

Proposed Tax Limit Gains New Support

By PHILIP E. WATSON
 Los Angeles County Assessor
 My property tax limit proposal received strong support last week from an unexpected corner — the office of Attorney General Thomas C. Lynch.

Even though it didn't make it any less painful for us to pay the first installment on our property taxes last Friday, the Attorney General's endorsement of the 2 per cent limit means another forceful voice raised in defense of the property owners of this state.

I welcome him on the team. Testifying before the Assembly Interim Committee on Municipal and County Govern-

Dec. 9. Chief Deputy Attorney General Charles A. O'Brien said:

"AS IMPORTANT as I believe reforms are to provide better government, by themselves they offer no protection to the homeowner against confiscatory property taxes. Our investigations and our contact with citizens throughout this state impress us with the urgent need to limit property taxes."

"This isn't merely a problem of our older citizens — it hits hard at every homeowner in the state."

"The right to own a home is part of our California heritage, a property tax that effectively deters Californians from exercising this right is both unfair to the citizen and

also increases the social and community problems attendant to high density development."

"A LEADING expert in property taxes has projected that unless something is done at once, by 1980 the property tax rate will be \$22 per hundred. On a \$20,000 home assessed at 25 per cent of market value, this means a tax bill of \$1,100."

"Attorney General Lynch therefore recommends the introduction of legislation to limit the maximum property tax levy to 2 per cent of the value of the real and personal property. Thus, on the \$20,000 house, the maximum tax burden would be \$400. Even this is a high figure,

but we believe that it represents the dividing line between taxation and confiscation."

If Mr. O'Brien's words sound familiar, that's because they are. They are the same words I have been sounding for the last two years, in my talks before local organizations, in conferences with leaders of business, industry and homeowner groups, in testimony before the same legislative committee which heard Mr. O'Brien, as well as before the Assembly Committee on Revenue and Taxation.

IN FACT, as long ago as November 1963, in offering a series of property tax reforms to the Revenue and Taxation Committee, I warned that per-

iodically taxes become so high that the system breaks down and called for a 2 per cent overall tax limit in relation to market value. I pointed out that we have a property tax limit on automobiles fixed at 2 per cent of value and said, "Surely the homeowner is entitled to as much protection as the owner of an automobile."

The limit proposal was introduced at the last session of the legislature by Assemblyman Tom Carrell, but, like all property tax reform proposals at that session, went nowhere.

We intend to introduce it again at the budget session next year — assuming the Governor puts property tax measures on the special call.

The Attorney General's support brings renewed hope that the legislature will give it serious consideration at the earliest opportunity. For all other property tax reform will be meaningless if we fail to protect the individuals ability to continue to own property.

RECREATION, TOO

Today, over 50 million acres of land — about 86 per cent of the entire acreage owned by paper companies and independent woodland owners — are open to the general public, reports the American Paper Institute. Plus nearly 40,000 miles of streams for fishing and 750,000 acres of lakes for boating and swimming.

'Cancer Word Book' Is Offered at Area Unit

If you are not quite sure whether leukoplakia is a blood cell, a giant prawn, or a whitish patch in the mouth, the American Cancer Society has just the booklet for you.

It is a newly issued "Cancer Word Book" giving the definitions of nearly 90 words commonly used in medical conversations about cancer.

The definitions are written in non-professional language to make them easier for lay people to understand.

"Epidemiology," for example, is explained, as a "branch of medical science concerned with cause of epidemics; searching, through statistical analysis, for environmental and other factors associated with certain

people, i.e., cancers of various sites."

A TUMOR is described as "a swelling or enlargement; an abnormal mass, either benign or malignant, with no useful body function."

Free copies of the booklet may be obtained from the Los Angeles County Branch, South Bay unit of the American Cancer Society, 18503 Hawthorne Blvd., Lawndale.

Oh, yes. Leukoplakia is "a whitish, thickened patch in the mouth which is sometimes a forerunner of cancer."

Between 1896 and 1915, about 35,000 electric cars were built in the U.S.

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