

VERNONIA EAGLE



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RAY D. FISHER, Editor and Publisher

The Anti-Cigarette Petition

The petition presented at the meeting of the city council Monday night asking for enforcement of the state law and the city ordinance relating to the sale or gift of cigarettes to minors represents a praiseworthy desire to curb smoking by boys and girls. For whatever may be the pros and cons of the use of tobacco by adults, there can be little question that it has an injurious effect upon youths.

Whatever may be the desire, however, of the mayor, council, recorder, marshal and every other officer concerned to cooperate with those of the community who seek to protect young people from harmful practices, the law itself is impossible of complete enforcement. The original state law, dating from the nineties, is mild enough, prohibiting the sale of tobacco in any form to minors under 18 except upon written order from parents or guardians. In 1917 another law far more stringent was passed—so stringent that it has become practically a dead letter not only in Vernonia but also throughout the state. In addition to the usual penalties for selling or giving cigarettes (cigars, pipes, etc. are not mentioned in this later act) to minors, it becomes the duty of any officer upon seeing a minor smoking a cigarette to question him as to where he got it, and arrest him if he refuses to tell. Any officer neglecting to do this may himself be clapped into jail and fined. Information, if any, gained from the young culprit must be given to the district attorney for action. Furthermore, a proprietor of any shop, store, office, pool room, etc., permitting minors to smoke cigarettes on the premises is also subject to fine and imprisonment.

The idea back of the law—reflected in the Vernonia city ordinance which embodied its characteristic features several

years later—was that if the law against cigarette smoking by minors is only severe enough it will be self-enforceable through the fear of running afoul of it. But it didn't work that way. The dog had teeth, plenty of them, but it has been too good-natured a brute to bite, and too desirous of avoiding trouble.

Trouble there would be, in plenty, if a mayor or a marshal, as commanded, stopped every one under 21 he saw smoking a cigarette, demanded the source of supply, and upon refusal of the youngster to tell, hauled him off to jail forthwith. The very refusal to "squeal" would be extolled by relatives, friends and mere onlookers as a virtue, and the officer would be as the saying goes, "in dutch." Imagine, too, the predicament of a merchant who had neglected to order some minor to cease smoking in his store, and gets himself fined for not butting in to what he regards as somebody else's business.

Thus the law stood, disregarded. Merchants openly sold cigarettes to minors, and minors openly smoked them. Law enforcement officers got the blame, where any one did any blaming.

What, then, can be done to remedy an ever growing evil? It would be impracticable, if not impossible, to arrest boys and girls who smoke, for they are not so much to blame as their elders. Besides, how many parents would tolerate arrests of their children for following a fad, harmful though it may be?

It is possible, no doubt, to enforce the law against selling to minors. Yet that alone will not solve the problem, for almost always someone older stands ready to buy the wanted cigarettes for the youth and hand them over to him. The giver of cigarettes is hard to track down.

Abatement of the evil really depends upon cooperation of the home. Where parents are unconcerned, or are willing that their children should smoke if they care to, enforcement of a dozen severe anti-cigarette laws can accomplish little or nothing. Where there is sentiment in the home against the use of cigarettes until the boy or girl has become of age, there is at least the beginning of headway. Legal penalty should be a last resort, for extreme cases only, but if necessary it should receive the support, not the opposition, of the adults concerned if it is to be successful.

Complete enforcement of the present anti-cigarette laws, it seems to this newspaper, is impossible—but enforcement of the reasonable provisions may accomplish good—if the home cooperates. Not otherwise.

The Open Forum - -

OLEEN EXPLAINS SURTAX

Editor, Vernonia Eagle:
 House Bill No. 173 referred to in the newspapers as the Oleen Bill, passed the House by a vote of 47 to 7 with six members absent.

In order to meet the requirements for relief funds from the federal government, Oregon will have to raise half of the amount necessary to take care of the unemployed and needy and such amount can be raised only by a tax or bond issue.

