

5-2014

Oregon, Planning, and the Ideal Postwar State

Michael Summers
Pacific University

Follow this and additional works at: <http://commons.pacificu.edu/cashu>



Part of the [Arts and Humanities Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Summers, Michael, "Oregon, Planning, and the Ideal Postwar State" (2014). *Humanities Capstone Projects*. Paper 21.

This Capstone Project is brought to you for free and open access by the College of Arts and Sciences at CommonKnowledge. It has been accepted for inclusion in Humanities Capstone Projects by an authorized administrator of CommonKnowledge. For more information, please contact CommonKnowledge@pacificu.edu.

Oregon, Planning, and the Ideal Postwar State

Abstract

[From the introduction]

This paper will place the Oregon Postwar Readjustment and Development Commission in context with the historical development of New Deal ideologies throughout the 1930s and 40s. Using the Commission's handling of the population, public works, timber industry, and consumerist behaviors. Similarly to Robbins, I will argue that this Commission is reinvigoration of philosophies from the "first New Deal", such as government planning within the economy, by using the Commission's handling of Oregon's population, public works projects, and consumerist behaviors. However, and this is where I separate myself from Robbins, I argue that the Commission embodied principles from the "Second New Deal", which was heavily linked with Keynesian economic ideas regarding the role of government in fostering economic activity. Moreover, I will argue that this Commission is the ultimate apex of New Deal policies due to the embracement of its reports and recommendations that go without class or political clashes that were typical among previous New Deal era policies.

Document Type

Capstone Project

Degree Name

Bachelor of Arts

Department

History

First Advisor

Larry Lipin

Subject Categories

Arts and Humanities

Rights

[Terms of use for work posted in CommonKnowledge.](#)

Oregon, Planning, and the Ideal Postwar State

By: Michael Summers

History, 2014

Advisor: Larry Lipin

Franklin D. Roosevelt has arguably been one of the most influential presidents in recent history. When he was elected for the first time in 1932, America was economically and socially at a crossroads. After being engulfed in a deep economic depression for over 3 years with no end in sight America's patience had waned. Most were tired with old methods for dealing with economic downturns and wanted someone with a new vision of change, and ultimately hope. That glimmer of hope came in the form of Franklin D. Roosevelt and the new strategy he would bring to the administration for controlling the economic depression. More importantly his new approach for handling the Great Depression would have an important effect on the way in which the state would interact with private industry, which would survive the aftermath of World War II and beyond.

At a moment when the unemployment rate in the United States was near twenty five per cent (1933) Roosevelt's message was clear: he wanted to change the fate of every American through a government that would play an active role in the recovery of the faltering economy. With hindsight it is clear that the government's actions throughout the 1930s did not save the American economy from experiencing the worst depression in the history of the country. However, it is evident that the policies that would be known as the New Deal would have a long-term effect on the relationship between the American people and their government that would continue into the postwar years.

Throughout Roosevelt's four consecutive terms as President of the United States the relationship between government and the society at large was dynamic, and to some degree, radicalized. Advocates like Rexford Tugwell, one of Roosevelt's original "brain trust" members, pushed for "An Ordered Economic World" through the use of associational economics to end excessive competition. Whereas others had a competing approach for the role of government in

economic matters in which decentralization of economic power was a major theme. While these ideologies were important in the development of the role of government within the economy, none would have a more permanent effect than Keynesian economics. This ideology encouraged government spending not on producers, which had historically been the focus of government during downturns of the business cycle, but on consumers.¹ Overall the New Deal would revolutionize the relationship between private industry and the state, while also contributing to America's ability to become a world superpower in the postwar era. Administrators of all levels of government, but especially on the state level, would use New Deal principles of planning to encourage growth and stable prosperity in the difficult transition from wartime policies to the postwar era.

With the experience of the 1920s and 1930s behind them, policy makers across the country, who anticipated an allied victory in 1943, began to plan for the transition of the economy from wartime policies, which included material rations and massive government defense contracts, to a postwar peacetime economy. One example of this was the Oregon Postwar Readjustment and Development Commission (ORC).²

The need for state planning has its foundation in the domestic experience after World War I. After the war the United States experienced a short, but deep economic recession that affected material production and employment, but had dire social consequences as well. As millions of American soldiers were demobilized, the pool of available workers grew extensively, effectively lowering wages and hindering purchasing power. Moreover, factories that were accustomed to

¹Alan Brinkley, *End Of Reform* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1995), 6,7.

²Documents show that commission and committee were used interchangeably by members.

the Defense Department contracts could no longer count on the constant stream of business which wartime policies gave them. Thus the combination of a larger labor pool with a shortage of real purchasing power, and factories slow adjustment to peacetime economic needs, led to a severe recession lasting from January 1920 to July 1921. Furthermore, the recession and lack of planning from state officials caused a severe scarcity of adequate housing, causing social unrest among returning veterans and unemployed alike.

The necessity for planning on the state level was summed in speech given by W.M “Jack” Bartlett, the consulting engineer for the Commission: “But that has changed radically”, speaking of the change of ideology regarding planning, “and almost every city in the state has a planning committee. First, because of the experience after the last war they are intensely interested in making proper preparation so that the returning veterans will not come back to a depression. Second, because lack of planning in the last depression caused a woeful waste of public funds”.³

Incoming republican Governor Earl Snell initiated this Commission in 1943 when he asked the legislature to create an agency whose task was to discover the state’s needs and opportunities in the postwar era. The Commission’s “Statement of the Problem” identified both immediate and long-term goals. In the short run, the fifteen member Commission, who consisted of “members of capital and labor, scientists and businessmen, in addition to the heads several state agencies and the chairman of the Legislatures House and Senate ways and means committees”⁴, wanted to primarily ensure gainful employment for the service men and women whom were returning from duty as well as the numerous industrial workers employed in wartime

³Speech, Jack Bartlett “Planning For Industrial Cooperation”, October 1946, Inv00A-1, B-1,C-1, Oregon State Archives.

⁴Oregon State Archives, “Smoothing the Bumps: Planning for Postwar Reconversion”, 2008.

productions. Moreover, it wanted to identify postwar problems that would emerge out of the process of demobilization such as inadequate housing and health care issues. Its main tool for employment would be the use of a vast network of public works programs that would last approximately three years. As the opening paragraph of the “Statement of the Program” contends, “due to the difficulty of and delay of private industry absorbing the employables, it would necessary for a time to carry on a rather large program of public works”. In addition to this goal, the committee wanted to secure long-term economic growth for the State of Oregon by expanding its economic life to “new levels” through “taking advantage of new opportunities in the pacific, keying the state to new techniques in industry, and new developments in transportation”. However, it is explicitly stated that the short-term goal is the most urgent order of this commission and it will do all in its power to ensure full employment in the State of Oregon⁵.

