

The Informal Story of HOW THE OREGON WHEAT COMMISSION WAS FORMED

By Marion T. Weatherford

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



The author of this informal story of the formation of the Oregon Wheat Commission, Marion T. Weatherford, needs no introduction to most Oregon people engaged in agriculture, and particularly those who produce wheat. Marion is a wheat and cattle producer in Gilliam County whose operation lies in the Shuttler Flat area, about 12 miles south of the town of Arlington. He is of a pioneer family. His grandfather emigrated to Oregon in 1861 by ox team and farmed in what is now Morrow County until 1881, when he homesteaded on Shuttler Flat and raised the first crop of wheat to be produced in Gilliam County. The original homestead is still included in the current Weatherford operation.

Mr. Weatherford has been extremely active in all phases of the state's wheat industry and agricultural pursuits in general. His various activities are much too numerous to be listed in their entirety here, but mention must be made of a part of them. They include a term as President of the Eastern Oregon Wheat League (now Oregon Wheat Growers League) after serving on key committees and lesser offices in the organization; 10 years on the Oregon Wheat Commission, four years of which he served as chairman; twenty-one years as chairman of the P.N.W. Grain & Grain Products Association representing the Wheat Commission, five years as President of the Oregon Agricultural Research Council, and two years as President of the Agri Business Council of Oregon. His many other activities combine with those mentioned to catalogue him as one of the most devoted and dedicated individuals in the state who has worked in the interests of the wheat industry as well as Oregon agriculture in general. You will enjoy his breezy informal account of events leading up to and the actual formation of the Oregon Wheat Commission.

PREFACE

Doctor D. D. Hill, in collaboration with the late E. R. Jackman, has done a wonderful job of writing the Story of the Oregon Wheat Commission in a booklet published by the Oregon Wheat Commission in 1960 and revised in 1965, entitled "They Broke the Trail." The Commission was established in 1947, and after twenty years some of us thought it would be interesting to have a twenty-year reunion. Most of the original commission members were on hand for that reunion in Pendleton on March 7, 1967. There were the usual reminiscences and each of us spoke on something about the trials and tribulations of getting the Commission into business, including the reason for it, the efforts in getting a bill written, and passed by the legislature, and in getting the machinery of the Commission moving.

Some one at that twenty-year reunion suggested I should write down what I know of this period of time and effort. Recently, Scotty McEwen, now Administrator of the Commission, has reminded me again and asked that the job be done.

So, while this bit of work will not compare to the scholarly work done by Dr. Hill in "They Broke the Trail", I take my pen in hand! It will probably be slow moving and rather stuffy, but anyone is at liberty to stop reading at any time. To me, it is an interesting story, and I'll try to tell it as interestingly as I can.

It seems almost necessary to begin this narrative with a brief history of the Eastern Oregon Wheat League, if we are to understand why they asked that a Wheat Commission be formed. And that history begins with Frank Ballard, then assistant director of the Extension Service, Oregon Agricultural College, Corvallis, Oregon.

Frank had a burning desire to help the farmer and ranchers of Oregon develop the economy of the State by developing agriculture in the state. He felt that if there could be more communication between producers within commodity groups that there would be more progress. So, he arranged a meeting for wheat producers to be held in Moro, Oregon, February 11-13, 1926. The men listened for two days to talks about production and marketing, transportation, diseases of wheat, tillage practices, and just plain visited with each other. Oregon wheat farmers have always been a progressive lot, and the value of this conference was apparent to everyone. So, they decided to make it an annual event, and formed at that very meeting the organization known as The Eastern Oregon Wheat League.

(This is just one small example of the leadership Frank Ballard has given to Oregon Agriculture. In my estimation, Oregon Agriculture owes Frank a debt of gratitude we will never be able to repay.)

During the next twenty years, and continuing to the present, annual meetings were held. The framework of a solid organization formed rapidly with the help of Charlie Smith who acted as secretary for over fifteen years. Besides the officers there were the various standing committees with their chairmen and vice chairmen.

At the annual meetings, men were asked to distribute themselves among the various committees to consider and discuss the problems in that field, and to express their thinking through resolutions to be submitted to the whole group and acted upon. During the interim between meetings, the officers and the committee chairmen were supposed to read the paper and keep their ears attuned for any situations that might arise which might require some action.

