

The Star-Telegram is an independent Democratic newspaper, supporting what it believes to be right and opposing what it believes to be wrong, regardless of party politics, publishing the news fairly and impartially at all times.

## Can Texas Afford a State Tax Increase?

An informative chart of state spending in Texas from 1847 to the present has been prepared by Walter E. Long of the Texas Legislative Service from records of the state comptroller and private sources.

This chart shows the steady rise in state expenditures in the 20th Century and the tremendous increase in the post-war years from \$186,493,191 in 1945 to an estimated \$500 million in 1950. This state "spending out of hand" has meant the depletion of a \$90 million general fund surplus on hand last Jan. 1. It also points to an annual tax increase of \$75 million a year if the Legislature meeting in January maintains state expenditures at present high levels.

The wartime increase in revenues from oil and gasoline is not expected to offset the additional costs authorized by the last Legislature. On the contrary the inflationary rise in financing of all phases of state government may be greater next year than the gain from oil revenue.

An article in the *South Texan*, publication of the South Texas Chamber of Commerce, holds that the provision of an additional \$75 million in annual state revenue will necessitate a general sales tax, a personal income levy and a corporation income tax. Whatever the form of the tax increase, it would be pyramided upon the 10 per cent hike in omnibus and cigaret levies by the last special session of the Legislature to produce an estimated \$60 million a year.

The article suggests a 10 per cent reduction in all state expenditures to effect an annual savings of \$50 million. This arbitrary retrenchment is deemed neces-

sary because of the practical difficulty of whittling down the 50,000 different items in the major appropriation bills. Every pressure group benefited by this spending will be on hand at the Legislature to oppose reductions in appropriations affecting it and to favor economy for "the other fellow."

A blanket saving of \$50 million a year would extend to the public schools, highways and old age assistance which account for about 90 cents of the state tax dollar. The increased provision for education and rural roads by the 50th Legislature have been largely responsible for exhaustion of the state surplus. Since these costs are recurring, more taxes will be necessary after the surplus is gone—unless there is substantial economy.

This problem is before the Texas Economy Commission, appointed by the governor, and its recommendations to the Legislature may be a useful guidepost for averting another increase in state taxes. The *South Texan* recommends that every citizen, alive to the import of state spending at the rate of \$1 billion every biennium, talk to the legislators in his district.

This advice will have to be specific, and legislative supporters of economy will have to have active support when the problem arises in Austin next January, when pressure groups will be on hand. Every resident of this state, in public and private life, should realize the necessity for the same "belt tightening" by state government that will be required of every citizen in paying more federal taxes for the defense of this country. Perhaps, this realization is the starting point to economy in state government.

## Making Amends

President Truman did the fair and proper thing when he told the United States Marines that he sincerely regrets the unfortunate choice of language he used regarding them in a letter to a Republican member of Congress.

It was commendable, too, that the President followed up his written apology by appearing personally before the Marine Corps League meeting in Washington to express the hope there will never be another misunderstanding between him and the Marines.

That should be the end of the incident. No good purpose can now be served by further discussion regarding the unfortunate choice of language. Nor can any good come from intemperate denunciations of the President. The offending letter was written by someone on the White House Staff—not necessarily by the President himself—but the President made no effort to shift responsibility for it to any of his aides. As soon as the storm it caused broke Mr. Truman set about doing all that anyone could do in the circumstances, which was to make amends.

"When I make a mistake," he told the Marine Corps League, "I try to correct it."

Members of the league showed the proper spirit by giving the President a standing ovation and applauding his verbal apology furiously. They realize, of course, that the incident has not lowered the Marines one iota in the high esteem in which they are held by the people of the United States and, we are sure, by the President of the United States.

## Draft Predicament

Maj. Gen. Lewis B. Hershey, selective service director, has objected to the strict requirements of the armed forces that result in the rejection of three out of every five prospects for military duty.

At the other end of the selective service process, there are increasing demands for exemptions and deferments of particular groups. A blatant illustration was the appeal of a hotel association representative for deferment of hotel chefs and personnel. No segment of national life needs good cooks more than the armed forces, although the veteran will tell you

that chefs become blacksmiths and blacksmiths are cooks in the strange ways of military life.

