

EAGLE EDITORIALS

SOME INFORMATION FOR THE PUD VOTER—

THE FACTS given below are taken as quotations from a recent bulletin issued by "Oregon Business and Investors". The information deals with the question of public utility districts and revolves about points of question which have given rise to considerable comment in this region. The quotations are not presented as an opinion of this publication but merely as the findings of "An Agency Specializing in Taxation, Legislation and Public Affairs."

"Tax levies placed on property by any tax-levying public body, a PUD for example, must not be more than 6 per cent greater than the tax levied in any one of three preceding years, unless specifically authorized by a majority of the legal voters."

"The foregoing is a thumbnail summary of Oregon's "6 per cent property tax limitation," which is Section 11, Article XI of the state's constitution."

"6 per cent of nothing is nothing!"
 "Therefore, a new PUD, a new school or port district, or any new tax-levying body, that has no tax base, cannot, without a vote of the people, make a first or original tax levy. Any tax levy would be in excess of a 6 per cent increase over no previous tax levy. Since a first or original tax levy by a PUD or any other tax levying body would be more than 6 per cent of nothing . . . these levies must be submitted to the legal voters for approval or rejection."

"Tax levies by PUDs therefore, are subject to the restrictions imposed by the Oregon 6 per cent property tax limitation constitutional amendment."

"What's the significance of this contention that PUD tax levies are subject to the restrictions imposed by the 6 per cent limitation?"

"The significance is this: As Oregon's PUD law is now operating, or rather has been permitted to operate in Tillamook, Wasco and Hood River counties, the five PUD directors, acting as a budget committee, ask for a certain amount of tax money. The assessor forthwith computes the millage levy necessary to raise that budget, and includes that millage tax in the levy against all the prop-

erty in that particular utility district. Five PUD directors, therefore, now function as the sole authority for levying the first or original PUD tax."

"However, if the theory advanced by this Bulletin . . . is correct, PUD directors cannot legally make the first or original PUD tax levy. Since the first or original PUD levy is certainly more than 6 per cent in excess of the non-existent levies during the preceding three years, our contention is that such first or original PUD levies, or until a tax base is established, must be "specifically authorized" by a majority of the legal voters voting on the question . . ."

"The 1939 Oregon legislature referred to the people an amendment to the 6 per cent limitation, which amendment proposes a procedure whereby a tax base can be created for any tax-levying body that has no tax base. This amendment will be voted on at the 1940 general election. But if approved by the people, PUDs would still be required to submit three tax levies for approval by the people. When three such successive levies are approved, an average of the three becomes the new tax base."

"PUD advocates in Oregon have stressed their intention not to ask for public approval of general obligation bond issues to finance their public ownership plans. Obviously, PUDs cannot issue revenue bonds until and unless there is revenue available against which such bonds can be issued. Now, if the public refuses to authorize PUD tax levies, when submitted at an election, just where are PUDs going to get the cash that is necessary to get started?"

"So far there has been no effort by any taxpayer in any county wherein a PUD has been created and has levied a tax, to test the validity of that levy or those levies, with respect to their legality or illegality under the restrictions imposed by the 6 per cent limitation."

"Suffice it here to say that it is quite probable that PUD advocates will not relish the idea that the authority of five PUD directors to levy taxes is circumscribed by the 6 per cent limitation. We hazard the guess that PUD advocates will find it easier to create PUDs than to obtain public approval of direct tax levies on property for PUD organization purposes. Other tax levying districts, school district, cities, port districts for example, that have no tax base, must obtain voter approval of tax levies that are outside the 6 per cent limitation. Why then, should PUDs, that have no tax base, be exempt from this necessity of voter approval of tax levies?"

A GREAT MAN'S BIRTHDAY PASSES—

MONDAY OF this week, February 12, marked the date of the birthday of one of America's great men, Abraham Lincoln. The date probably passed for most of us with little thought being given the man who has been given considerable space by historians in the hall of America's great men.