The dues of the organization were \$1.00 per year, and there was seldom any money in the treasury after paying for the printing of the annual convention "Proceedings." Consequently, when some especially urgent situation would arise which required action, a call would be made to a few men whom everyone knew could be counted on to contribute ten or twenty or twenty-five dollars to take care of the expense of doing what needed to be done. I suppose just as a child grows-becoming aware of first his family, then his community, his town, his state-and then the nation and then-glory be-the whole world just so did the wheat growers of Oregon grow in their knowledge of wheat production from the plow to market. The more they learned and studied, the more they saw that needed to be done. And it was most frustrating not to be able to do the things for themselves that they could see needed desperately to be done.

There were many discussions over the years of how more money could be drawn into the treasury. A life member plan was suggested and adopted. Associate memberships at a fee higher than the \$1.00 charged to farmer members was proposed and adopted. And, there were other schemes such as raising the dues, starting an insurance company, publishing a money-making magazine, and many others. None of them seemed to have much appeal.

Finally, with yields pretty good and prices fairly high and everyone able to pay their bills and maybe paint the yard fence to boot, but with the ominous clouds of over-production clearly visible, and all the problems that would bring, the Wheat League decided to make a serious attempt to find an equitable way of providing a reasonable amount of money on a continuing basis for working on their own problems.

So, in mid-1945, Wheat League President Jim Beamer appointed a committee to study the problem and to bring back a recommendation at the 1946 meeting to be held in La Grande, Oregon on December 16, 17 and 18. The committee chairman was Jens Terjeson and the three committee members working with him were H. R. (Ike) Weatherford, my brother, Bob Wood and myself. The name of the committee was the "Special Committee on Wheat Disposal and Market Development." The committee report is rather long to include in this paper, but it must be repeated here to show what the thinking of Wheat League members was at that time. It was drawn from pages 79 and 80 of the Proceedings of the Nineteenth Annual Meeting of the Eastern Oregon Wheat League, La Grande, Oregon, December 16-18, 1946.

The committee specifically asked that a Wheat Commission be created by Legislative act, with the power to tax each bushel of wheat entering commercial channels by 1/2 cent to finance its operations. The report follows:

A REPORT TO THE EASTERN OREGON WHEAT LEAGUE FROM THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON WHEAT DISPOSAL AND MARKET DEVELOPMENT

December 16, 1946

This special committee, after one meeting in Pendleton, and after the individual members have given considerable thought to the subject, and after studying laws in Maine, Idaho and Washington, presents the attached PLAN to the Eastern Oregon Wheat League. In explanation, the committee was governed by the following facts:

1. The nation is geared to production of more wheat than can be consumed in this country for food, feed and seed.
2. The present good market cannot be expected to last forever because now we are giving away the surplus.
3. Acreage control is costly and in itself tends to intensify depressions by reducing labor for freight, supplies, milling, and in many other ways.
4. Wheat growers must, therefore, be considering plans on how to cope with a surplus when it develops. These plans must take into consideration expansion of outlets for present products, development of varieties that will better fit milling uses, and additional uses for wheat such as industrial and feed.

The committee therefore submits for your consideration the following plan.