In order to help the Committee perform its duties as quickly and efficiently as possible, several sub-committees were formed to help target specific areas for economic improvement. The commission covered a variety of issues including agriculture, forestry, fishing, minerals, stream purification, reclamation, education, wildlife, The Willamette Valley Project, industry, public works, tourism, grazing, and employment. While some were less important such as the fishing and wildlife sub-committees, others were of importance to the readjustment plan. The most significant included public works, industries, and employment, which correspond with the

⁵Report, “Program of the Committee on Postwar Readjustment and Development: Statement of the Program”, 1943, Inv00A-1, B-1, C-1, Oregon State Archives.

objectives of the commission itself. These sub-committees would play a crucial role in obtaining data from their respective areas and transferring those figures to the Readjustment Commission⁶.

The leader of the Commission was John Kelly, a former political newspaper writer, who also ran its day-to-day operations. In its monthly progress reports, the Commission investigated migration to Oregon, timber depletion, energy needs, potential public work programs, employment complications, veteran's affairs, and a host of other topics that presented potential problems in the postwar era.

The scholarship of this commission is very limited with the most significant contribution coming from William Robbins book, *Landscapes of Conflict: The Oregon Story 1940-2000*. In this work he presents the Commission as a body that reinvigorated early New Deal principles of planning, and argued that it stressed private enterprise throughout its reports. Moreover, he highlights how important public works projects were in the redevelopment of Oregon in the postwar era. Yet, his main focus of the ORC is on its role in environmental matters, in which he argues, "the PRDC's (ORC) monthly statements read like a prescription for the massive reordering of nature".⁷ While his analysis of the ORC's role on Oregon's natural resource development is superb, this will not be the main focus of this paper.

This paper will place the Oregon Postwar Readjustment and Development Commission in context with the historical development of New Deal ideologies throughout the 1930s and 40s. Using the Commission's handling of the population, public works, timber industry, and

⁶Report, "Report of Subcommittee of the Committee on Postwar Readjustment and Development", 1944, Inv00A-1, B-1, C-1, Oregon State Achieves.

⁷William Robbins, *Landscapes of Conflict, The Oregon Story, 1944-2000* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2004), 28,29.

consumerist behaviors. Similarly to Robbins, I will argue that this Commission is reinvigoration of philosophies from the “first New Deal”, such as government planning within the economy, by using the Commission’s handling of Oregon’s population, public works projects, and consumerist behaviors. However, and this is where I separate myself from Robbins, I argue that the Commission embodied principles from the “Second New Deal”, which was heavily linked with Keynesian economic ideas regarding the role of government in fostering economic activity. Moreover, I will argue that this Commission is the ultimate apex of New Deal policies due to the embracement of its reports and recommendations that go without class or political clashes that were typical among previous New Deal era policies.

Scholars tend to argue that there are two defined stages within the New Deal itself: the “first” in 1933-1934 and the “second” New Deal in 1935-1938. The former were years in which a “chaos of experimentation” was taking place and a wide-range of reform ideas regarding the reordering of the relationship between private industry and the state were emerging from within the inner-circles of Washington D.C.⁸ These diverse reform ideas were based on the assumption which most Americans held at the time: that social and economic hardships were derived from flaws in the system of modern industrial capitalism, and it was the government’s responsibility to fix those flaws. An example of this and one of the keystone bills passed during these early years of the New Deal was the National Industrial Recovery Administration, or known as the NRA.

The NRA permitted major manufactures and other prominent business entities to “agree on common pricing and production policies without fear of antitrust prosecution”.⁹ In theory, by

⁸Brinkley, 4.

⁹Brinkley,39.

eliminating destructive competition and agreeing on certain price controls and production quotas, businesses would become profitable again thus spurring new private investments and creating new jobs for workers. Government administrators would create “codes” that would enact these theoretical goals into practical legislation for major industries such as the automobile, timber, steel, and textile industries. However, industries were forced to recognize and negotiate with labor, and comply with ambiguous government supervision.¹⁰

Yet, Ellis W. Hawley in his work, *The New Deal And The Problem of Monopoly*, articulates that the NRA would not go as smoothly as the theory outlines and in practice, the NRA in its final form neglected the average worker and was geared toward the interests of big business. Hawley argues that the NRA was doomed from the beginning due to the three conflicting goals present within the early discussions of the bill. On the one hand, according to Hawley, the NRA embodied the “vision of a business commonwealth” that pursued a plan that would allow cartelized businesses and their industrialist leaders to dictate economic decisions. On the other hand, Hawley presents the potential of the NRA as a cooperative, collectivist democracy that pushed for a system in which the major economic groups-business, labor, government, and consumers-would come together in a rational manner in order to plan economic decisions for the best possible outcome for all. In the middle of these competing ideas was the “old” vision of the competitive ideal, which argued that the best economic outcome possible would be produced if basic economic decisions were made by rational individuals in an impersonal market rather than by a centralized planning agency¹¹. What prevailed, according to

¹⁰Ellis W. Hawley, *The New Deal And The Problem of Monopoly*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966), 31-33.

¹¹Hawley, 35.

Hawley, were the cartelization of major American businesses and the creation of an American economy dominated by a few monopolies and their respective industrialists.

When President Roosevelt signed the NRA into law on June 16th, 1933, many were overjoyed by the possibility of recovery through a new collectivist system that would benefit all actors of the economic system. However, this notion was quickly quashed, and as Hawley argues, the NRA became little more than a “bargain between business leaders on the one hand and businessmen in the guise of government officials on the other.”¹² Hawley contends that within code discussions regarding a specific industry, labor and consumers were largely overlooked and ignored in the policy negotiations. Moreover, employers largely ignored section 7a of the bill, which promised collective bargaining rights and minimum labor standards for industrial workers. In general, Hawley argues, “the wage –and hour provisions were riddled with exceptions and loopholes” while “labor representation on the code authorities was held to a minimum”.¹³ Overall Hawley shows that this early New Deal legislation was predicated on the notion of favoring the owners of industry, while highlighting the NRA’s downfall in assisting the lower class workers.

Similarly, Paul Conkin contends in his early work, *The New Deal*, that the major businessmen of the United States dominated the NRA in both the writing of the codes, and the enforcement of them. He argues that labor and consumer representatives were continually neglected in the NRA meetings and that this is reflective of the overall operation of government at this time. Businesses and overall production were the focus of government action during these

¹²Hawley, 57.

¹³Hawley, 57.

early New Deal years. As Conkin argues, “the early New Deal seemed to have a larger treat for corporations than for any other economic interests”.¹⁴ For Conkin, this highlights the power that business had over politics in Washington and shows the fiscal orthodoxy that still existed among many within the liberal network.

