

5-21-1926

City Club of Portland Bulletin vol. 06, no. 33 (1926-5-21)

City Club of Portland (Portland, Or.)

Follow this and additional works at: https://pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/oscdl_cityclub



Part of the [Urban Studies Commons](#), and the [Urban Studies and Planning Commons](#)

Let us know how access to this document benefits you.

Recommended Citation

City Club of Portland (Portland, Or.), "City Club of Portland Bulletin vol. 06, no. 33 (1926-5-21)" (1926). *City Club of Portland*. 69.

https://pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/oscdl_cityclub/69

This Bulletin is brought to you for free and open access. It has been accepted for inclusion in City Club of Portland by an authorized administrator of PDXScholar. Please contact us if we can make this document more accessible: pdxscholar@pdx.edu.

"Harmony in
Diversity"

PORTLAND CITY CLUB
BULLETIN

"Active
Citizenship"

VOLUME VI

PORTLAND, OREGON, MAY 21, 1926

NUMBER 33

FRIDAY, MAY 21

Hotel Benson, 12:10

Story of Northwest Discoveries

SPEAKER

EDWARD F. FLYNN

of St. Paul, Minnesota

*Director, Bureau of Public Relations
Great Northern Railway*

SUBJECT

"The Columbia River Historical Expedition"

The historical significance of the French pioneers in America, the honor which is being paid to the rugged men who penetrated the wilds of the Northwest and the monuments which are now being erected to those who made important discoveries and established permanent posts are sub-topics of the address which Mr. Flynn will give before the City Club this week. He will also insert a reference to newest development in railway extensions in Central and Southern Oregon.

Mr. Flynn is a distinguished lawyer on the staff of the General Counsel of the Great Northern Railway and is director of the Bureau of Public Relations. He is an eloquent speaker and has a fascinating subject.

NEXT WEEK—THE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS, THE CITY COMMISSIONERS AND DISTINGUISHED SPEAKERS WILL BE ENTERTAINED BY THE CITY CLUB IN HONOR OF THE OPENING OF THE NEW BURN-SIDE BRIDGE.

LET'S KEEP THE CITY CLUB GROWING

PORTLAND CITY CLUB BULLETIN

Published Weekly By

THE CITY CLUB OF PORTLAND

Office of the Club 607 Oregon Building
Telephone Broadway 8079

Subscription Price \$1.00 per year

Entered as Second Class Matter, October 29, 1920, at the
postoffice at Portland, Oregon, under act of March 3, 1879

City Club dues are \$1.00 per month, payable semi-
annually on May 1st, and November 1st. There is no
initiation fee.

CITY CLUB PURPOSE

*"To inform its members and the community in
public matters and to arouse them to a realization
of the obligations of citizenship."*

CITY CLUB NOTES

It is a demonstrated fact that a great
many Portland men would be glad to
join the City Club and are only waiting
for an invitation. Why not invite your
your friends to become members of the
City Club?

The new Board of Governors held its second
meeting last Monday in the grill of the Benson
Hotel.

The Club's committee on Milk sanitation in
this city presented a report which had thorough
discussion and was finally approved by the
Board.

The report deals with the importance of a
sanitary milk supply, the necessity for milk
inspection and discusses Portland's new Milk
Ordinance.

The conclusion of the committee is that proper
enforcement of the new ordinance will assure a
sanitary milk supply, will diminish the possi-
bilities of milk-borne epidemics, and will react
to the economic advancement of the milk pro-
ducers as a whole.

Dr. William Levin is chairman of the com-
mittee making the report and he was assisted
in the work by Dr. John R. Montague and C.
W. Platt.

NEW OFFICERS ARE INSTALLED

The officers who will direct the work of the
City Club during the present year have under-
taken their duties with energy and promptness.
They were all seated at the head table at last
Friday's meeting and were formally introduced
to the Club.

The new president, Ernest C. Willard, made
a favorable impression as he used the gavel for
the first time and opened the meeting with a few
terse remarks having a direct bearing on Club
work.