PLAN FOR IMPROVING WHEAT MARKETING AND FOR PACIFIC NORTHWEST DISPOSAL

- 1) Creation of an Oregon Wheat Commission by legislative act. 2. This commission to be financed by a tax of one-half cent per bushel on all wheat entering commercial channels in Oregon.
3. An appeal to organizations of wheat growers in Washington and Idaho to form similar commissions so that wheat from this area could be treated as a unit in any industrial disposal plans. If Washington and Idaho farmers do not see fit to go along with us, we believe we should go ahead with this anyhow in Oregon.
4. We recommend that the Commission have five members, all of whom are wheat producers, three from the Columbia Basin, one from other counties of Eastern Oregon, and one from Western Oregon. The Commission would naturally be expected at all times to call for advisory help from such organizations as the millers, the state College, the state department of agriculture, warehousemen's organizations, and others.
5. Amount of money such a tax would raise. We estimate that in Oregon the tax would raise \$75,000 per year, on the average, and that if all three states should come in, the annual fund would be about \$350,000.
- 6) Purposes for which this money would be used:
 - a) Study of industrial uses.
 - b) Construction of pilot plants or laboratories if such studies show the project to be necessary.
 - c) Advertising the special wheats grown here in order to attract more eastern mills.
 - d) Trade expansion for Pacific Northwest wheats in other parts of the United States.
 - e) Trade expansion for special pastry flours in foreign countries, particularly South America and the Orient.
 - f) Cooperation with Federal research laboratories. (These laboratories have done wonderful work with soybeans, fruit products, peanuts, cotton, and other things, but have done very little worthwhile work on wheat).
 - g) Cooperate with state experiment stations, especially in the production of larger supplies of clean seed.
 - h) Studies of transportation rates and initiation of measures to iron out injustices.
 - i) Study of National wheat programs and support of the most feasible of all long-range plans.
 - j) Development of enlarged feed outlets for wheat. (This might take the form, for example, of prizes for best showing of wheat fed steers at Pacific International Livestock Exposition and the local 4-H fairs, etc.)
7. The Commission should hire a competent executive secretary to carry out the objectives above. This man in turn would, with appropriate authorization of the Commission, at times be expected to hire qualified engineers, chemists, rate experts, advertising firms, or other specialists needed to carry our particular programs.

8. The money should be collected from the first commercial buyer of the wheat, who would be required to make periodic returns to the State Treasurer, much as the gasoline tax is now collected.

9. The central office of the Commission should be in Eastern Oregon.

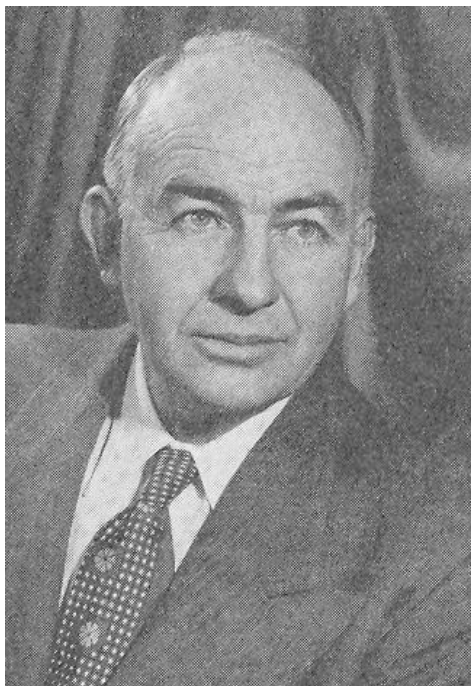
10. The money collected would go to the State Treasurer and be expended as other State funds are, with the benefit of state audits. Control of expenditures should be with the Commission, and all money so collected should be earmarked for sole use by the Commission. Funds should be non-transferable, and none should revert to the General fund.

11. The Commissioners should serve without salary but should be paid their expenses plus salary for the days actually devoted to the work of the Commission.

12. This committee recommends that the above points be embodied in a law to be introduced in the forthcoming legislature and recommends that the Wheat League circularize legislative members asking for their support.

This report was adopted by the General Assembly at La Grande, Oregon, December 18, 1946.

During the year 1946 I had been Vice President of the League and subsequently was elected President at the 1946 annual meeting at La Grande. At the executive meeting held just after the "convention" had ended and I had assumed my job, someone suggested that since the report of the Special Committee had been adopted unanimously we had better be getting along with the job of seeing to it that the resolution was carried out. It was proposed that Jens Terjeson and I be delegated to go to Salem where the Legislature would soon be meeting, to have a bill drawn and introduced. Then we should work to get the legislation passed and signed by the Governor. As I think back over that meeting, it seems to me there was no doubt of any kind in anyone's mind that the legislature would pass the bill and that the Governor would sign it.



Jens Terjeson, Helix, left, was the Chairman of the Wheat League "Special Committee on Wheat Disposal and Market Development." The adoption of his committee's report resulted in League action to form the first Wheat Commission in the U.S. Jens served as the first chairman of the group.

In later years I have come to view this assignment as an incredible one. The assignment was to get a bill written and passed into law. There were no instructions to have a bill written and then return it to the executive committee for approval. Perhaps having heard that the Camel was the result of the work of a committee, and thus fearing what kind of a law a committee would produce, they felt the lesser evil would be to leave it to Terjeson and Weatherford. Of course, when the bill was introduced and printed, we sent several copies to the officers and committee chairmen, but there was no static from the hinterland, and there were no suggestions nor criticism.