Nevertheless, selective service is confronted with a two-front struggle for military manpower. Military experts will have to be less choosy about draftees, and strict limitations on deferment will be necessary if another Korean crisis of numerical inferiority is to be avoided.

## Genius for Trouble

The Russian genius for alienating neutrals and creating needless enmity is finely illustrated in the current dispute with Sweden over Baltic territorial waters and the treatment of a Latvian subject.

Sweden and other Scandinavian countries have been exercised for several months at high-handed Russian seizure of fishing craft which, by Russian accounts, have penetrated Baltic waters over which Russia claims control. Those waters, Russia has declared, extend seaward for 12 miles, despite the fact that for ages past territorial waters in the Baltic have been recognized to extend only three, and in some cases four, miles from shore.

Sweden has clubbed nine separate protests against seizure of Swedish trawlers by the Russian navy and both Sweden and Denmark have described Russia's 12-mile claim as "occupation of the high seas." It was in this general area, it will be remembered, that an American naval plane, unarmed and carrying 12 crewmen, was shot down last spring with the loss of all aboard.

The result of the Russian unwillingness to yield in any particular has driven the Scandinavian foreign offices into close co-operation and into parallel alignment in the United Nations General Assembly.

Insofar as Sweden is concerned, a strain upon the traditionally calm Swedish temperament is noticeable in connection with the peremptory character of a Russian note concerning the disposition of a Latvia-born Soviet citizen. Moscow has charged Sweden with illegally imprisoning him and with deliberate deception to mislead the Soviet embassy.

The tart Swedish reply flatly denied the charges and saw "no reason to take up this note for discussion as its accusations are groundless and therefore insulting, both in matter and form."

It all adds up to the fact that Soviet bluff, bluster and threats lack some of the scare power they once possessed. Whatever the Red tactics have accomplished within the Cominform world, they are slowly but certainly uniting free nations in a common resistance. Dividing and conquering, it would appear, is not a Russian talent.

## SENATOR SOAPER says:

We are jittery enough as it is, and any sea monster lolling off our shores hereafter will please cut out the funny stuff, like wearing a schnorkel.

Along with our thanks to Australia for a quick helping hand in the crisis, let it be said in passing that Harry Bridges never was our favorite Australian.

Could time turn backward in its flight to, say, 1905, it might relieve us of the imminence of war. But look at the millinery we'd get into!

## PITCHING HORSESHOES

by Billy Rose

As I've reported in this column before, I was born Sept. 6, 1899. On the same date two years later President McKinley was shot, and there are plenty of fellows on Broadway who will tell you they shot the wrong man.

Anyway, be that as it may, when I woke up on the morning of Sept. 6, 1950, my two heads began to argue with each other.

What's that? You didn't know I had two heads? Of course I have. When I was born on a kitchen table on the lower East Side 51 years ago, I had only one, but 15 years later, day and date with my first pay check, I began to sprout another.

In recent years, as readers of this column know, I've been a badly confused man—my two brains seldom agree on anything, and as a result I seldom know whose corner I'm in, what team I'm rooting for, which cheering section I belong to.

When I got up Wednesday, both heads yawned, blinked and then remembered what day it was.

"Happy birthday," said Head No. 1.

"What's happy about it?" said Head No. 2. "A birthday is just a comma between crib and crypt."

"Bad alliteration and worse logic," said No. 1. "A man is as old as he feels."

"Think so?" said No. 2. "Well, try touching your toes and you'll find that a man is as old as he is old."

I reached out for my usual get-up cigarette.

Tobacco and T-Bones.

"That's another thing I've been meaning to take up with you," Head No. 2 went on. "Now that your lungs are 51, don't you think it's time you cut down on your smoking? And while you're at it, how about doing something about that waistline? This Halloween some kid is liable to think you're a pumpkin and start cutting holes in it."

"Save your breath," said Head No. 1. "I get a lot of pleasure out of tobacco and T-bones, and I'm not giving them up for you or any other head."

"Okay, it's your funeral," said No. 2. "And incidentally, speaking of funerals, what's this I read in the papers about your doing a television show this fall? I thought you were through scrounging around for an additional hot buck."