Lincoln has grown into the realm of an ideal for the youth of America. Probably one characteristic more than any other attributed to the man has led to his position in history—his honesty. Early in his career he became known by the nickname "Honest Abe".

The application of that principle throughout his career in life is commendable to note. It is a principle which has been forgotten by many now but one which could well be followed to the advantage of all. Let us not forget the ideals for which Lincoln steadfastly stood throughout his life.

district would embrace an area of approximately 190 square miles in the northeastern portion of Columbia county.

The proposed district would not embrace incorporated cities and towns, says Charles E. Stricklin, secretary of the hydroelectric commission of Oregon.

J. W. HUNT BREAKS HIP X-RAY PICTURES REVEAL—

J. W. Hunt, Columbia county clerk, suffered a fractured hip when he slipped and fell while at the Gordon Thompson farm near Deer Island last Sunday. X-ray pictures taken last Tuesday in St. Helens General hospital revealed the fracture. At first it was believed that Mr. Hunt was merely severely bruised. He will be confined in a cast for a number of weeks to come.

Clatskanie--

PUD HEARING HELD SATURDAY—

The Oregon State Hydroelectric commission held a public hearing here Saturday at the Odd Fellows hall to consider the petitions for the formation of the Clatskanie Peoples' Utility District.

The hearing was conducted by George Joseph, Jr., chairman of the commission, and those favoring the proposed district and those opposed were given full opportunity

to be heard.

According to notice of the meeting, the commission made a report of this preliminary investigation as well as hearing the evidence for and against the district.

CLATSKANIE AREA COLLECTS \$114.18—

In the vicinity of Clatskanie \$114.18 was cleared for the benefit of the Infantile Paralysis fund.

Thirty dollars and 83 cents was taken in the collection boxes placed in the various business houses. The Junior Maccabees conducted a pin sale and went from house to house as well as soliciting in the business section and turned in \$17.33; \$2.93 was sent in from the Clatskanie schools and the Quincy schools sent in \$1.94. The dance netted \$61.15 or the fund.

Eagle Items Of Past Years

ONE YEAR AGO—

Completion of the Treharne bridge under construction for the past two and one-half months by the State Highway Bridge Repair crew was completed this week.

Students of the high school senior class motored to Salem to visit the state legislature in action.

FIVE YEARS AGO—

The S. P. and S. Railroad Co. has reduced its freight service to Vernonia to twice-a-week. Under the new schedule the train comes in Tuesdays and Fridays and leaves Wednesdays and Saturdays.

Mrs. William Briot has taken charge of the soda fountain in Mac's Pharmacy and is serving light lunches.

M. E. Turkington, who conducted a cafe here for several years and moved to St. Helens in 1931, has returned to Vernonia to establish a cafe in the Shamrock beer parlor owned by Myrtle Loyer.

The proposed Scappoose-Vernonia road is under consideration as a PWA project. Investigation of the route is being made by William Pringle, Sr., county commissioner and U. W. Clark, road foreman.

TEN YEARS AGO—

C. Y. Bowers, vice president and general manager of the Washington Gas and Electric Company, which company recently purchased the Columbia Utilities company, now known as the Oregon Gas and Electric company visited in Vernonia, consulting with George Ford, superintendent of the local plant.

FIFTEEN YEARS AGO—

The men interested in drilling for oil between Banks and Buxton will start action at once.

A 2,000,000 paper and pulp mill is to be built in St. Helens. Wednesday's freight train left 41 empty cars to accommodate Vernonia shippers.



By EARL SNEEL, Secretary of State

Forty-two percent of the pedestrian fatalities of 1939 involved persons committing some obviously imprudent action at the time the accidents occurred, it was revealed today by Earl Snell, secretary of state.

These unsafe actions included jaywalking, crossing intersections against traffic signals or diagonally crossing major highways without taking adequate precautions, walking with traffic instead of facing it on highways, stepping off curbs without first looking both ways, walking into the side of passing cars, stepping out into the street from between parked cars or playing in the roadway.