Terjeson and I agreed to undertake the job and we had a little private talk about how we would go about this. So far as I know, neither one of us had ever even read any part of the Oregon Laws, and I'm sure we didn't have the slightest idea of how to go about getting new legislation drawn up. Between the two of us, however, we had one slight contact with the legal profession. One of my uncles was a lawyer, so we decided to send him the report of the Special Committee and ask him if he would prepare a bill to be introduced in the Legislature.

To make sure he had the thinking of the group I even called him on the phone long distance at his home in the Willamette Valley and we had a long talk about it. True to his word, my Uncle drafted a bill for us. It arrived in the mail about the first of January and I read it eagerly. I was just sure it would be what we wanted. But dog-gone it, somewhere in his musings, Uncle got to making decisions of what he thought should be in the bill instead of following the report of the Special Committee, and the bill didn't bear the remotest resemblance to what we had in mind.

What should we do? Time was getting short. Somewhere along the line we had heard that the Attorney General had a staff of attorneys assigned to the legislators to prepare bills for them. But we couldn't spare the time for an attorney to study and understand the thinking of a group of men who had been working on this specific matter for years.

There seemed only one way to proceed. Of course, I knew I didn't have the training and ability to properly draft a bill, but I decided to ignore all that and pretend I was an attorney and draw up a bill. I figured if I could put on paper what we wanted the bill to include, and maybe if we were lucky enough to get the right man, he could put into proper language what we wanted to have in the bill. So that is what I did. Terjeson didn't seem to have any further suggestion, so we agreed to proceed.

As I recall, we let the Legislature get settled down for a week or two before we went down to Salem. But eventually we arrived there on a Monday and got a corner room on the third floor of the old Senator Hotel. It wasn't a very large room, but it had twin beds and we got along all right. Our first move was to go up to the Capitol and look around. Seems like I had a pretty good acquaintanceship with Ernest Fatland who was serving in the Senate. He lived in Condon and served three or four of the principal wheat counties in the Columbia Basin. Just about the first man we met was Ernie Fatland, and he wanted to know what we were doing down there. We explained that we had to find someone to write this bill for us and then find someone to introduce it. Ernie said he would ask one of the Legislative Council to prepare the bill, and he would introduce it for us.

At this point we had our best fortune. Ernie took us to a man named Fred Miller, a man about our age and with a farm background. He had tremendous ability, and a great deal of understanding and compassion for two country boys trying to do a job they didn't know anything about. Over the next two or three weeks we had many long talks with Fred. He wrote, and rewrote, and then rewrote again. Jens and I made this one single matter our prime concern.

And here developed a pattern of attitudes Jens and I were to use for several years to come. Jens is naturally very cautious by nature, and when he is working with something that concerns someone else, he is ultra cautious and conservative. I could see that if we were to both be cautious and conservative, we would not likely get anything done. So, here we were, I was proposing, suggesting, urging, and a lot of other adjectives I can't think of now, while Jens was deliberate, reluctant, wanting to consider and go over everything many many times. But, whenever Jens was convinced my thinking was good, he would always agree. When I thought Jens had the edge on the discussion, then I would agree.

So, Fred Miller took that crude draft I had written and created for use the wheat commission bill we thought we needed.

By the time the bill was prepared and ready to be introduced, we had seen all the Eastern Oregon legislators many times and had become acquainted with all the other agriculturalists at the session, as well as many others. We had found out that any bill carrying a tax must originate in the House rather than the Senate. So, Ernie Fatland got 18 Senators and Representatives to put their name on the bill as sponsors and someone dropped it into the hopper in the House. The next day our "Bill for an Act" was in printed form.

In an effort to get influential people on our side we made a special effort to talk to them and explain what the wheat people had in mind. It's a good thing we did, too, because we found there were a great many questions in the minds of such people as the heads of the general farm organizations, other commodity groups, and certain governmental bodies. So, we talked with them all, and I guess, won them all.