While the Supreme Court would strike down The NRA in 1935 as unconstitutional, it highlights the obscure and often time radical ideas (for American standards) that were utilized by the early New Dealers and represents the degree in which progressives wanted to alter the capitalistic system. Moreover it provides an example of how governmental policy during the early years of the New Deal was geared toward the productive side of the economy. Yet it wouldn't be until the later years of the 1930s in which the old economic orthodoxy would be replaced with new a Keynesian approach to handling economic downturns.

The “second” New Deal, which ideologically expanded into the 1940s, can be described as a stage in which structural reform of capitalism was rhetorically ended. Instead what emerged was a passive government focused on obtaining and expanding the products of the welfare state, and ending the economic depression that had only worsened in 1937-38.¹⁵ Moreover, the sense of planning from the government's perspective in economic matters had changed from a more direct model, such as the NRA, to one that focused on fiscal policies that limited the government's role in day-to-day economic operations. This switch from a direct form of government intervention in daily commerce to one that is more hands off in the economy highlights the overall shift of private industries relationship to the state. Government's need to

¹⁴Paul Conkin, *The New Deal*, (Arlington Heights: AHM Publishing Corporation, 1975), 31.

¹⁵Brinkley, 7.

nurture economic productivity, consumption, and employment was largely unprecedented in the United States prior to New Deal and by the end of World War Two, it was largely ingrained in the intellectual mindset of most American politicians and businessmen.

The other major contribution in terms of real legislation from the “second” New Deal was directed toward the expansion of the welfare state. As Conkin articulates, “after 1934 the most significant New Deal measures dealt more directly with the immediate economic needs of individuals, families or other exploited groups”.¹⁶ With the direction the state was taking in its policy solutions for helping solve social and economic problems across the country class conflict was unavoidable. Programs such as the Social Security Act of 1935,¹⁷ Wagner-Steagall Act,¹⁸ and National Labor Relations Act of 1935^{19,20} constituted a major swift in ideology by Roosevelt from the “first” New Deal to the “Second New Deal, which upset many conservative businessmen. During the “first” New Deal, as previously noted, business was the main driver of policies coming out of Washington. This equilibrium was offset by the surge of Roosevelt and the other

¹⁶Conkin, 21.

¹⁷Included an enforced tax split by the employer and the employee for retirement benefits and comprised an unemployment provision.

¹⁸Established the United States Housing Authority as a corporation that lent to low income families on low interest rates and extended (60 year) repayments, while also requiring rents well below competitive rates to occupants of low income families.

¹⁹Guaranteed rights to collective bargaining by a union chosen by a majority of employees, legalized collective action, and by a code of fair practices outlawed such traditional as the company union, blacklist, and yellow-dog contract.

²⁰Conkin, 63.

liberals within the administration, to create policies aimed at aiding working and middle class families and individuals.

Thus after the passing of the major legislation of the second New Deal, a backlash occurred among Republicans toward the framework of the New Deal creating not only political clashes, but huge class conflicts as well. This is relevant for situating Oregon's Postwar Commission because it avoided these confrontations between classes and was welcomed by business leaders. Yet, this commission embodies more than just a classless New Deal program; it exemplifies ideologies from both the "active" and "inactive" years of the 1930s and 40s.

Alan Brinkley in his work, *The End of Reform*, presents the New Deal and the years leading up to World War II in two stages: "active" and "inactive" years. This classification is critical for placing the Oregon Readjustment Commission into historical context. In his text, he argues that over the course of the 1930s and 40s there was a specific change in rhetoric and policies produced by the government and, he uses the Roosevelt Recession of 1937 as the turning point. According to Brinkley, the intellectual discourse and policies enacted in the years leading up to 1938 were characterized by a wide range of structural reforms, such as the NRA of the first New Deal, and the Fair Labor Standards Act of the second New Deal, which established federal minimum wage and maximum hours standards and forbade child labor. This is the period in which he argues are the "active" years, an era in which government was directly involved with economic matters in attempting to solve the economic crisis at hand. However after 1938 Brinkley argues that the government began to pursue an "inactive" role in regards to its relationship to the economy.²¹ He contends that many factors contribute to this switch including the 1938 recession, including a Republican revival in the Congressional election of 1938, but

²¹Brinkley, 5,6.

most importantly he attributes the rise of economist John Keynes and his new liberal approach to tackling economic downturns.

Keynes's argument, which has dominated liberal economic thinking ever since, goes as such: in economic downturns during the natural capitalist business cycles, the government must increase its expenditures in order to compensate for the lack of investment from private firms and expand the amount of capital available to consumers in order to increase their purchasing power. He argues that only when private investments rises, and consumers have enough money to buy goods, can the government steadily balance its budget. This is a stark difference to the ideologies of the "active" period of the New Deal. Rather than altering the existing form of capitalism, Keynes wanted the government to use institutions and strategies within the current structure of capitalism to influence consumer purchasing power. Such strategies included using the Federal Reserve to manipulate interest rates to encourage borrowing, government stimulus in the form of public works projects or other such measures, and tax cuts to consumers.

Brinkley argues that the clear cause of the recession of 1938, and the subsequent American involvement in World War Two, which essentially implemented Keynes economic principles on a massive scale, caused a shift in the liberal understanding of the proper role of the government in economic matters. Rather than fairness or stability, the duty of the government was now to ensure that consumers had adequate buying power in order to keep the economy growing and to help warrant "full employment" in the private sector.²² Yet, some even argued that increasing consumer purchasing power was crucial for the survival of American democracy.

As Lizabeth Cohen argues in her work *A Consumers Republic*, Keynes and his followers sought to provide an economy that would enhance "economic egalitarianism" and would offer

²²Brinkley, 66.

the building blocks for a strong American democracy by pursuing the goal of enhancing mass consumption. Cohen argues that these consumption-oriented economists and policy makers believed that industrial capitalism had led to the concentration of wealth in a small number of hands, which led to unnecessary saving and only marginal spending by these few members of society with the capacity to spend and indulge; this they argued offered a breeding ground for revolution, such as the events witnessed in the Bolshevik seizure of power in Russia (1917), the rise of Benito Mussolini in Italy (1924), and Adolf Hitler's ascent to dictatorship (1933).

According to Cohen, the Keynesian effort to fuel "mass consumption promised not only a route to economic recovery, but also a more democratic and egalitarian America for all its citizens".²³ By the late 1930s and early 1940s most government economists accepted Keynesian economics and shared the conviction that under-consumption had been the primary cause of the Great Depression. This connection between the rise of Keynes and the consumer economy is critical when analyzing the postwar era because it dictated government policies such as jobs programs, public works, or progressive tax strategies that were all geared towards full employment.

However, providing for full employment in the postwar period was a complicated task given the population changes that occurred throughout the nation for much of the late 1930s and entire 1940s. A region that was dramatically affected by this problem was the northwestern part of the United States' and one state that proved difficult was the State of Oregon. Yet, the ORC would encounter problems from the beginning that made the task of reconversion even more troublesome.