A few paragraphs from his address are given
herewith:

"Since I have known the City Club, no
president has been more fortunate than I am,
in the personnel of his co-workers, in the splendid
group of officers and governors whom you have
elected. During the past year the City Club
has maintained the high standard set by former
administrations. It is my hope that during the
coming year we will be successful in continuing
our work along the same instructive and con-
structive lines.

"It seems advisable at the beginning of the
new Club year to re-state the purposes of the
City Club as set forth in the constitution, which
are:

"To bring together congenial, forward-look-
ing men of divergent beliefs, politics and oc-
cupations; to assemble a library of information
relating to all phases of civic life; to study
and discuss impartially Portland's civic prob-
lems; to work for the improvement of the
city's economic and social conditions; to en-
courage a fellowship which shall breed ideas
and to endeavor intelligently to discharge the
obligations of citizenship; to work with all
high-purposed organizations for a greater
Portland."

"As you know, the Club is organized in seven
sections:—City Planning, Education, Govern-
ment Organization and Public Finance, Port
Development and Public Utilities, Public Health,
Public Safety and Defense, and Social Welfare—
each organized to study the problems in its
special field and to publish the results after a
thorough investigation. Service in these sec-
tions and on special committees affords an op-
portunity for the members of the City Club to
participate in work for the advancement of
public welfare and the improvement of municipal
conditions.

Continued on page 3

**ADVISORY BOARDS
BENEFIT SHIPPERS**

"A more tolerant understanding between railroad officials and the shippers has been brought about through regional advisory boards," said A. F. Steele, chairman of the Pacific Northwest Advisory Board, speaker at last Friday's City Club meeting. Cars have been more evenly distributed, shippers have experienced better service and the number of complaints has been materially reduced, said the speaker.

One immediate result of the organization of the Pacific Northwest Advisory Board, as explained by the speaker was that a bigger crop of wheat was moved with less cars than ever before, because they were properly distributed. Under the present system, the boards can order cars moved into territory where they are needed, regardless of what railroad owns them.

Direct results have been shown in all parts of the United States where Advisory boards are operating. Among the constructive accomplishments of the Advisory Boards are reported the following typical cases that illustrate the tremendous savings that can be made by co-operative effort between the shipper and the carrier.

During the last season before a board was organized there were 6000 cars of juice grapes handled in New York City and during this movement serious congestion occurred, embargoes were placed, fruit spoiled and a serious loss was sustained by both shipper and carrier. The first season after the Advisory Board started to function, 12,000 cars were handled with only slight congestion and the second year showed a total of 20,000 cars handled with no congestion whatever.

A large retail lumber yard in Philadelphia, by reason of expedited shipments through Advisory Board help, was able to show a 20% increase in business and at the same time cut the average yard stock down from nine million board feet to four million feet.

Central West retail lumber yards, due to certainty of deliveries, were able to cut yard stocks carried from "months" supplies to "weeks" supplies.

In Florida, due to congestion and embargoes, prices of all commodities were pyramiding dangerously. By mutual agreement and with mutual representation of shipper and carrier, a permit system was installed with wonderful results—the tension being let down gradually instead of with a crash and in all probabilities a serious crisis was avoided.

**VOTERS MUST DECIDE
ON CITY MEASURES**

The arguments both for and against the measures which are to be voted on in the City and County election have been prepared by C. C. Ludwig, executive secretary of the Tax Conservation Commission and member of the City Club, on request of the Board of Governors. They are presented herewith for the information of City Club members without recommendations.

An attempt is made in this sketch, first, to analyze briefly the provisions of each of the five measures to be voted on, and, second, to outline the arguments pro and con to each measure without expression of opinion as to their relative importance and weight.

County Road Bond Issue

This bond authorization is in the amount of \$2,500,000.00 and for a term of thirty years. It is understood that the County Commissioners contemplate issuing these bonds on the serial plan providing \$100,000.00 maturities from the sixth to the thirtieth years after date, inclusive. Not more than \$1,250,000 bonds may be issued in one year. It is planned to carry out the projects authorized and issue the bonds as soon as possible,—that is, within two years. The annual debt burden involved in this bond issue will vary during the next thirty years from a maximum of \$212,500.00 in 1923 to a minimum of \$104,500.00 in 1957.