Forty-nine percent of the pedestrian fatalities occurred while persons were crossing streets or highways, Snell's figures showed. This figure indicates the necessity of taking every precaution when starting across a busy highway or street, Snell declared.

"A common error made by pedestrians is to start across a street without looking for cars before stepping off the curb," Snell declared. "Studies of pedestrian accidents have shown that nearly half the pedestrians killed are struck before they are more than three steps away from the curb, indicating that they did not look for cars coming from their left before stepping into the street."

He urged persons to look to the left before stepping off curbs and then to the right before reaching the center of the street.

Illustrating the danger of walking along the highways with traffic instead of facing it, Snell's figures showed that 14 persons were killed

while walking on the right side of the highway against six deaths while walking on the left side. Jaywalking, or crossing streets between intersections, took 13 lives during the year.

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LODGES

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 Legion Hall — 8 P. M.
 John Grady, Commander

Vernonia F. O. E.
 (Fraternal Order of Eagles)
 Legion Hall
 Vernonia
 Friday Nights
 8 o'clock

Roy Barnes, W. P.
 Marvin Kamholz, W. Sec'y.

Knights of Pythias
 Harding Lodge No. 116
 Vernonia, Oregon
 Meetings:—I. O. O. F. Hall, Second and Fourth Mondays Each Month.

Pythian Sisters
 Vernonia Temple No. 61
 Vernonia, Oregon
 Meetings:—I. O. O. F. Hall Second and Fourth Wednesdays Each Month

Order of Eastern Star
 Nehalem Chapter 153, O. E. S.
 Regular Communication first and third Wednesdays of each month, at Masonic Temple. All visiting sisters and brothers welcome.
 Sara Drorbaugh, W. M. 1/40
 Mrs. Helen Dewey, Secretary

A. F. & A. M.
 Vernonia Lodge No. 184
 A. F. & A. M. meets at Masonic Temple, State Communication First Thursday of each month. Special called meetings on all other Thursdays, 7:30 p. m. Visitors most cordially welcome.
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COUNTY NEWS--

St. Helens--

ENGINEERS PROPOSE DEER ISLAND DIKING PROJECT—

Initial steps were taken this week toward the proposed diking and drainage improvement of approximately 4333 acres of lowlands of Deer Island and vicinity. This is a federal project, supervised by Major C. R. Moore of Portland, corps of United States engineers, under the flood control act of congress. The estimated cost is set at \$381,000.

A petition, signed by most of the landowners in the affected area, was filed in court by Russell E. Sewall of Portland, attorney for the proposed district, setting forth the objects of formation of the district. This is to reclaim the low, overflowed lands of Deer Island and acreage westerly on the mainland below the S. P. & S. Railroad grade by construction of levees, tide gates, pumping plant and interior drainage. The work is to be accomplished under supervision of the U. S. Engineers, the funds to be made available by this government agency, without cost or expense to the landowners.

Plans of the engineers provide that the levee will be constructed

to an elevation of 26 feet above sea level, which will protect approximately 4333 acres of land in the proposed district against any flood equal to the one of 1876 in the Columbia river. The levee will be about six miles in length, beginning on the mainland near the south end of the island, and extending around the island on the river side, and connecting with the mainland on the property of Dr. Arthur L. Canfield at Columbia Stock Ranch.

Expense of the project is estimated at \$381,000 by the U. S. engineers and construction contracts will be let as soon as the drainage district is organized and acquires the necessary right of way for the levees and other drainage works.

PUD HEARING TO OCCUR FEBRUARY 24—

A public hearing will be held by the hydroelectric commission of Oregon on Saturday, February 24, beginning at 1:00 o'clock p. m. in the Beaver Homes Grange hall near Goble to consider the preliminary petitions of voters of Columbia county for the formation of a peoples' utility district to be known as the Columbia River Peoples' Utility District. This dis-