I think it would be difficult to assess the help given to us by the political writer for The Oregonian, Larry Smyth. Larry knew quite a lot about Jens Terjeson's career on the football gridiron at the University of Oregon. To hear Larry tell it, or to read the record book, Jens was really great. Larry had a very high regard for Jens and because I was tagging along, took us both under his wing. To begin with, he quizzed us closely on what we knew about this business of lobbying. He soon found out we knew nothing, so he set forth two rules. He checked closely to see that we were following his instructions. The first rule was to get to know, by sight at least, every legislator and every other person who spent his time in the Capitol building. This included State employees, lobbyists, everyone. Within two weeks we told him we thought we could do pretty well on rule number one. The next rule was to watch to see who talked to who (or is it whom?). He insisted this was the most important. The implications were obvious.

Larry liked to smoke cigars and always seemed to be out. He just helped himself to about six fifteen-cent cigars out of my pocket every day, always with a grin and a thank you. And he kept up a running attack on us whenever he could catch us near or with some legislators, warning them not to vote for our bill. He would claim we were country slickers down there to slicker the Legislators. Every time he caught us going into a dining room for the evening meal he would get as many legislators as he could to come over and eat with us, with him included of course, and see to it that we paid the bill.

The net result of all this was that very soon every one of the legislators knew our names, where we were from, and what bill we wanted passed.

It would be risky to mention from memory some of the outstanding men who served in the Oregon Legislature in 1947 because of the probability of omitting perhaps the most outstanding person. Even so, a special note should be made of a few of them, even if all cannot be equally treated. There was Dean Walker, a rancher from Independence who knew more about taxes than any man there, and who had an intense interest in all of agriculture, and a topflight man. Our own Carl Engdahl, from Pendleton, was a tower of strength and always helpful. Angus Gibson with his Scotch wit and bur-r-r of a tongue, always kidding-almost needling -yet in a friendly way. Giles French, an authority on taxes and many other things, but who often voted no-so I thought-when he was actually in favor. Senate President Marshall Cornett, quick of mind, ran a taught ship. Then, of course, the old potato farmer from Klamath Falls with his gnarled hands, bowed leg from fracture, keen wit, and perceptive mind, Henry Seeman. These men were our friends, as well as all the other members of the House and Senate.

The most impressive thing in favor of the passage of our bill was the reputation of the Eastern Oregon Wheat League. The annual meetings of the League were rotated from town to town in Eastern Oregon, and as a result of this, the people in Eastern Oregon had had a good opportunity to get acquainted with the members of the League, their philosophy and their sincerity. They knew them as hard working, intelligent, and progressive farmers. The League had never, in all its history of 19 years, come out for crackpot schemes or far-out programs. I am sure Jens and I felt very proud to be representing and working for an organization which was held in such high regard. Inevitably the people on the Western side of our dividing mountains came to have some knowledge of the League because many of them had made the trek to one or more of the annual meetings. Bankers, railroad men, machinery representatives, and of course the Governor.

The Governor of Oregon was almost always the banquet speaker at the annual meetings. In those days, it was as necessary to the Governor that he be the banquet speaker at the Wheat League convention as it is today that he ride in the parade at the Pendleton Roundup! It is easy to see, therefore, how two fellows without any experience at all in lobbying matters were able to get a bill passed if they were representing the Eastern Oregon Wheat League.

House Bill # 176 came up for hearing in the House Agriculture Committee and we presented our testimony for the bill. It was voted out unanimously, with a "do pass." When the bill came to the floor of the House for a vote, it is my recollection that Mr. Children, Chairman of the House Agricultural Committee, carried the bill. After a short explanation, the Speaker called for the roll call vote. The vote for passage was unanimous. I still feel a warm glow within when I remember how almost every member of the House looked up at Jens and me in the Gallery and smiled when they cast their vote!

About four working days later the bill was considered by the Senate Agriculture Committee and we again presented our testimony for the bill. Again, the bill was reported unanimously with a "do pass."

For what it may be worth, we found that with two men working together in such a situation a much better statement can be developed. What one man forgets, the other remembers. It's good technique.

When our bill came on the Senate Calendar, it was near the bottom of the list. One of the preceding bills provoked a first-class donnybrook and before it was settled everyone on the floor was mad. Jens and I were scared to death our bill might be the victim of someone's animosity toward another legislator, but we were saved by the bell. Senate President Marshall looked up in the balcony at us and declared the balance of the calendar would be taken up at the next session. Then the session was adjourned. Whew!