²³Lizabeth Cohen, *A Consumers' Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2003), 55.

When the Commission was set up in 1943 it had an annual budget of \$10,000. Yet, it was suggested by the Committee members that \$25,000 be appropriated to the committee in order for it to perform its annual duties. So as a compromise, the legislature provided in Section 4 of the bill that created the ORC that, “it shall be the special duty of the committee to request to the emergency board for such funds as the committee may find necessary”. Just one year into its existence the Committee was forced to write to the emergency board in order to obtain funds that would help them continue to be active in the postwar planning. In total they asked for just under \$8,000. The ORC argued that the California postwar agency was granted an annual budget of \$200,000, and that granting this \$8,000 would allow the readjustment agency to perform at its best level for the state.²⁴ While the sum was a trivial amount, and it is unclear as to whether or not the funds were granted, this budget issue shows how very limited funds were. Both the private industry and, the local and state governments were heavily restricted in how much money could be spent on non-essential war materials.

Another problem the postwar readjustment commission faced was convincing the general population that funding for such an agency was necessary for the betterment of the state. At a conference in Portland, Oregon in 1946, the consulting engineer of the Oregon Postwar Readjustment and Development Committee, W.M. “Jack” Bartlett, gave a speech regarding government planning to the committee and others. He began by saying that “because eighty percent of every job is first selling, I will have to sell you planning before I can talk about planning”.²⁵ He continued by delivering a story about a conversation with the Dean of

²⁴Letter, Victor Morris to War Production Board, July 26, 1944, Inv00A-1, B-1, C-1, Oregon State Archives.

²⁵Speech by Jack Bartlett, “Planning For Industrial Cooperation”, October 1946, Inv00A-1, B-1,C-1, 1.

Agriculture at Oregon State University regarding the Dean's opinion of government planning. The Dean said, "Do you know, in this country, we have never planned. We have dissipated our natural resources terribly. Let me tell you of the planning that Germany did".²⁶ The Dean proceeded to tell his story about a visit to Germany where he performed research behalf of the Agricultural Department in 1925. While there, he spoke at a university and after the speech his guide offered to show him the archives. What the Dean described to Jack Bartlett was a building three stories high containing "stacks such as you would see in the library reserves section, as close together as possible and filled with plans, specifications, pictures, films, maps, phonograph records, data, data, data".²⁷

The guide then showed the Dean records ranging from phonographic archives about different American dialects to vitamins for which the German's had fifteen years prior to the Americans. However, Jack Bartlett suggested, "Perhaps the most important factor in all the planning of Germany was education. I believe it is also the most important in planning for industry, in planning for democracy and world peace".²⁸ He argued that it will take two or three generations, and a worldwide effort to rid the ideology that Hitler installed from the beginning of life in the German people. Bartlett contended that this story should have sold his audience on the idea of planning as an economic principle, and believes "if that type of planning for DESTRUCTION could be so effective, that it took the whole world five years to defeat, a country the size of Germany than that same kind of planning for CONSTRUCTION can bring

²⁶Speech by Jack Bartlett, "Planning for Industrial Cooperation", October 1946, Inv00A-1, B-1,C-1, 2.

²⁷Speech by Jack Bartlett, "Planning for industrial Cooperation", October 1946, Inv00A-1, B-1,C-1, 2.

²⁸Speech by Jack Bartlett, "Planning for Industrial Cooperation", October 1946, Inv00A-1, B-1,C-1, 3.

this country to the highest plane of living that was ever dreamed".²⁹ Jack Bartlett does an excellent job of articulating the need for such a planning commission, yet expresses it in a way that does not invoke class or political conflict that was historically the case surrounding New Deal policies (particularly the "second New Deal"). This is characteristic throughout the Commission's existence regarding its correspondences to both private and public entities and its handling of the various issues that arose out of demobilization.

One of these problems of demobilization was the increase and uncertainty of the population of Northwest and in particular Oregon. Throughout much of its history, western population growth was not determined by a steady increase of people overtime but rather through several sharp increases due to events such as the California Gold Rush and the urbanization years following World War One. World War Two provided such an event for a mass migration to western states. Between 1940 and 1947 California, Oregon, and Washington combined for a total population increase of 38.9 per cent.³⁰ One of the tasks assigned to John Kelly and the Oregon Postwar Readjustment and Development Commission was tracking population through the course of the War and the immediate years following the Axis surrender.

The Commission took up the task. According to John Kelly, in a letter to S.W Wilkerson and Associates--a private land developing firm out of Philadelphia--the Census Bureau placed the Oregon population in 1940 at 1,089,684 with a heavy concentration in the Portland metropolitan area of 406,000. During the war between 270,000 and 300,000 migrant workers came to Oregon in search of work in the war time industries; out of that almost 100,000 went

²⁹Speech by Jack Bartlett, "Planning for Industrial Cooperation", October 1946, Inv00A-1, B-1,C-1, 5.

³⁰Gerald Nash, *The American West Transformed: The Impact of the Second World War*, (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1985), 3-5.

directly to Portland. Kelly argues that about twenty five per cent of those workers “went home” putting the January 1947 Oregon population figures between 1,336,000 and 1,360,000.³¹

According to the Oregon Migration Index of 1943, a majority of workers who came to Oregon came from other western states. Between California, Montana, Idaho, Colorado and Washington, 87,409 out of 147,500 total migrate workers came to work in the Oregon war machine.³² This is significant because it highlights the planning approach that is characteristic of the New Deal. John Kelly actively sought out the latest population numbers in order to help policy makers cope with the population swings of World War Two and the chaotic demobilization effort that confronted Oregon policy makers.

A major consequence for city planners at the end of the war was the lack of adequate housing for veterans and their families. This substantial return of men and women from the battlefields, coupled with the already present force of migrant workers, created a difficult housing situation across Oregon. John Kelly in the May 1947 progress report labeled housing as the “still No. 1 problem”. He argued that even with the Veterans’ Affairs loan of \$6,000, vets were still being priced out of homes and the necessary furnishings that a home requires. To make matters worse, most of the returning soldiers never established a well-paying career prior to the war, so they did not return with a trade in which they could be readily employed. While he does say that some vets were utilizing the Oregon Educational Assistance program and the funds provided by the G.I. Bill to attend the state universities in order to obtain a higher paying job, he contends that housing prices created a negative social atmosphere for the returning vets. For

³¹Letter, John Kelly to S.W. Wilkerson & Associates, 1947, Inv00A-1,B-1,C-1, Oregon State Archives.

³²Report, Oregon Migration Index from State Unemployment Compensation Commission, September 25, 1944, Inv00A,B-1,C-1, Oregon State Archives.

example, in 1945 the average single unit dwelling cost \$6,024; in 1946 the price rose to \$7,031; the first four months of 1947 the prices doubled to over \$14,000.³³ This housing problem was not limited just to Oregon and had some of its roots during the wartime years.

