

Power Tax Needs Thought—Do You Want It?

(AN EDITORIAL)

A proposed city ordinance would place a gross earnings tax of 4-per cent. on the Oregon Gas & Electric Company's revenue within the incorporated limits of Vernonia. This ordinance according to information published in The Eagle last week, is now being drawn and will be submitted to the councilmen for probable passage Monday evening.

So many Vernonians have asked concerning the ordinance that The Eagle, after due thought, devises a story which it hopes will be read by every power consumer in the city limits. We have reason to believe that the city officials want to act in accordance with the majority of taxpayers and power consumers in their city, hence we issue an appeal to all of you to talk with your councilmen concerning the ordinance if you are not satisfied with the find-

ings in this editorial.

In the first place, the proposed ordinance can be passed through customary channels by listening to three readings at three regular meetings, or can be declared an emergency and passed within a comparatively short time. Which choice the council will make, we cannot say.

In the second place, whatever percentage figure is selected for the amount of the tax, your average bill will eventually carry that figure and the amount, which you will pay.

When we say that the consumer will pay the tax, we base our finding on procedure in other localities and with many other power companies. The reason the consumer will pay is based on the fact, (Utility Commission reports show the following correct) that the Vernonia unit has not earned 7-per cent. on its invest-

ment for several years. The state body's figures show the local holdings worth over \$240,000. Last year, this company is reported to have netted \$3,000, or about 1-per cent. These are not our figures, but those available to the public.

As soon as an earnings tax is inflicted, the company's representatives will go to Salem where the situation will be laid before the utility commissioner. On the basis of the company's figures, as well as those at the disposal of himself, he can ill afford to deny the company's petition.

The absorption of the tax by the consumers, you and me, may be brought about in two ways. The company may ask for a revised tariff in an upward direction, which would, without a doubt, cover the entire distribution system and would, if our own figuring is within reason, average 10 per

cent. Mind you, this would not only include the incorporated limits of Vernonia but the rural district now served out of this operation. In other words, the Vernonia people would be inflicting a higher rate on the hinterland . . . parties apart from the city but whom would not feel too kindly towards us for our forcing added power costs to their already skinny budgets.

But, then, perhaps the Oregon Gas & Electric Company would not take this step. We don't know.

The other way the tax could be carried to the consumer would follow in somewhat the same style as the former, except that the company's representative would seek permission from the commission merely to add 4-per cent. (or whatever the figure) to those consumers' monthly bills within the incorporation. If any is sought, this would be

by far the most advantageous.

But, we wonder if the gross earnings tax is justified at this time? There may be facts with which we are not conversant. We mention the ordinance this week in such a prominent fashion because we are not especially anxious to pay an added tax of any description. And we believe there are hundreds of power consumers in Vernonia who feel the same way.

The ordinance will raise only about \$75 monthly for the city and therefore cannot be termed a revenue producing tax. Then it is natural to assume that there are other reasons.

The other reasons, of course, come within the power program that has, indeed, enlightened the people a lot, and will, no doubt, bring much information before the city ere it is completed. We do not frown

on the power program . . . at least not now.

The Bonneville power opportunities are still dormant. We do not know what they will bring. We hope, even the Oregon Gas & Electric Co. must hope, that Bonneville will bring reduced power rates to Vernonia and rural power consumers.

But until we learn definitely one way or the other, perhaps it would be better to pour a little oil on riotous waters. There is much misinformation afloat now, on all sides, and The Eagle chooses to await specific and authentic developments before it countenances any program.

If you favor the gross earnings tax at this time, tell your councilmen you do. If you don't, tell them about it. We have reason to believe that Vernonia's mayor and council want to represent their constituents.

ADVERTISING WORKS INDIVIDUAL MIRACLES. SOME PEOPLE STILL CAN'T BELIEVE CALIFORNIA IS HAVING WEATHER TROUBLE. WHY DON'T YOU ADVERTISE? IT HAS ALWAYS PAID.

Vernonia Eagle

PRINTING YOU NEED CAN BE DONE IN VERNONIA BY VERNONIA PEOPLE: A RECIPROCAL ATTITUDE IN PRINTING AS WELL AS IN OTHER SERVICES AVAILABLE HERE PAYS DIVIDENDS.