The next day, after all the preliminary palaver, necessary to conduct the daily business, was completed, our bill was called up for consideration. Quiet Carl Engdahl carried the bill, as they say, and made his little explanation. He urged his colleagues to vote for the bill. The bill carried 29 to 1. The dissenting voter was lawyer Eugene Marsh from McMinnville. Gene Marsh was, and is, a most competent and respected man. His negative vote bothered us very much. So, later on, we went up to him and asked him why he voted against the bill. With a wry smile he said, "Well, I just didn't want you fellows to think getting a bill through the Legislature is so damned easy!"

It should be mentioned that we were constantly in touch with the Wheat League throughout our stay in Salem. This was done mainly through a telephone call to Ralph McEwen, who was President of the League that year. He, in turn, contacted the secretary and anyone else he could get in touch with. In this way we had periodic conferences, especially when there was something to report.

The bill was sent to the Governor and we settled in for the long wait. We found out then that every governor has a legal advisor who reviews every bill reaching the governor's desk. He studies it, evaluates it, and makes what he feels is an objective report to the governor. The governor obviously leans heavily on the opinion written by his attorney.

Governor Snell was no stranger to us, of course. His father and my mother had the same parents and he had shared our home for a time in his youth. The last time he and I had been together for more than a few minutes was when I rode down the Columbia River Highway to Portland with him. He was going to school, having decided on a career in politics, and I was running away from the dusty ranch. This was in 1924. In spite of our long-standing ties of friendship and consanguinity, we knew enough not to try to hurry up the consideration of our bill. The Governor's attorney, or legal counsel, was Wilbur Henderson from Portland. Henderson made an imposing appearance with his bushy eyebrows, his erect carriage, and his glasses that hung on a black string around his neck, a lorgnette sort of glasses.

Well, we waited and waited. We made it perfectly clear to the Governor's secretary that we would be waiting in the lobby if the Governor wished to discuss the bill with us-when he got ready and we hoped he would. While we were often seen by her, we didn't press the matter. Finally, after days and days of waiting, Jens felt that he just couldn't stay down in Salem any longer. We had already been there about six or seven weeks. The pressure was building up. We felt quite a responsibility in this undertaking, and I imagine unconsciously, the tension was building up within us. Anyway, it was time to plow, so Jens packed his bag and left.

It always amazes me to find life so ironical. Jens couldn't have been gone more than two hours when the Governor's secretary came out to me and said, "The Governor would like to see you men now."

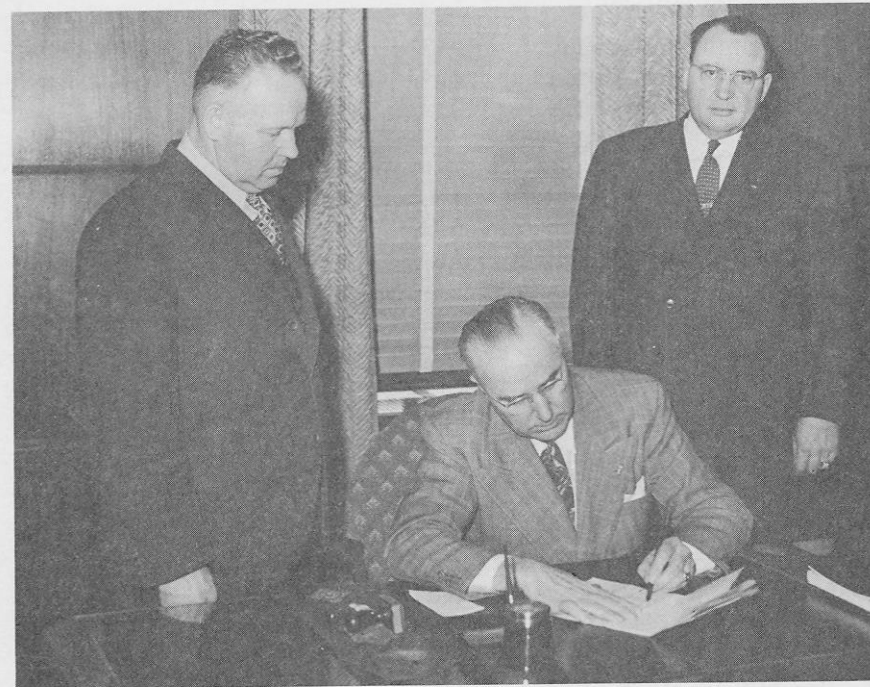
The Governor took me into his small private office and I explained that Terjeson had been called home! He told me that his legal advisor had made a very comprehensive study of our bill and had found some glaring inadequacies in it. He wanted me to study the report. "If you will just sit there and review it, I will sign some mail," said Mr. Snell. So, I scrutinized it carefully.