Continued on page 4

NEW OFFICERS

Continued from page 2

"I trust that during the coming year, when you are called upon to assist in this committee work, you will avail yourselves of the opportunity, as your work will not only be of service to the Club members as a whole, but will bring each and every one of you into closer touch with the problems of this fast growing community.

"During the year it is the intention of your officers to arrange for short opening addresses prior to the principal address of the day, from the various members of our municipal government on the problems which are confronting them and on the work which they are proposing to carry out. In this way, the purposes for which the Club was organized, will be more closely linked with local problems.

CITY AND COUNTY MEASURES

Continued from page 3

The projects for which the bond money will be authorized are as follows:

1. Reconstructing and widening St. Helens Road (on lower Columbia River Highway) from 31st street to one mile north of Linnton.....	\$400,000.00
2. Changing and improving Pacific Highway from Virginia street to south county line (over Elk Rock Hill).....	\$125,000.00
3. Relocating and constructing Canyon Road, together with connections to Humphrey and Hewitt Boulevards and Scholls Ferry Road, maximum 5% grade, three miles.....	\$1,200,000.00
4. Capitol Highway reconstruction from end of Terwilliger Boulevard to Bertha Junction; and overhead crossing at Multnomah	\$85,000.00
5. Completing pavement of Columbia Boulevard from St. Johns to Sandy Road, 4½ miles.....	\$80,000.00
6. Widening roadbed and pavement, Columbia Highway (Sandy Road) from city limits to Fairview, 7 miles.....	\$200,000.00
7. Paving Fremont Street, East 42d to Sandy, 1½ miles.....	\$40,000.00
8. Paving Cully Road, from Fremont to Columbia Boulevard, 1½ miles.....	\$25,000.00
9. Paving Section Line Road, 82nd Street to Gresham, 7 miles.....	\$120,000.00
10. Paving Mt. Hood Loop, Gresham to county line, 4½ miles.....	\$90,000.00
11. Reconstructing and paving Broadway Drive (Patton Road), Grant Street to Edgewood Road, 1¼ miles.....	\$50,000.00
12. Paving East 52d Street, Foster Road to south county line, three miles.....	\$85,000.00
Total.....	\$2,500,000.00

The main arguments which have been advanced in favor of this bond issue are as follows:

First, each one of the road projects for which bond money is asked is regarded as an important traffic artery and needs to be improved immediately to take care of the growing traffic in and out of the city.

Second, the current road money which the

county receives is not sufficient, it is contended, to make these improvements on a pay-as-you-go basis, most of the current funds being required for fixed charges and maintenance.

Third, in view of the general satisfaction with the administration which is being given by the present Board of County Commissioners it is suggested that if these projects are necessary the time to undertake them is now while the expenditure of funds is in good hands.

Arguments which have been suggested against the county bond issue are as follows:

First, the term of the bonds (thirty years) seems unduly long in view of the uncertainty of the life of the improvement financed, both from the standpoint of physical depreciation and possible obsolescence. It is suggested by some that twenty or twenty-five years would be a safer term of years.

Second, the current revenues of the county, especially from the Motor Vehicle License Fund, are growing rapidly and it would seem desirable that, if the county's needs are so urgent as not to permit of paying-as-you-go, provision should at least be made that the current motor vehicle revenue should be applied to carrying this net burden. Under the law, however, an additional debt tax will be required. The general result will be to compel a very substantial increase in the road and bridge budgets of the county in the future.

Third, there has been some criticism against the bond issue on the ground that a dozen projects have been blanketed under one authorization. This criticism has been voiced particularly with respect to the inclusion of the Canyon Road project which will require \$1,200,000 of the \$2,500,000 bond issue. A protest against the inclusion of this project was made by the proponents of the Tualatin Tunnel project, it being their contention that a reconstruction of the Canyon Road according to modern standards would largely vitiate the arguments for the tunnel. This will be the probable result, but whether it is regarded as an argument against the bond issue or for the bond issue depends upon one's attitude toward the tunnel project. In view of the present uncertainty with respect to the tunnel project it is difficult to blame the County Commissioners for endeavoring to carry out their responsibility for the improvement of the major highways of the county, of which the Canyon Road is an important one.

