

**VERNONIA EAGLE**  
 County Official Paper  
 Member of National Editorial Assn. and Oregon State Editorial Assn.

**OCTOBER**

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RAY D. FISHER, Editor and Publisher

**THE GRANGE POWER AMENDMENT**

In another column appears a statement of the legislative committee of the Columbia county Pomona grange replying to what it terms power trust propaganda.

Certainly efforts of the so-called power trust or anybody else to slander the grange because of its sponsorship of the amendment are to be condemned by all fair-minded persons, for the purpose back of the proposed measure and the motives of the committee that drew it up are above reproach. Farmers want cheap and abundant power, and if it can be provided they should have it.

Yet unquestioned sincerity of purpose and desirability of the end in view are no guarantee that the method is well advised. The grange, in thinking that objections to the proposed amendment are necessarily due to power trust propaganda, is simply falling into an error that many a well intentioned person makes when he fancies that criticism can come only from his enemies, never from his friends.

It is regrettable that the grange itself did not discover the flaws in the bill as drawn up by the committee, thereby protecting its own members as well as the rest of the state. A high powered car without brakes is dangerous to its own occupants as well as to other traffic. Without limitation as to taxing power, issuance of bonds or determining of boundaries the amendment has no brakes. The farmers' taxes are too high as they are; the formation of water power districts would inevitably make them much worse.

"Without cost to the taxpayer" is the promise that allures, whether made by visionary or schemer. All is not gold that glitters in a brick.

The fact that some cities have installed and are operating municipal plants without increase in taxation is no proof of the grange viewpoint. McMinnville, cited in the article, will serve as an illustration.

McMinnville's publicly owned plant was not started as a big enterprise but on a moderate scale. Less than ten years ago municipal power in that city was neither cheap nor abundant. Rates, though not exorbitant, were sufficiently high to provide for a sinking fund for the retirement of bonds, and as the original bonds were paid off and a surplus accumulated, new Diesel units were added, adequate power provided, and rates gradually lowered. By prudent management under a commission of hard-headed business men and a highly competent superintendent, wholly untrammelled by politics, the business was built up from comparative insignificance into an outstanding example of the benefits of municipal ownership. Had there been pressure for plenty of power at low quantity rates to begin with, the only possible method of financing the enterprise would have been through increased taxation.

The procedure to be followed under the grange enabling amendment would call for no such program of moderate beginnings at comparatively high rates, limited bond issues, economical management and gradual development.

Instead there must be a heavy initial expenditure of operations on a big scale, service at a loss to outlying districts, huge bond issues and burdensome taxes. No 10 h.p. motor in a galvanized iron shed beside a 20-gallon creek will do. The outlay will cost money, and money comes

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not through magic, or at the behest of politicians, unless the taxpayer foots the bill.

Tacoma, much praised by certain Portland newspapers which have a great deal to say about its low power rates but nothing about its high taxes, Eugene and McMinnville, likewise praised for their efficient plants but not wholly understood by outsiders, are all cities, not gerrymandered districts to be furnished by state-operated power. "It has been done," say the sponsors of the amendment. No, it has not been done. The experiment is wholly untried, visionary, the product of good intentions but the tool, potentially, of the scheming and the unscrupulous.

If we are to go into state ownership of public utilities at all, let us go into it with open eyes, realizing its benefits, its limitations, its costs. In order to gain the benefits we should not give to any man or any group of men the opportunity to abandon all limits and disregard all costs.

**Capitol Letter**  
 "BY UNITED-PRESS"

BY EARL H. LIEF  
 (United Press Staff  
 Correspondent.)

SALEM, Or.—(UP)—Battle lines are being drawn at this time for the great fight of the 1931 legislature—the water power issue.

The power companies are preparing their campaign for the session that will constitute the greatest menace to their own interests in the history of the state. The anti-private power interests are likewise grooming the legislators to oppose the power companies, and a good time was had by all.

It appeared certain that the state reclamation commission will withhold action on the application of the California-Oregon Power company for the Grant site in Klamath county, until after the legislature convenes and can adopt a policy regarding such measures. This is the only major application now ready for definite action by the state.

At the present time there is no statute on the state's law books empowering the state of Oregon to go into the power business or to develop power for any purpose. Cities, municipalities and districts may condemn privately-owned plants and take them over for municipal ownership, but the state cannot do so.

Measures permitting the state to construct, maintain, and operate power plants will be introduced at the session and will furnish the target for direct action by the legislature. The new governor will have much "power

of persuasion" over the legislature but in point of fact will have no direct authority on the issue except the veto.

Civic clubs and other organizations continue to bombard members of the reclamation commission with demands that all action be delayed on important power applications until after the legislature convenes.

However, that portion of the public that has made itself audible, is not unanimous in its views on the issue. A large faction favors private development of power and disapproves the state going into the power business. If the public were unanimous, legislators would have no choice but to obey its dictates or endure disgrace. The power companies would not then have even a fighting chance to pre-



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 A. F. & A. M. meets at Masonic Temple, Stated Communication First Thursday of each month. Special called meetings on all other Thursday nights 7:30 p.m. Visitors most cordially welcome.  
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 Vernonia Post 119, American Legion. Meets 2nd and 4th Tuesdays each month, 8 p. m. Dan Nelson, Adjutant; P. Hughes, Commander.

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**I. O. O. F.**  
 I.O.O.F.—Vernonia Lodge No. 246 meets every Tuesday night at 8 o'clock, in I.O.O.F. hall. Visitors always welcome.  
 C. W. Kilby N. G.  
 John Glassner, Secretary.

serve what they call their rights. The fight has started, much of it being under cover at this stage of the game. November 4 will reveal much of the progress each faction has made.

(Special to Vernonia Eagle.)  
 SALEM—(UP)—Loans of the state veterans' aid commission to Columbia county veterans for the first nine months of 1930 totaled \$11,200, according to figures released this week by Frank Moore, secretary of the commission. During September this year, one loan of \$1,900 was approved by Moore for veterans of the county.

Twelve Oregon high school basketball teams, champions in their own districts, will meet here March 18 to 21 inclusive to fight it out for state championship on the courts of Willamette University, according to announcement of the state high school athletic board of control.

The board announced district committees which will have charge of the basketball competition in their own districts. The committee in charge of district number nine, comprising Columbia and Clatsop counties, will be J. J. Mandrall of Seaside, chairman; A. C. Hampton, Astoria, and O. D. Byers, Rainier.

No cases of contagious diseases were reported in Columbia county during the week ending October 11, according to the state department of health.

A total of 131 cases were reported in Oregon as compared to 154 the previous week. New cases reported were: measles 21, pneumonia 20, chickenpox 17,

mumps 17, tuberculosis 17, whooping cough 16, scarlet fever 11, influenza 6, typhoid fever 3, diphtheria 2, malaria 2.

Old man Oregon with a \$3,000,000 deficit hanging over his head like a Sword of Damocles, would have a few pennies to jingle in his pockets if the voters of this state approve the cabinet form of government at the November election, in the opinion of Hector McPherson, chairman of the joint legislative committee on administrative reorganization. "The present financial status

of Oregon with its \$3,000,000 deficit is in itself sufficient argument for adoption of the cabinet form. We would wipe out the deficit and have a sizeable surplus in a few years."

All of them had perfectly valid excuses for running short of money, but seven heads of state (Continued on Page 5)

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