know anything about the subject. Many lawmakers thought that Kimsey, whose job mainly was to inspect boilers and electric wiring, would just ignore the new law. Therefore, give Bill the job, and nobody would ever hear about the law.

But Bill, being a man trained to enforce the law, fooled them.

Soon after the new law was passed, the Rev. William Van Meter, an Episcopal clergyman from Woodburn who was active in working for minorities, called on Kimsey to see what his program was.

Kimsey didn't have a program, because he didn't know what it was all about.

Religious groups and the Urban League of Portland put pressure on the 1949 Legislature to pass the FEP law, which makes it illegal for employers, labor unions and employment agencies to discriminate against any person because of his race, religion or national origin.

The Legislature didn't think much of the bill. The problem was in Portland, which had an influx of Negroes during the war. Legislators from upstate weren't interested, because they had no racial minorities in their towns.

But the pressure for passage of the bill was great, so the Legislature passed it. There was one major change, though. Instead of providing for an independent ad-

A week later, Kimsey sent for Van Meter, and appointed him deputy labor commissioner in charge of FEP enforcement.

Van Meter, now 41, who preaches every Sunday at Independence and Monmouth, still runs the show under Kimsey. Mark Smith, the highest ranking Negro on the state payroll, looks after things in Portland.

As Kimsey learned, he got so interested in the subject that he became one of the state's outstanding foes of discrimination.

He believes most progress can be made through education. He and his men work hard to convince people that in a democracy, you can't have second class citizens.

Kimsey is a kindly old character, until he cracks down and gets mad. Then there's no monkey business. He investigates every complaint, and solves almost all of these by patient negotiation, after which the person who complains usually gets his job.

If all this shouldn't work, Kimsey has a powerful weapon. He can get a court injunction, but he's never had to go that far.

Strangely, his biggest problem has been to persuade the state government to obey its own law. He has this worked out pretty well now, but he's had some rugged battles with several departments. Kimsey won these, usually by telling the public about it.

Kimsey's progress is not measured by the cases he has investigated, but by the changed attitudes of the people. Minority groups, especially Negroes, are working in many jobs from which they were banned before FEP. They belong to unions which used to bar them.

Discrimination still exists, and Kimsey sees the need for much more work.

Education against discrimination should be stepped up, he says. Persons suffering from discrimination should be quick to complain to his department. There should be better chances for members of minority groups to get job training. They shouldn't hesitate about applying for any job.

Saving that elimination of discrimination is a teamwork job, Kimsey believes that when employers and unions work together "all present and future problems of discrimination in employment will be solved."



RIDIN' HERD on the El Rodeo, Klamath Union High School's yearbook publication, will be (seated, from left) Betty Juckeland, editor; Jan Kenyon, art editor; (standing, same order) Bob Buelow, faculty adviser and Dwayne Prather, photographer.

Salesman Held For Murder

STOUC CITY, Iowa, (AP) — A Sioux City detective said Thursday "I think we have the right man" in the abduction-killing of 8-year-old Jimmie Bremmer.

Detective Lt. Harry J. Gibbons identified the man as an itinerant salesman previously questioned at

length in the case. No charge has been filed.

The salesman, described by Police Chief James O'Keefe as "psychotic as well as homosexual," steadfastly denies any

knowledge of Jimmie's death.

The man has admitted talking to the boy on Aug. 31, the night he disappeared from near his home here. Police decline to name the man.

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Potato Festival Exhibits Slated

MERRILL — The attention of 4-H Club and FFA members, and all high school students in the Klamath Basin is directed to the potato exhibits section of the Klamath Basin Potato Festival to be held in Merrill, Friday and Saturday, October 22 and 23.

Entries in Lot 6, 4-H Club growers only, are to consist of 25 pounds of potatoes, and a completed record book. First prize is a scholarship to the 1955 4-H summer school at Corvallis; second \$15.00; third, \$10.00; and fourth, \$5.00.

Lot 7, FFA potato growers only, Class 1, commercial U.S. No. 1 Netted Gems, 25 pounds, \$10.00; and Class 2, seed potatoes, 25 lbs., \$10.00.

Lot 8 is for high school exhibitors and has a first prize of \$10.00 to the exhibitor and a cup to his school. The second prize is \$5.00 cash.

Exhibits remain the property of the Potato Festival, and should be delivered to the Merrill High school gym Thursday, October 21.

Teachers Seek Information

The Oregon Retired Teachers Association is seeking information to present to the legislative interim committee on retirement and compensation regarding retired teachers in Oregon.

All teachers 65 years of age or over who have taught in Oregon, who are not receiving retirement pay and who were not taken care of by the law closing the five-year gap, are urged to write to the Interim Committee on Retirement and Compensation, care of the Oregon Education Association, 1530 S. W. Taylor Street, Portland 5, Oregon, stating age, length of service and where and when the teacher taught school.

This information is needed for the use of the next legislature.

Tri-Hi-Y Girls Hold Meeting

The sophomore Tri-Hi-Y held the first meeting of the year, Tuesday, September 21.

Karen Kiger was elected president; Mary Harlan, vice president; Sheila Kunz, secretary; Mary Lou Kerr, treasurer; Carolyn Garrison, chaplain; Carl Howard, sergeant at arms; Pat Wilbanks, representative.

The district conference held September 25 in Klamath Falls was discussed. The members plan a cake and cookie sale in the near future.

Business meetings will be held the second Tuesday of each month. There will be a potluck supper before the October meeting.

Hostesses for the first meeting were Sally Soukup, Carolyn Fulton and Nancy Drew.

PROCLAMATION

NEW DELHI, India (AP) — Prime Minister Nehru proclaimed Thursday that India is "obviously the fourth country in the world" after the United States, Russia and Red China.

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