

Several Bills On Taxes Still In the Hopper

By VINCENT THOMAS
Assemblyman, 68th District

California taxpayers, among whom I am numbered, will certainly be affected by what is done on state finances by this legislature. Oddly enough, however, in view of the fact that adjournment is now less than two months away, it is impossible to do more than guess what the final outcome on taxes and budget might be.

Even before this session convened in January, contradictory statements concerning taxes had been issued by influential parties. The Governor reiterated his campaign promise to request no new or increased taxes in his budget. From the Senate Interim Committee on Transportation and Public Utilities came a report recommending increased motor vehicle fuel taxes to improve local streets and roads.

WHEN the Governor's budget message was submitted late in January, it contained a number of recommendations for tax changes. Promptly a partisan storm brewed, as to whether these proposals were, or were not, for tax increases. Widest in effect were those relating to the personal income tax, which called for elimination of taxes below \$10, stopping installment payments of the tax starting July 1, 1964. Next were proposals to drop installment payment of bank and corporation taxes, and to put them on a current basis. Third, were those to speed up payment of insurance taxes.

Official estimates fixed the added revenues from these and other changes at \$165.3 million for fiscal 1963-64, and at \$151.1 million for 1964-65. Two-thirds of this latter amount, or \$99.1 million, would result from the withholding tax.

HEAVIEST criticism has been directed at the withholding tax proposal, which provides for forgiveness of one-quarter of the 1964 tax due. It was pointed out that this would in effect require individuals to pay one and three quarters times their normal annual tax in one year. The resulting one-time jump in state revenues would be necessary to balance the budget in 1964-65, according to the budget message.

Republicans were not alone in criticizing the withholding tax proposal. Prominent Democratic legislators also questioned both its necessity and the equity of the forgiveness proposal. The state controller reiterated his earlier opposition to it.

DESPITE the lateness of the legislative hour, none of the bills containing these proposals have been set for committee hearing. Rumors are circulating that forgiveness of the income tax may be upped to 50, or even 75 per cent, but nothing definite is known. Chances for final passage of withholding are generally regarded as slim.

Prospects of higher taxes have also popped up in another direction. I have already written in this column about the bill which should impose

Senior Class Play Slated

Rehearsals are underway at West High School for the first senior class sponsored play, "Scheherazade" to be presented May 23 and May 24 at 8:30 p.m. in the cafeteria.

The three-act play will contain two of the Arabian Nights stories as narrated by Scheherazade, "The Fisherman and the Genie" and "Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves."

Hilma Martin has been cast to portray Scheherazade. Others in the cast include James Lewis, Sherrie Sells, James Kelly and Richard McGinty.

Miss Eileen Wainwright, librarian at West High School, has adopted the stories and will direct the production. John May, a senior, has been selected as student assistant director. Mrs. Beverly Bosak, drama teacher, will sponsor the event.

The admission charge will be \$1. Tickets may be purchased at West High's student activities office.

Those who are fond of setting things to rights, have a great objection to seeing them wrong.—William Hazlitt

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Since then a companion measure to raise the tax on cigarettes from three cents to five cents per pack, has been introduced.

SINCE their author also introduced the bill to raise state support for public schools by \$100 million per year, which is strongly supported by major education organizations, and since the bills together would produce about the state revenue needed to pay this added amount, they cannot be lightly dismissed.

The motor vehicle fuel tax has passed the Senate, and its supporters are confident it will pass the Assembly, but its ultimate fate rests with the governor. The fate of other tax bills interests all of us, but until they begin to move, those of us in each party can only make up our minds as to the eventual outcome.

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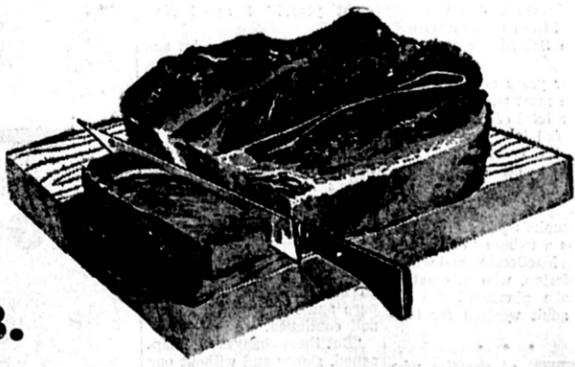
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