VOLUME 15, NUMBER 9

VERNONIA, COLUMBIA COUNTY, OREGON

FRIDAY, MARCH 4, 1938

Last of Concerts Due Mon.

Jane Watts to Act as Mistress of Ceremonies; Fine Program Billed

The last in a series of five concerts which have been presented for Vernonia music lovers in recent weeks by the Junior band is billed for the little auditorium in the Washington grade school Monday evening. Director C. R. Watts announced this week.

The director's daughter, Miss Jane, will act as mistress of ceremonies for the Monday evening event. The concert starts at 7:30.

Those wishing to attend this final concert are asked to enter the school via the west door.

The event Monday evening, similar to those in the past, will be an impromptu affair, the students participating arranging for their individual numbers shortly before the hour of the presentation.

The public is extended an invitation to attend the musicale.

In McMinnville—

Mr. and Mrs. Dan Brutkie and son spent Sunday in McMinnville with relatives.

See Bonneville Dam—

Mr. and Mrs. Vern Sykes and H. W. Cameron made a pleasure trip to Bonneville Dam Sunday.

Fire Chief Warns of Seasonal Blaze Danger; Local Total Low

"Few days of sunshine, an east wind, then the fire danger jumps up mighty fast," said Fire Chief Earl Smith this week.

His comment came following the fire at the James Emmons home on First avenue south which occurred at 10 a. m. Friday morning. Seven local volunteers answered the call. The blaze was confined to the roof immediately surrounding the chimney and damage in excess of \$40 or \$50 was not expected.

This was the first call for the department since June, 1937, and stands as an excellent record, it is believed, for the community. The fire was caused by an overheated chimney.

However, the call prompted the chief to warn local persons that with days of dry weather approaching, the moss growth on roofs, and

BELIEVE IT OR NOT! LOCAL POST OFFICE DELIVERED IT!

One can read of such instances, but seldom does one see it worked out so close to home. But a letter came this week to the local post office addressed to either one of two Portland telephone numbers, Vernonia, Oregon. C. R. Watts, carrier, took the letter to the local telephone office and it was found that a brother of the man whose business bore the telephone number on the envelope, had just placed a call a short time before. While the letter was probably not intended for the local man, the Portland man's brother who resides near here, got the letter Tuesday after it had been mailed a day or two before in Cottage Grove. "Though addressed to a telephone number, the letter was delivered promptly," said Postmaster Emil Messing and Carrier Watts.

Neighbors Help Eagle Out of Tough Spot This Week

Due to mechanical difficulties suffered by The Eagle this week, the management found it necessary to hurry to Hillsboro and arrange for setting many columns of the type matter embodied in this issue. To the staff, especially the mechanical department, of the Hillsboro Argus, The Eagle extends its sincere thanks and appreciation. Come over and we'll return the compliment by running down a steelhead in Rock creek.

On Business Trip—

Mr. and Mrs. Ed Salomonsen spent Friday in Portland.

CANDIDATE



Carl C. Donaugh, federal district attorney for Oregon, Monday formally entered the lists for the United States Senate when he filed his declaration of candidacy with Secretary of State Earl Snell. Donaugh thus became the first officially to enter the race for the Democratic nomination for the senate subject to the May primary.

Donaugh announced he would run on a slogan of "For Roosevelt; wide distribution Bonneville power; Willamette Valley project; stabilizing labor conditions."

Pritchett Denied Right To Remain

Classed as "Undesirable" According to Press Reports Received Yesterday

Harold J. Pritchett, 33-year old international president of the IWA, CIO lumber employees' union, and a recent visitor and speaker in Vernonia, has been denied entrance and the right to remain in this country, according to press releases issued yesterday from Washington, D. C.

Pritchett, according to the reports, was branded an "undesirable", in the ultimatum. He has appealed to the state department several times recently for the privilege of remaining here to conduct his work in connection with his presidency of the union.

Pritchett said he would return to Canada, his native country, and re-establish residence, and then make another application for admittance. The young union head said, while here, that he wished to become an American citizen.