During the early years of the War government officials began realizing the need for the state to step up its housing program for migrant war workers and the eventual return of soldiers. In an assessment done by the National Committee for Congested Production Areas, which investigated twelve cities, including Portland, the committee found that only three cities had “adequate” housing for their migrant workers, with the Portland-Vancouver area being one of them.³⁴ Yet for John Kelly “adequate” wasn’t good enough, and with the postwar era being unpredictable, he began to seek the most up-to-date information on the progress of housing construction in Oregon. He reached out to the Northwest regional representative of the National Housing Agency. He found that there as of April 1944 there were 29,293 family units and just fewer than 9,000 dorm units being constructed. While there was some private investment taking place-\$35,133,750, in the building of houses-a majority of the funding came from public entities. Roughly \$66,449,050 came from public funds, with most of that in the form of new construction projects. Moreover, an overwhelming amount of the new housing construction projects were located in the Portland-metro area.³⁵

However, his fears were resolved with the immediate defeat of Germany and Japan when in 1945, Portland home buildings increased substantially to meet the new demand. In fact in the

³³Progress Report, Legislative Assembly Committee on Postwar Readjustment and Development, May 1947, Inv00A-1, B-1,C-1, Oregon State Archives.

³⁴Report, Committee for Congested Production Areas Report, 1944, Inv00A-1, B-1,C-1, Oregon State Archives.

³⁵Report, National Housing Agency to John Kelly, 1944, Inv00A-1, B-1,C-1,Oregon State Archives.

Portland metro area the amount of house sold went from \$88,538,308 in 1945 to \$136,877,261; an increase of 54 per cent. Furthermore, the amount of mortgages sold in the same area more than doubled from \$32,367,477 in 1945 to \$67,071,555 in 1946. This postwar era housing boom hit the commercial sector as well. Between 1945 and 1946 commercial building permits bought increased 179.22 per cent from \$12,373,225 in 1945 to \$34,548, 685.³⁶ This collection of data suggests that John Kelly, and the ORC did in fact succeed in its primary role of identifying the immediate problems the State of Oregon would face. Moreover, from an ideological perspective, the way in which the housing situation was handled by the commission fits within the framework of bringing a classless venture. From the evidence given, this was a bi-partisan effort that was supported by both the historically anti-New Deal conservative businessmen and members of the working class. Yet, it also highlights that the Commission went above and beyond its stated goals and served as a clearinghouse of data for private and public entities.

This gathering of quality housing information regarding one of the highest priorities in the state government at the time demonstrates that John Kelly, and his Commission were actively seeking information within different agencies. It shows that the Postwar Readjustment and Development Commission served as a middleman for distributing information to the larger society and to policymakers. While this Commission did make some policy recommendations, it was largely used as a clearinghouse of data that circulated the important issues of the day to both public officials and businessmen. At first glance this role as a conduit of information between primary government agencies and leaders of the business world does not appear to represent the New Deal feature of planning. However, when looked at more rigorously, this role is paramount

³⁶Report, Portland Chamber of Commerce, "Real Estate Data for Portland, Oregon", Inv00A-1, B-1,C-1, Oregon State Archives.

when attempting to organize a society after a radical event such as World War Two. By creating methods, such as the John Kelly's monthly progress reports which were distributed to masses of individuals and firms, this commission was able to take the initial steps toward advising Governor Earl Snell on how to best cope with the radical changes that the postwar period brought to the overall society.

Another example of this is John Kelly's communications with the Lee Eyerly, the chairman of Oregon State Board of Aeronautics. In Kelly's initial letter to Everly dated April 11, 1945, he asks for recommendations as to what the Aeronautics Board plans to do in the postwar period. Kelly articulated several national policy references to Everly, such as "to ascertain the needs of the municipalities and other political subdivisions." He continued by saying, to "formulate a statewide airport plan based upon the needs of the political subdivisions and of the state as a whole". Kelly was interested in attempting to figure out whether Everly's plan matches up with the national creed.³⁷ In Everly's response he made it clear that he intended to follow most of the national policies outlined in Kelly's initial letter and outlined some problems that arose due to the increase in airfields. One of the major problems discussed by Lee Eyerly was the shortage of funds from certain municipalities for the upkeep of new airport fields. He argues that this is the responsibility of the state government.³⁸ This exemplifies the overall effectiveness of communication between government agencies and shows how planning for postwar problems was a central aspect of these specific policy makers. However, identifying problems was only one aspect of the commissions' goal; the other was ensuring employment for returning veterans

³⁷Letter, John Kelly to Lee Eyerly, April, 11 1945, Inv00A-1, B-1,C-1, Oregon State Archives.

³⁸Letter, Lee Eyerly to John Kelly, April, 11 1945, Inv00A-1, B-1,C-1, Oregon State Archives.

and out-of-work industrial workers through planning while also recognizing economic opportunities in the State of Oregon.

During the Depression era the western part of the United States was a place of limited prospects, which was reflected in the west's negative population growth, and its lack of cultural liveliness. Some argued, including influential New Deal economist Alvin Hansen, that the capacity for the West to grow economically was inherently restricted due to the disappearance of any "new frontier" into which it could expand, as it had in the last century. This perception of growth, or lack thereof, in the western states highlights the overall economic structure that persisted prior to WWII. Gerald Nash argues that the western economy functioned similarly to a classical colony of the late renaissance era that provided raw materials to be processed in the East. Agriculture and mining formed the backbone of the West, while manufacturing contributed to less than five per cent of the income in 1940. This lack of industrial output was due to insufficient funds provided by Wall Street bankers and the Interstate Commerce Commission that imposed unfair freight rates and basing point system. Yet, the New Deal and World War Two would offer an opportunity to develop western industries in which the federal government would become the major financier.³⁹

Between the years 1933-1939, New Deal programs pumped over \$ 7.5 billion into western states in the form of infrastructure investments. These investments often came through New Deal Relief programs such as the Public Works Administration and the Works Progress Administration, and were not only viewed as methods to bring work to the jobless, but to increase the capabilities of the west as well. But the major boost to the western economic

³⁹Gerald Nash, *The American West Transformed: The Impact of the Second World War*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985), 3-5.

infrastructure was WWII. In Oregon alone, between 1940 – 1945, the Federal Government spent over \$2 billion on war supply contracts and major war facility projects.⁴⁰ This state investment into projects concerning Oregon's infrastructure would continue under the Postwar Readjustment Commission and would be used not only as a development mechanism, but as an employment tool as well.