"Bucks have little to do with it," said No. 1. "TV is an interesting medium and I'd like to take a crack at it."

"My guess is you'll fall on your fat face and wind up owing Hooper a few points," said No. 2. "This isn't a one-shot thing, you know—you've got to be good week after week. And, as I see it, that's like the vaudevillian who steps down to the footlights and says, 'My next trick, ladies and gentlemen, is im-possible.'"

"I'm inclined to agree," said Head No. 1, "and I so pointed out to my sponsor. I told him I'd be plenty tickled if I came up with five good shows out of the first 26. And not to brood about it—chances are that five would put me four up on the other Joe Mc-Geniuses."

"How does your missus feel about this new chore?" asked No. 2. "As it is, what with the theater, column and night club, you only get to see her week-ends. What are you going to do when you're up to your earlobes in coaxial cable—see her every New Year's Eve?"

Present From Eleanor.

Just then Eleanor bounced into my bedroom. "Happy birthday, Methuselah," she said. "I've invited a few people in for dinner tonight. How do you want me to fix the birthday cake—one candle or one for each year?"

"One candle," I said, "unless you aim to pass out smoked glasses to the guests. By the way, did you buy me a present?"

"Yes—a deep-freeze," said Eleanor. "We've needed one for a long time. And for good measure, six handkerchiefs monogrammed 'E. H. R.'"

"That's my girl," I said. "Always doing the right and proper by her old man."

My wife grinned, walked out of the room and came back with one of those fancy wrist watches with have separate dials for the days and months of the year.

"Wear it in good health, darling," she said.

"What did I tell you?" enthused Head No. 1 when Eleanor had gone downstairs. "She's a girl in a zillion."

"That's one thing we agree on," said Head No. 2. "but the calendar on that wrist watch should worry you plenty. Maybe the little woman is trying to tell you that it's later than you think."

## WADING IN

by H. V. Wade.

"A new type of adjustable scissors cuts tin or silk equally well"—a boon to any home dressmaker who heretofore has had to buy the costume jewelry.

"Railroads are here to stay" says the ad—and a good thing, too. Without those tracks there would be nothing to grow up on the wrong side of.

Russia doesn't like our women wrestlers, an attitude rather wistfully shared both by fanciers of wrestling and fanciers of women.

To the mountain boy with a boiler and a coil, this Russian feat of growing crops without sunshine seems a sorry waste of good moonlight.

## FORT WORTH STAR-TELEGRAM

Trademark Registered U. S. Patent Office  
MORNING—EVENING—SUNDAY

Combining the Fort Worth Star, established February 1, 1906; Fort Worth Telegram, purchased January 1, 1909; the Fort Worth Record, purchased November 1, 1925.  
Entered as second-class mail matter at the Postoffice at Fort Worth, Texas, Jan. 1, 1909, under Act of March 3, 1879.

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SUBSCRIPTION RATES—By carrier: One week, Evening only, 25c; Evening with Sunday, 35c; Morning, Evening and Sunday, 13 copies, 60c; single copies, Evening 5c, Morning 6c, Sunday 10c. By mail, Daily and Sunday, per month, \$1.50; per year, \$18.