When he had finished signing his mail, he said, "You can see from Wilbur's report that there are many faults with this bill. Nevertheless, I'll do whatever you want to do. We can send it back to the House and Senate to have these corrections made, or I'll sign it. It's up to you." Without hesitating an instant, I said "Sign it." He seemed surprised and wanted to know how I could be so sure I wanted him to sign it. I explained that we had given much more than ordinary thought and consideration to the drafting of this bill. The bill had been examined by many lawyers in the House and Senate. Each one had mentioned some serious faults, but that not one of those serious faults had been mentioned by Mr. Henderson. Nor, had the faults found by one attorney ever been mentioned by any other attorney. So, I concluded that any attorney who had not authored a bill, a contract, or any other legal document, would find some fault with the language and would wish to revise it. Therefore, I said we were willing to live with the bill before him, and we felt he should sign it.

Earl said, "Well, if that's the way you feel about it, I'll sign it."

He called his secretary and asked to have the photographer sent over immediately. At that point, the Governor's business partner, David L. Lemon from Arlington, was shown into the office. Dave was an old friend of our family and I was glad to see him. After chatting a few minutes, we moved out into the formal office where the photographer snapped the Governor signing the bill with D. L. Lemon and me standing behind him.

The law-making procedure allows either house to call back a bill, even after it has been signed by the Governor, in the event someone wants to have the bill re-considered. I figured that our bill would be more quickly forgotten, and thus be less subject to recall, if there was no one around to remind them of it, so I left the Capitol, hurried down to the Senator Hotel, packed my bag, and got out of town. As some people in the South say, I was "high behind."



Standing at left: Governor Snell's business partner David L. Lemon, Arlington. Center, seated: Governor Earl Snell signing the Wheat Commission Law. Standing, at right: Marion T. Weatherford, Arlington, who piloted the legislation through the Oregon Legislature.

There is an interesting little sequel to the opinion written by Mr. Henderson. None of the objections he mentioned has ever been raised by anyone. None of the other faults suggested by others has ever been mentioned. Yet, there was a fault in the bill, one not thought of by anyone, and which is probably still a debatable issue. At least it is in my mind.

The bill provided for a tax of 1/2 cent per bushel to be paid on every bushel of wheat entering commercial channels. The tax would be deducted from the sale price by the first purchaser and paid over to the Wheat Commission. This part caused no trouble, but when we later reviewed the question of how the tax would be collected on wheat that was put under Commodity Credit Corporation loan, the problem got sticky. If

the farmer redeemed his wheat and sold it to a grain buyer, there would be no trouble. But what if the farmer forfeited his wheat and the C.C.C. kept the wheat? The loan was not a recourse loan and the Wheat Commission could have no way to collect the tax unless the C.C.C. would accept the language of the Act as constituting a lien on the wheat. This they refused to do. Some solicitor decided the law was not binding on the Federal Government. We were left with two courses: either bring suit against the C.C.C. to resolve the issue or wait until the legislature convened and ask for an amendment to the act. We did the latter, with no problems, although this action was not made necessary until 1951, which was 4 years after the Commission had been established.