Economists across the country were predicting that in the immediate postwar years private industry was going to need to supply between 20 and 30 million jobs to provide full employment. In reports from the Subcommittee on Industry and Public Works of the Oregon Postwar Readjustment and Development Commission, it was estimated that around 125,000 jobs would need to be created during the period of readjustment. While there were competing ideas on how to do that, this report, circa 1944, suggests that almost one billion dollars was already lined up for the immediate years following World War Two. It argues that public work projects amounting to a sum of \$300 million were already planned, with an additional \$100 million likely to be approved.⁴¹

This report breaks down the employment numbers based on the capital invested. It was understood that the \$300 million already approved, would sustain the direct and indirect employment of approximately 32,000 workers. With the supplementary \$100 million waiting to be approved, this number was expected to jump up to as much as 40,000 men, most of whom would be employed on public work projects across the state. Moreover this report suggested that private investment in the immediate years after World War Two would reach up to \$400 million

⁴⁰Nash, 218.

⁴¹Report, "One Billion Dollars for Oregon Postwar Period Lined Up", Oregon Postwar Readjustment and Development Commission, 1944, Inv00A-1, B-1,C-1, Oregon State Archives.

employing directly 80,000 workers.⁴² This Commission therefore suggested that with the public works projects full employment could be reached in the years following demobilization. Some of these projects included the Snake River and the Detroit Lake dams, and other reclamation and dredging projects. Altogether, the Commission summed up, “the Bureau of Reclamation is ready with \$8,825,000 for Oregon projects and proposes an additional \$22,945,000 for a number of smaller reclamation projects to increase food for the post war period”. Additional agencies such as State Forestry Department had \$5,459,531 and the Highway Commission had \$60,000,000 for its programs⁴³. With most projects already approved, Oregon was ready to begin its second massive infrastructure building program in order to increase both employment and the ability for private industry to conduct its day-to-day operations.

By February 1945, as more cities and counties reported their numbers, the Committee was able to produce more of an in-depth report on the “authorized” and the “tentative projects” that were available to the state. The amount of money authorized for projects in the state was \$262,712,996 with an additional \$108,775, 969 labeled tentative. Most of the projects addressed essential infrastructure upgrades that would help not only laborers who worked directly on the job, but would also facilitate overall growth by providing a basis for economic activity. For example, out of the \$60,000,000 provided for the highway commission in 1944, \$36,000,000 of that was authorized for use in 1945. Moreover, the readjustment commission focused on another essential infrastructure for aiding economic activity: power.

⁴²Report, “One Billion Dollars for Oregon Postwar Period Lined Up”, 1944.

⁴³Report, “Government Projects-Authorized”, Oregon Postwar Readjustment and Development Commission, 1944, Inv00A-1, B-1,C-1, Oregon State Archives.

One of the biggest attractions to the state of Oregon for private industry was the ability to produce cheap hydroelectric energy. So in order to help enhance this desirability, the Commission authorized \$49,608,000 for the “Umatilla dam & etc.” and \$58,744,000 for the Snake and Columbia rivers for various projects including energy ventures. Moreover, the Committee had \$25,630,000 planned, but not authorized, for the Bonneville Power Administration.⁴⁴ This attention to particular infrastructure provides an example of how this Committee was used a means to enhance economic activity and attractiveness to outside companies hoping to move their productive entities to the state of Oregon.

Another aspect of planning that the Readjustment Committee undertook was it attempted to break down private industries anticipated contribution to the postwar economy. In the second part of the report mentioned in the previous paragraph, they articulated big investments from different private entities in order to predict how much employment could be gained through the private sector. The biggest individual economic contributor as prescribed by this report was the Pacific Telephone Company, which estimated that the firm would invest \$20,000,000 in the few years following the war. Furthermore, this report gives a brief list at some of the new employers who moved their firms/productive entities to Oregon such as American Smelter (who at this point was still looking for a location) and an Oil firm from Texas who drilled in Columbia County.⁴⁵

The importance of this planning for private firms was that the Readjustment Commission didn't focus solely on public employment; on the contrary, their main concern was increasing the

⁴⁴Report, “Status of Projects”, Oregon Postwar Readjustment and Development Commission, February 27, 1945, Inv00A-1, B-1,C-1, Oregon State Archives.

⁴⁵Report, “Status of Projects”, Oregon Postwar Readjustment and Development Commission, February 27, 1945.

money supply of the entire population through greater consumer spending. This emphasis on public works programs, while seen by many as only a stopgap measure against unemployment, places the ORC in perfect line with both the older ideals of the first New Deal and later principles that emerged with the rise of Keynesian economics. In terms of the former, public works programs are the quintessence modern liberal measure of assisting the unemployed, which makes it very unique that a Republican Governor would employ such a device to aid the employment rate. In relations to the latter, it highlights the complexity of such a commission because this Committee's work embodied free market ideals that were found within their discourse on consumerism, and their emphasis on the new liberal connection between individual consumer buying power and economic growth.

One of the major economic ideologies that emerged out of the Great Depression and World War Two was the focus on the centrality of consumer spending as a critical stimulant of economic growth. On the eve of his election in 1932, FDR declared, "I believe we are at the threshold of a fundamental change in our popular economic thought and that in the future we are going to think less about the producer and more about the consumer".⁴⁶ As previously mentioned, prior to the New Deal, most government action toward easing financial meltdowns was concentrated on the production side of the economy.

Lizabeth Cohen, in her work *A consumers' Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America*, argues that the progressive era of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries manifested a recognition toward the consumer as a main driver in economic growth. She refers to this as the "first wave consumer movement" and was marked with legislation such

⁴⁶Lizabeth Cohen, *A Consumers' Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2003), 23.

as the Pure Food and Drug Act, the Meat Inspection Act, and the Federal Trade Commission Act. However, the “second-wave consumer movement” of the 1930s and 40s will be more relevant for this paper.⁴⁷

She argues that the Democratic administration of FDR and the New Deal altered the relationship of the state and its people by creating a “national welfare state” where “industrial relations were restructured around state-sanctioned collective bargaining, and the federal government assumed a more active role in the economy”. Cohen contends that the active stage of the New Deal, when policies such as the NRA dominated political discourse, lacked genuine interest in enhancing consumers’ rights and needs. She argues that “administration officials may have viewed under-consumption as a major cause of depression, but they still believed that the route to improving consumer fortunes-and hence the economy-lay with assisting business, not its customers”.⁴⁸ In other words, FDR and his fellow liberal New Dealers still sought to improve the economy through the classical economic paradigm of concentrating on efficient production, with the assumption that consumption would automatically follow. It wasn’t until after the recession of 1938, and the rise of John Keynes, that the consumer would grow to become the centerpiece of government economic policy aimed at stimulating the economy.

Cohen argues that in the post-recession years of the late 1930s and early 1940s, a conviction grew within the minds of ordinary Americans that aggregate purchasing power was the most important tool in helping revive the American capitalistic model in the wake of the worldwide threat of fascism and communism. FDR and his administration pushed for an “equal

⁴⁷Cohen, 21.