In order to meet the required needs of the state without undue burden on any class of taxpayers, Oregon's tax laws must be revised, based on ability of the taxpayer to pay.

It is a well established fact that sufficient funds cannot be raised by any one tax act, therefore it becomes necessary to make amendments to our present tax laws, and it may become necessary to tax some new source of revenue.

Because of the yearly increase in property tax levies, property owners have decided that a great deal of the property in the state is not worth paying taxes on.

The tax delinquency on property in the state of Oregon has been increasing since 1929 in the following manner:

1929 and prior	\$ 7,285,036.79
1930	5,642,294.20
1931	8,289,216.44
1932	11,008,104.55
1933	13,943,914.82

Total \$46,168,566.80

In other words a \$46,168,566.80 mortgage has been placed on property which the owners are unable to pay.

The property tax levy in Portland is now 49 mills or \$73.50 on a home assessed at \$1,500, or more than \$6.00 per month. Many business buildings in Portland are renting for less than taxes, insurance and upkeep; therefore substantial buildings are being torn down and the ground used for parking lots.

The farmer pays from \$2.50 to \$7.00 an acre per year in taxes on cultivated land for the privilege of digging a living out of the soil.

Property taxes are from three to four times what they were 30 years ago and one-third of the property in the state is now threatened with tax foreclosure. The first thing prospective investors ask before they invest in factories or other enterprises is: "What is your property tax levy?" One of the greatest inducements to investors would be a reduced property tax levy.

In regard to House Bill No. 173 for an act providing for property relief by levying, collecting and paying of a 2 per cent surtax on incomes for the purpose of providing funds for the support and maintenance of public schools, individual net incomes are paying only 18 mills on the dollar while property is paying 44 mills. Property is paying \$41,572,394.21 while net individual incomes amounting to \$66,397,005 are paying only \$1,197,124.54.

No real revision of Oregon's antiquated tax laws have been made in the last 30 years and the chaotic conditions which now exist should be changed.

The House by a vote of 47 to 7 with six members absent have gone on record as containing more progressive, fair-minded members than any legislature in the last 20 years.

O. Henry Oleen

SOME COST
 (Oregon Journal)

An estimate of the cost of the Hauptmann trial made by the Associated Press is \$1,000,000. Included in this is the \$50,000 ransom money paid out by Colonel Lindbergh, part of which is now in possession of the state of New Jersey. Dr. Condon spent \$10,000 of his own funds to bring the defendant to trial. Transcripts of evidence cost \$60,000, jurors' fees \$1800, lawyers' fees more than \$20,000. This does not include the Hauptmann attorneys. Telegraph tolls ran up to \$600,000, salaries of special writers and reporters to \$180,000, and expenses of witnesses to \$30,000, to say nothing of the preliminary expenses of New Jersey and the federal government which are estimated at \$50,000. The case can be credited with putting money into circulation.

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CCC MEN TAKE KEEN INTEREST TO DETERMINE BEST BARRACKS

CAMP WILARK, CCC, Houlton—(Special.) — An already keen interest in a new competition to determine the best barracks at Camp Wilark was markedly increased this week as enrollees recounted events of an "award trip" to the seashore during the last weekend.

Thirty-eight members of Barracks Two, winners of the best daily inspection reports among the four living groups at Camp Wilark during February, left for a trip to Astoria, North Head, Wn., Seaside, Camp Clatsop and Cannon Beach last Friday. The men received the award of a pleasure excursion for maintaining the best

order and sanitation in camp. The Astor column at Astoria, oyster beds in Washington, an Alaskan cannery steamer, a ferry trip across the Columbia river and attractions of the seashore were sampled and enjoyed by the conservation corps workers, unanimous comments indicated.

The men traveled in CCC trucks in command of Lieut. George Wood, company executive officer. The excursionists return-

ed Sunday night. Success of the trip to the coast just completed has intensified competition among enrollees for the next award to be given as a result of the present routine of daily inspections.

A consistent improvement in work projects accomplishments, in camp police and in general morale have been favorably commented on by visiting officials and inspectors.

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