City General Tax Levy

The old charter limitation for city tax levies was 8 mills. During and since the war it has

Continued on page 5

CITY AND COUNTY MEASURES

Continued from page 4

been necessary for the people periodically to levy special millage taxes beyond the 8 mills in order to provide sufficient revenue for the city to operate. In 1922 and 1923 a special 3 mill authorization was in effect. In 1924, 1925 and 1926 a special 2.2 mills authorization was in effect. The actual levies were less than these amounts but these special authorizations were regarded as tax limits. The actual city levies (exclusive of levies for debt purposes) for the past three years had been as follows:

	DOLLARS	MILLS
1924.....	\$3,134,639.00	10.30
1925.....	3,237,894.00	10.46
1926.....	3,417,900.00	10.53

The average levy for these three years was \$3,263,811. The proposed amendment abolishes the 8 mill provision and substitutes therefor the 6% increase rule of the State Constitution. In addition it provides a series of ten special levies, graduated from 3 mills for 1927 to .2 mill for 1936. The reduction in the special millages will have the effect of reducing the 6% increases that would otherwise be allowed.

The maximum levies permitted under this proposed amendment would vary between \$3,951,137 (12.16 mills) for 1927, and \$5,093,122 (15.67 mills) for 1936. This is on the assumption that the assessed valuation remains static. If the valuation show a moderate increase during this ten year period the dollar levies will be slightly larger but the millages will be slightly less. If actual levies for the next ten years are permitted up to the maximum limits allowed by this proposed charter amendment the average city levy exclusive of debt will be \$4,520,785 on the basis of a static valuation, \$4,557,985 on the basis of a \$5,000,000 annual increase in valuation, and \$4,595,185 on the basis of a \$10,000,000 annual increase in valuation. This compares with an average total levy for the last three years of \$3,263,811.

The arguments in favor of this amendment are as follows:

First, it eliminates the necessity for frequent special elections for the renewal of special levy authorizations.

Second, it puts the tax limitations of the city charter after 1936 on the same basis as the tax limitation of the Constitution of the State. It does away with limitations in terms of mills which have little relation to the needs of the city.

Third, it is stated that the proposed amendment would operate only as a tax limit and that

the budget jurisdiction both of the Council and of the Tax Supervising and Conservation Commission could be effective within that limit.

The only argument which has been raised against this amendment is the large increase provided the first year of the ten—that is, in 1927. The maximum levy permitted for 1927, if the valuation remains the same, is \$3,951,137, which is an increase of \$53,3237 over the actual levy for 1926.

City Police and Fire Salary Increase Levy

This amendment to the city charter authorizes a special levy of not to exceed 1¼ mills each year for twenty years to provide a fund for increasing the salaries of the Police Bureau and Fire Bureau. This levy is outside of existing budget and tax limitations. The amendment provides a division of the proceeds of the special millage levy as follows: three-fourths of a mill for the Fire Bureau and one-half mill for the Police Bureau. If the valuation next year is the same as this year, namely, \$325,000,000, and this special levy is authorized and levied to the full amount, it will provide \$406,250.00, of which \$243,750.00 would be for Fire Bureau increases and \$162,500.00 for Police Bureau increases. These amounts would provide increases over the present year's personal service appropriations for the two bureaus as follows: 25.6% for the Fire Bureau and 21.3% for the Police Bureau. It is understood that the Council is committed to the principle of equal salary rates for policemen and firemen. If that is the case, and assuming that all salaries would be increased the same percent, the additional money allowed the Police Bureau would permit patrolmen to be increased approximately from \$155.00 per month to \$187.00 per month, or from \$2060.00 per year to \$2244.00 per year. The additional money for the Fire Bureau could not be applied to larger increases if the principle of parity of rates is preserved.