⁴⁸Cohen, 29.

opportunity” within the market place for everyone to enjoy the “fruits” the market had to offer. It was on the cusp of World War II that FDR promised the American people that “his policies were designed to secure their ‘four freedoms’, including ‘freedom from want’ and the ‘enjoyment of the fruits of scientific progress in a wider and constantly rising standard of living’”.⁴⁹ World War Two would provide the ultimate Keynesian model for government spending, which if there hadn’t been a war to fight, would have drove America fully into economic recovery.

In June 1940, just after the defeat of France by Nazi Germany, Congress appropriated the United States military more than the nation had spent in total on World War One. Cohen argues that this hyper-government spending for defense refilled factories with workers which boasted demand for consumer products of all kind: production of refrigerators increased 164 per cent in the first 6 months of 1941 over the average for 1935-1939; automobile sales were up 55 per cent. Cohen contends that the nation’s leading manufacturers, retailers, and advertisers began to notice the power of mass consumer purchasing power that, in turn, mandated that public officials did so as well. In fact, during the war Cohen argues that consumers were encouraged to buy war bonds in order to not only curb inflation, but to become the purchasers of the future.⁵⁰ Buying power would be become the engine that drove the postwar economy into the future, in which “full employment and improved living standards for the rest of the nation”.⁵¹

Effective buying power, as defined by the Portland Chamber of Commerce in 1943 “is the money received from goods and services produced and rendered during the calendar year,

⁴⁹Cohen, 56.

⁵⁰Cohen, 63.

⁵¹Cohen, 63.

plus Federal or state allotments and the money paid out of saving, and surpluses of business institutions". The Pacific Northwest states had some of the largest increases in effective buying power over the course of the war. From 1941 to 1942 these states increased their collective buying power over fifty per cent. When measured by per capita, California, Washington, and Oregon were ranked in the top five states with an effective buying power of \$1356, \$1322, and \$1186 respectfully.⁵²

In a piece for the second progress report, circa 1944, the Portland Chamber of Commerce breaks down the total amount of money each family was planning on spending in the postwar period. They speculated that thirty three per cent of families would spend \$3,000 or less; twenty six per cent would spend \$3,001 to \$5,000; twenty four per cent would expend \$5,001 to \$10,000; while seven per cent say they would spend more than \$10,000 dollars. Moreover, they investigated what percent of families would purchase consumer appliance goods during the period as well. For example the Commission contends that just fewer than five per cent of families will purchase mechanical refrigerators at an average price of \$175.00 and slightly over four per cent of families intend to buy stoves with an ordinary price of \$90.00.⁵³In all it was predicted that Oregon families would spend over \$54 million on household appliances, home furnishings, and newly purchased houses. While these are mere estimates of the economic activity that is supposed to take place in the postwar period, it highlights the overall importance of consumerism placed on growing the economy.

⁵²Report, "Portland Chamber of Commerce: Effective Buying Power", June 1943, Inv00A-1, B-1,C-1, Oregon State Archives.

⁵³Report, "Agenda To The Second Progress Report", Oregon Postwar Readjustment and Development Commission, Inv00A-1, B-1,C-1, Oregon State Archives.

The Oregon Postwar Readjustment and Development Commission's focus on consumerism was manifested in its focus on the automobile industry in Oregon. They put an emphasis on the returning of the motor business from not only a consumer perspective, but from an employment aspect as well. They estimated that slightly less than 20,000 jobs were directly related to the automobile industry in Oregon. Moreover, it was believed that this would only grow due to the abundance of motor vehicles that were to be bought during the immediate postwar years. As of 1947, the amount of automobiles registered with the state was still less than at the height of car ownership of 390,896, which was prior to Pearl Harbor in December 1941. However there were signs that this was increasing and was soon to surpass the high of registered motor vehicles reached in 1941.⁵⁴ This articulated the need for the state to increase the viability of consumers in the postwar era. While this Commission did not explicitly make policy recommendations regarding consumerist behavior, it is presumed within their discourse that one of the government's responsibility was to help increase consumer habits in order to stabilize a growing economy.

Arguably one of the most important by-products of increasing consumer spending is the growth of the tourist industry. Naturally when one increases the size of his or her monetary holdings they will begin to embark on more leisure activity, and in the postwar era Oregon had immense potential to harness this under-developed economic sector. In an address by Governor Earl Snell to the Highway Commission in October 1945, he proclaimed that, "Oregon is the greatest recreational and inspirational playground in America". He continued by expressing that, "only a few spots in the world can compare to the beauty and the variety, the scope and the

⁵⁴Report, Progress Report To Governor Earl Snell, May 1947, Oregon Postwar Readjustment and Development Commission, Inv00A-1, B-1,C-1, Oregon State Archives.

extent of Oregon's scenery and grandeur".⁵⁵ Not only was Governor Snell personally attracted to the idea of improving Oregon's tourist industry, the Readjustment Committee investigated the potential postwar possibility in this sector with the intent to vastly improve it.

The Sub-Committee on tourism argued that prior to the war, over \$50,000,000 was brought in by intrastate and interstate tourism.⁵⁶ Moreover, this Committee sought to enlarge this industry to become either number one or number two industry in entire state of Oregon. In staying consistent with the current focus on government's role on influencing economic activity, the state calculated that in 1940 "the total number of out-of-state visitors that year including the 128,000 cars registered, as well as the non-registered cars and those who came by other means of transportation, reached a grand total of nine hundred thousand." It continued by expressing that "during that year the average stay in our state of those traveling by car was 8.6 days; the average car mileage totaled 896 miles and the average expenditure per person per trip through Oregon, exclusive of incidentals, totaled \$31.91".⁵⁷ The state by analyzing the numbers in such a precise way validates their stance on the issue toward consumer spending. They wanted to identify how much each person would spend visiting the state in order to persuade businesses, government agencies, other institutions that it was worth their invest of capital and time in order to upgrade the proper infrastructure to facilitate a high demand that was anticipated in the postwar era. In a memo produced by the Readjustment Committee, "what must be offered to the tourist if this industry is to maintain and grow to be if not first, then second largest in the state"? The memo

⁵⁵Speech, Governor Earl Snell to Oregon Tourist Industry, 1945, Inv00A-1, B-1,C-1, Oregon State Archives.

⁵⁶Report, Sub-Committee on Tourism, 1945, Inv00A-1, B-1,C-1, Oregon State Archives.

⁵⁷Speech, Governor Earl Snell to Oregon Tourist Industry, 1945, Inv00A-1, B-1,C-1.

continued by articulating that tourist wanted “to hear to splash of trout” and “the sound of cool breezes in the trees”, while enjoying “a good hotel with fine equipment” that was “constructed to give the highest degree of service and landscape to please the eye”.⁵⁸ However, this Sub-Committee, along with others such a Governor Earl Snell, recognized major improvements would be needed if they were to accomplish this goal.