Fuse on Power Issue Due for Igniting Here Monday Evening

Stockmen of County Will Meet Tonight

Grange Hall to Be Scene of Important Session; Will Seek Protection

Stockmen of Columbia county will gather in Vernonia this evening to discuss several important topics of interest to them in their business. The Grange hall will be the scene of the meeting which gets under way at 7:30 p. m., according to Lode McDonald, in charge of local arrangements.

Somewhat perturbed at activity of packers concerning beef buying and certification, the stockmen will discuss protective legislation at the meeting tonight.

In addition cooperative efforts in breeding and feeding will come before the group at the session tonight. All stockmen of this district as well as in the entire county are urged to attend and enter into the discussion scheduled for this evening.

Last week's Eagle erroneously reported the meeting for March 1. March 4 was the date set for the meeting.

Chamber Meet Billed Next Tuesday, 8th

Business Program to Be Considered by Local Members, Reported by Hawken

The Vernonia Chamber of Commerce will hold a noon meeting Tuesday, March 8, at the Masonic temple, President Lyman Hawken announced yesterday.

The meeting comes in the form of a business session and will include discussion of several important topics current in local discussion.

The membership committee will be out again this weekend contacting prospective members and 1937 members not already signed in the civic group.

Eastern Star members will serve the meal Tuesday noon. The meeting starts at 12 noon sharp, the president said.

A promised lighting of the fuse on the local power issue is due for Monday night at the Vernonia council session when the expected first reading of the gross earnings tax on the Oregon Gas & Electric income within the incorporation is expected.

Some said that the ordinance, ordered drawn last week by the council, would be connected with an emergency rider and would, therefore, be placed into action at an

Local Men Arrested for Game Violation

Wood Brothers Shoot Deer; Get Fines of \$100 Each in Clatskanie Court

Albert Everett and Isaac Irvin Wood, brothers, 37 and 43, respectively, were fined \$100 each in Justice Puzey's court in Clatskanie last Thursday following their apprehension the same day by Warden Forsythe for slaying of a deer out of season.

Forsythe found the two brothers loading the deer in the back of their car in the Oak Ranch creek section. The arrest followed and they were taken to Clatskanie by the officer where they entered pleas of guilty before the magistrate.

Using Insulators on Power Line As Targets Deemed Eery

Several Rock creek road residents found themselves sans power and telephone facilities Friday following a severing of the high line from the Keasey, presumably by a bullet fired from a rifle.

The use of the insulators atop the power poles, and which hold the high voltage lines in their place en route kept Manager J. W. Nichols and his linemen ill at ease before but the break Friday afternoon proved the most damaging and dangerous for some time.

Not alone did the line break and crash to the ground but it fell over telephone lines, throwing "juice" directly into the switchboard in Vernonia. Eva Errend, chief operator here, was on duty at the time and was ousted out of her place at the board when the maze of wires drizzled smoke and then flared to "scare

me to death," she said. Fortunately, Jim Hodges, Oregon Gas & Electric Co. lineman, was en route up the Rock creek road when the break came, and found the predicament shortly after leaving Vernonia. He hesitated long enough in his work to warn a resident, traveling by horse and buggy, to wait for a moment until he eliminated the electrical death which had been forced across the road.

The transformer near the break was ruined, at an estimated cost of \$150, and several telephones in the area were incapacitated for some time due to the wires conducting the power into the homes.

The break was considered fortunate, in spite of the damage in dollars and cents, for but luck which seemed to dog the incident, several may have been seriously burned, mayhap killed.

Ordinance Incomplete
The statute, around which much debate has been centered, was not in its final form yesterday, the attorney said, hence its contents were not available.

However, the general consensus, following the meeting held last week, was that the ordinance would seek collection of four per cent on the gross earnings in the city.

Figuring the month of November, which month's earnings were checked by a special crew hired by the city recently, showed that the total collected by the local power company within the city limits approximated \$1,800. November, however, is considered one of the peak months of the year.

The four per cent, if this figure is maintained in the ordinance, would bring the city \$72 in revenue, it was pointed out.

Talked of Before
The earnings tax was originally discussed some weeks back, but at that time, the West Coast Telephone Co., operating in this area, was included in the deal. However, seeing the need for additional bookkeeping, records and forms, the late George Bauman, district manager, met with the council and worked out a "deal" (Continued on page 12.)