The main arguments in favor of this amendment are as follows:

First. The policemen and firemen do not now receive a living wage.

Second. Other cities, particularly Pacific Coast cities, pay higher rates.

Third. Low wages make it difficult for the officers, especially policemen, to resist the temptations incident to their work.

Fourth. The morale of the public service is raised by the payment of adequate salaries.

The arguments against the proposed amendment are: First, the distribution of money pro-

vided by the special millage tax levy, being arbitrarily three-fourths of a mill and one-half of a mill, is inflexible and not readily adaptable to circumstances. For instance, if it should happen that the number of employees in the Police Bureau should be substantially increased as compared with the Fire Bureau it would mean a still greater surplus accruing to the Fire Bureau, which would not be available for use if the principle of parity of rates was preserved.

Second, millage taxes are arbitrary and have no definite relation to the needs or purpose for which they are levied.

Third, increases of city salaries ought not to be provided for two bureaus without considering the city as a whole. Piece-meal consideration of the problem is not fair to the entire personnel of the city and is not a real solution.

Fourth, the argument as to the raising of morale by the payment of adequate salaries is limited in view of the tenure feature of civil service.

Without commenting on these arguments pro or con a few facts will be given relating to the "other city" argument. The "International Fire Fighter" gives the following rates of pay as of March 31, 1925, for fourth year firemen in the twenty cities which are in Portland's population class:—that is, ten cities next larger and ten cities next smaller according to the census:—

CITIES	RATES PER YEAR
Washington, D. C.	\$ 2,100.00
Newark	\$2,200.00 to \$2,300.00
Minneapolis	2,040.00
Cincinnati	1,500.00
New Orleans	1,500.00
Kansas City	1,620.00
Indiana	1,734.00
Rochester	?
Seattle	2,160.00
Jersey City	2,250.00
Portland	1,860.00
Denver	1,920.00
Toledo	1,800.00
Columbus	1,920.00
Louisville—per day	4.00
Providence	?
St. Paul	1,760.00
Oakland	1,980.00
Atlanta	1,680.00
Akron	1,980.00
Omaha	1,800.00

It will be noted that nine of these cities pay salaries larger than Portland and nine pay less

than Portland. It is probably true that some of the cities cited have granted increases since March 31, 1925. The comparative figures used by the Firemen's and Policemen's Committee are limited to Pacific Coast cities which, according to population, seem to be above the national average for police and fire salaries.

City Bond Issue for Street Widening

This charter amendment authorizes a city bond issue of \$1,500,000.00, or more, to pay three-quarters of the cost of four street widening projects which are traffic arteries approaching the Willamette bridges:

1. Widening of East Larabee, Williams, etc. (East approach to Broadway Bridge)	\$608,600.00
2. East Burnside to Sandy and East Glisan (East approach to Burnside Bridge)	\$745,000.00
3. Powell Street and others (East approach to Ross Island Bridge)	\$380,000.00
4. West approach to Ross Island Bridge	\$230,000.00
Total	\$1,963,600.00

This bond issue is excluded from the general bonding limit of the city charter. Provision is made for issuing additional bonds to take care of any deficit over the estimates resulting from additional court awards for damages. The bonds will be serial bonds, maturing from three to thirty years, inclusive. The annual debt burden for thirty years varies from an approximate maximum of \$12,500.00 in 1930 to an approximate minimum of \$73,150.00 in 1957.

The one argument for this bond issue is the paramount necessity for adequate approaches to the bridges, particularly the two new bridges which are to be opened this year—that is, the Burnside and Ross Island. It is universally admitted that the capacity of these bridges cannot be used if the bottle-neck approaches are not eliminated by substantial widening proceedings such as those contemplated in connection with this amendment.

The one argument against the bond issue is with respect to the small percent of the cost of the widening projects which is to be assessed to benefitted property. In many large cities street widening projects involving both special and general benefits have as high percentages as 40% to 50% assessed to benefitted property and it is thought that the low percentage in this case might become a bad precedent for future projects of this kind.