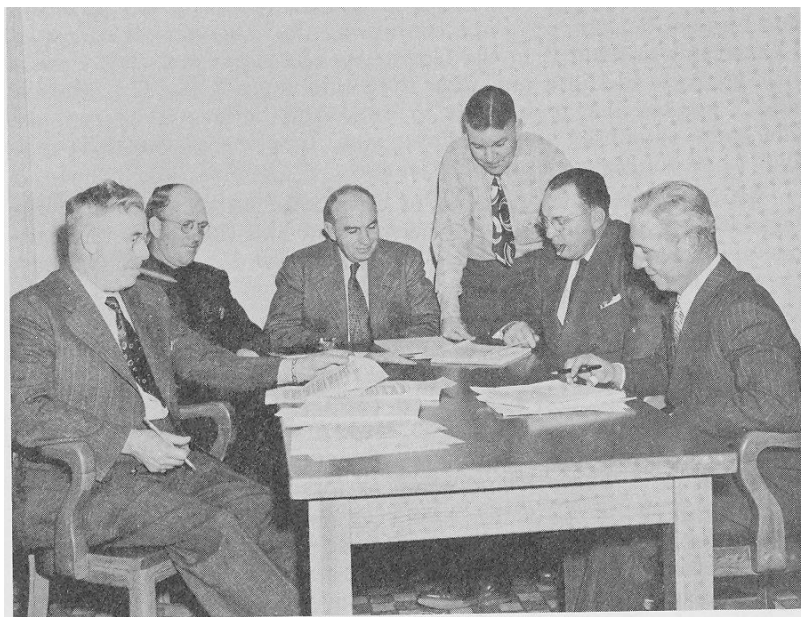
One last and interesting action took place before I left Salem that day. The Act which the Governor had just signed provided for a commission of five wheat growers. One was to be from the Willamette Valley, one from East of the Blue Mountains, and three from the wheat counties of the Columbia Basin in Oregon. We recognized that the Governor would need help in selecting these men.

Anticipating passage of the bill, we undertook to ask knowledgeable persons to suggest to us names of men whom they felt would be good to serve in this capacity. We wrote to the Dean of the School of Agriculture, Dean Schoenfeld at Oregon State Agricultural College. We also wrote Frank Ballard, Director of the Extension Service at O.A.C., to Ervin Peterson, State Director of Agriculture, and to others, perhaps totaling ten prominent persons in all. We received a list of qualified men from each of them.

I then sat down at my typewriter and made a list of all those names that were suggested. At the top was a heading "These men have been suggested by prominent people as being well qualified to serve on the Wheat Commission." Then I took a second page and typed a list of two men for each position on the proposed commission, making ten names in all. At the top of the sheet was a heading, "Either of these men are eminently qualified to serve on the Wheat Commission." Then, I took a third page and wrote at the top, "If I were Governor, I would appoint the following five men to serve on the Wheat Commission."

Well, as I left the Governor's office, I stopped by his secretary and handed her the envelope containing the three sheets of paper. I asked her to hand it to the Governor. She suggested that I could just go back in there and give it to him myself, but I explained that I wanted her to hand it to him. And believe it or not, the Governor appointed four of those men. In place of the fifth man that I had suggested, he appointed me!

After the statutory number of days following the close of the legislature had passed, the Act became law and the Governor made his appointments. That is the story of how the Oregon Wheat Commission came into being.



OREGON WHEAT COMMISSION—1947—Seated left to right: W. J. Enschede, Hillsboro; Millard Eakin, Grass Valley; Jens Terjeson, Pendleton, Chairman; Marion T. Weatherford, Arlington, Vice Chairman; Ralph McEwen, Jr., Haines. Standing: E. J. Bell, Administrator.

I think it is fitting and of interest to include in this material, the initial policy statement of the Oregon Wheat Commission which was formulated at its first meeting held in Portland, Oregon on April 21, 1947, and has served the Oregon wheat industry so well for so many years. Dr. D. D. Hill, first ex-officio Commission Member representing Oregon State University, recorded the thinking of the first Wheat Commission as follows:

"It shall be the policy of the Oregon Wheat Commission to promote the production, marketing and utilization of Oregon wheat to the end that producers maintain a permanent agricultural production and that the crop be utilized to the fullest development of the area.

"To implement this policy, the Oregon Wheat Commission will utilize all existing information and all agencies, private, state, or federal, having to do with production, marketing or utilization of wheat. It will not duplicate nor usurp the functions of other agencies but will rather assist and coordinate their activities. It will attempt to develop individual functions not now included in the work of other agencies."

In conclusion I wish to say that my years on the Wheat Commission, and my years of work with the Wheat League-which. continue to this date in at least two capacities-have been richly rewarding. The opportunities for personal growth have been abundant and for this I am grateful. I believe in the approach and in the work the Wheat League and the Wheat Commission has done and is doing. My pride in being associated with such wonderful men and such wonderful organizations knows no bounds.