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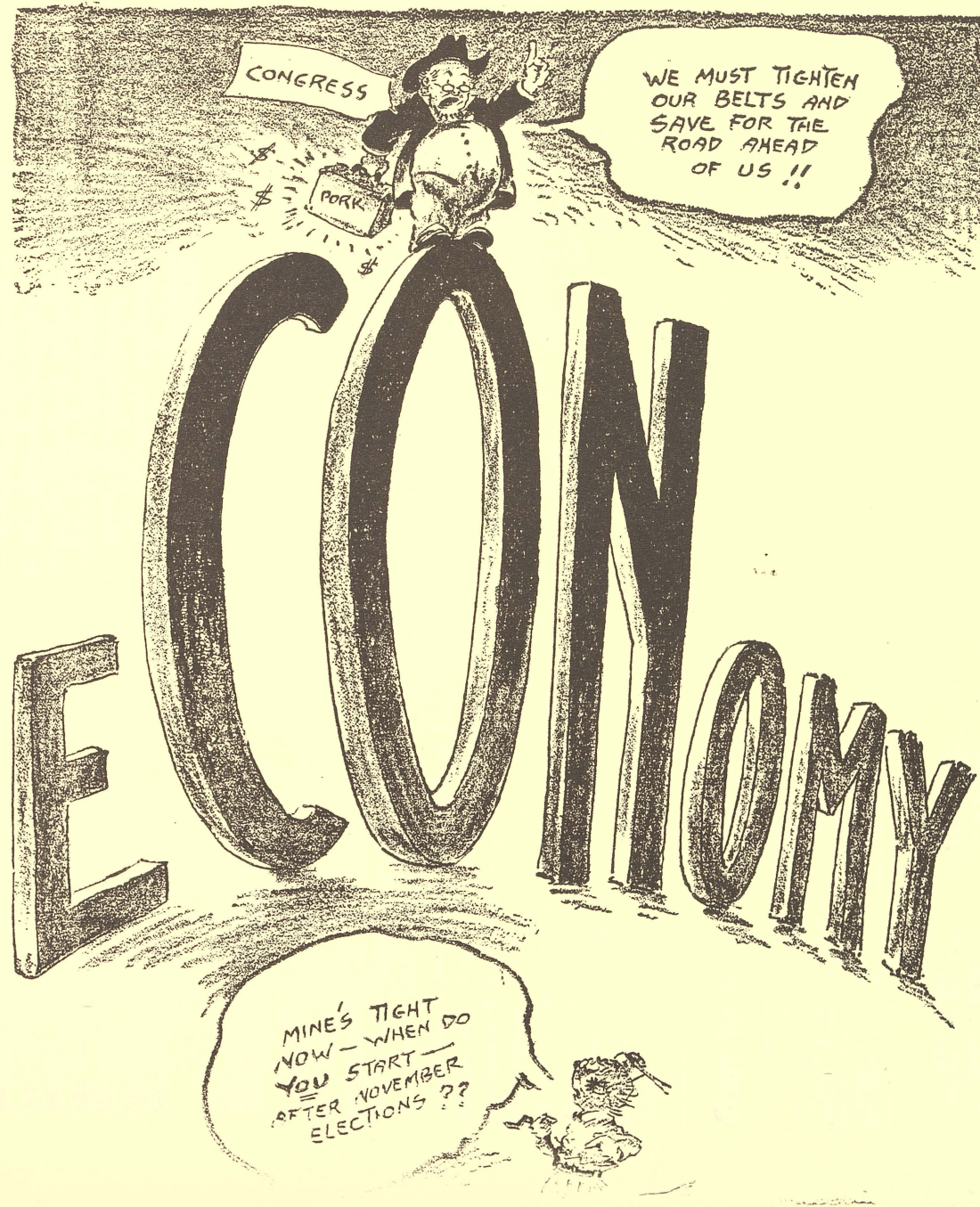
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## WHO'S KIDDIN' WHOM?

by Hal Coffman



## BILL TO AID EXPRESSWAYS

by James M. Haswell

WASHINGTON (CDN).—The new federal highway aid bill contains a provision designed to hurry up the construction of high-cost, big-city expressways.

Highway engineers rank these congestion cures the No. 1 need of cities today.

Trouble has been that pay-as-you-go methods wouldn't finance extremely high-cost projects satisfactorily.

The new provision in the highway aid bill permits a local highway building agency to use federal highway funds to repay highway construction bonds. The city, county or state may not pledge federal highway aid in advance, however.

A lot of conventional highway experts scowled at the proposal to borrow construction money when Mayor Albert Cobo of Detroit first brought it to town. The pay-as-you-go system of building intercity highways has developed out of long and painful experience. Even President Truman criticized the plan in a letter to the Senate committee handling the highway aid bill.

### Principal Arguments.

But these arguments finally prevailed:

1. It is not practicable to build high-cost, limited-access, often elevated metropolitan expressways on a bit-at-a-time basis like country highways.

They are more like bridges than they are like standard highways running between cities.

2. It is not good financing to pace construction to annual available revenue. No return might be obtained for perhaps 10 to 15