One of the most essential improvements that this Readjustment Committee found was the need to improve the sanitary conditions of the coastline. Typically sewage and waste disposal are local problems that fall within the jurisdiction of local and county governments of incorporated areas. The problem with the coastline area is that many parts where houses were located, or where developers wanted to build homes, were in unincorporated districts so there was no funding for services such as waste. This created a problem for the tourist industry because it corrupted the natural beauty of the coastline inhibiting growth of that sector. In an effort to collaborate with other agencies, the Committee brought this problem to the State Board of Health and the State Sanitary Authority to help solve this issue of unsanitary shorelines. In a letter addressed to John Kelly dated March 9th, 1946 the director of the Oregon State Board of Health, Curtiss Everts Jr., admitted that this was not within the jurisdiction of his agency but did outline two possible plans: 1) to hire extra sanitarians to require individual property owners to take full responsibility for their proper sewage facilities or 2) to educate the residents of unincorporated to form sanitation districts and provide for the construction of proper waste disposal areas for the entire district. Director Everts favored the latter but suggested that this would take multiple

⁵⁸Report, “What Oregon has to Offer the Tourist”, Oregon Postwar Readjustment and Development Commission, 1945, Inv00A-1, B-1,C-1, Oregon State Archives.

agencies in order to accomplish this task.⁵⁹ While the eventual outcome would be the creation of several sanitary divisions in charge of the cleanup of the coast, it highlights the cooperation between the different agencies and demonstrates that the Readjustment Committee was used a central clearing house for date, as well as provided assistance to other agencies in order to tackle important problems. Yet, this was not the only problem discovered by the Commission and the most important problem exposed had its roots with the cultural history of the United States.

Historically, tourism in the United States had been a reserved activity for the wealthy elites. Lawrence Lipin in his book, *Workers and the Wild: Conservation, Consumerism, and Labor in Oregon, 1910-30*, argues that America top elites viewed tourism, and in particular wilderness activities, as a means for regenerating masculinity that was lost in the feminine urban environment. Moreover, government policies regarding tourism were almost exclusively geared toward wealthy individuals and even alienated lower class individuals. As Lipin contends, “proper hunting became a badge of respectable manhood, a sign of elite status among American men, while the profit-motivated slaughter of the lower-class market hunter, who engaged in the hunt to support himself and his family according to producerist principles, was denounced.”⁶⁰ This mentality of favoring elites over the working class continued throughout the years leading up to World War Two. The ORC is an excellent early example of how state agencies began to focus on a majority of people, rather than just on a small number of elites. This Commission found that many of the existing structures within Oregon to support tourism were not adequate for accompanying the vast majority of the population.

⁵⁹Letter, Oregon State Board of Health to John Kelly, 1946, Inv00A-1, B-1,C-1, Oregon State Archives.

⁶⁰Lawrence Lipin, *Workers and the Wild: Conservation, Consumerism, and Labor in Oregon, 1910-30*, (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2007),51.

The main problems as observed by the Readjustment Commission were the lack of adequate hotels and posted signs to the vast number of scenic and manmade tourist destinations. They argued that, as mentioned prior, tourists want adequate accommodations that suite the natural beauty of the state. During this time, the state lacked a significant amount of quality hotels that would entice enough tourists that would come to Oregon to elevate the tourist sector to either the number one or two industry in the state. Furthermore, the Committee argued that the state lack appropriate signs to help direct the emerging class of Americans who would elect to travel by car. The latter problem was not limited to street or highway signs that dictated information travelers received; rather national and state advertising was understood a major tool in the fight for national tourism.

Governor Snell reflected similar believes toward the problem of tourism facing the state of Oregon. In a speech during 1945, he prescribes that Oregon should, “coordinate our advertising programs; provide for an effective and central clearing agency” that could “disseminate” information to local citizenry as well as provide a network on national stage in order to attract out of state citizens.⁶¹ The work done by the Readjustment Commission on the tourist sector of the economy is a prime example of how it fits into the parameters of the early, “active” years of the New Deal, and the later years of the “in-active” New Deal. The focus on consumer spending within the sector of tourism, placed within the framework of heavy planning done to help stimulate economic growth, places this commission within both stages of the New Deal. Moreover, the commission’s work on consumer purchasing power and the development of the state’s tourist industry highlight the committee’s work to classless planning in which they want to satisfy both the working class, and the owners of capital. By focusing on and advocating

⁶¹Speech, Governor Earl Snell to Oregon Tourist Industry, 1945, Inv00A-1, B-1,C-1, Oregon State Archives.

an increase of consumer purchasing power, the commission and the State of Oregon were expressing their commitment to providing a planning strategy that didn't involve alienating one class or another as many of the previous New Deal policies did; rather, the intent, and outcome of their planning was to satisfy a majority of Oregonians.

Overall the Postwar Readjustment and Development Commission was an important transitional Committee in helping dictate the shape of postwar economic prosperity. It played a prominent role in seeking economic opportunity and compiling data on population, public works, and consumerist behaviors that was crucial in helping the state of Oregon plan for postwar economic expansion. This Commission embodied the characteristics of the early New Deal which focused on planning and using public works as a measure to help curb unemployment, while at the same time, exemplified ideals from the later part of the New Deal that used planning and data gathering as means to help private enterprise grow. Moreover, it performed all of these duties without invoking an apparent class conflict due to its natural position within the New Deal itself. The focus on consumer spending power and its transition in handling tourism in Oregon further highlights this goal of achieving economic success for a majority of Oregonians. The ORC provides an excellent early example of how state agencies can dictate and encourage economic growth and employment without alienating different economic actors.

This relationship between the state and private industry is one that would continue to expand into the 1950s and 60s, and helped America become a preeminent world superpower. The close ties between government and industry arguably had its origins within the New Deal itself. However, the New Deal was problematic because it inherently created class and political conflicts, and it wasn't until the experience of World War Two, and the subsequent planning commissions, such as the ORC, that would allow for government to intervene economically with

limited class and political conflicts. While the limited class or political conflicts from government intervention in the economy would last only until 1970s, the close relationship between private industry and the state has continued to flourish to this day.

Bibliography

Brinkley, Alan, *End of Reform*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1995.

Cohen, Lizabeth, *A Consumers' Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2003.

Conkin, Paul, *The New Deal*. Arlington Heights: AHM Publishing Corporation, 1975.

Ellis W. Hawley, *The New Deal and the Problem of Monopoly*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966.

Lipin, Lawrence, *Workers and the Wild: Conservation, Consumerism, and Labor in Oregon, 1910-30*. Chicago: University of Illinois, 2007.

Nash, Gerald, *The American West Transformed: The Impact of the Second World War*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985.

Robbins, William, *Landscapes of Conflicts: The Oregon Story*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2004.

All primary material was found at the Oregon State Archives in Salem, Oregon.