

# Legislators Use Several Systems to Check Budget

By VINCENT THOMAS  
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 The intricacies of a Chinese puzzle have nothing much on those of financing our California between the hundred or more different agencies, the many special funds and different sources of revenue, and the varying legal and regulatory control of expenditures, we Legislators and our fiscal committees could be in constant bewilderment. But fortunately

we have been able to set up a couple of efficient staff units to help guide us through the fiscal mazes which surround us.  
 First, in the 1940s we established the Joint Legislative Budget Committee, and under it the Office of the Legislative Analyst. This unit enables us to make our own reviews of proposed state budgets, independent of the executive branch. Then, in 1949, we

passed another law creating the Joint Legislative Adult Committee, and the Office of Auditor-General under its supervision. This agency helps us find out how money appropriated is actually spent, and recommends improvements and solutions for any problems which may exist.  
 RECENTLY, the Joint Adult Committee met in Sacramento to consider a number of re-

ports prepared by the Auditor-General and his staff over the past several months. Under the established procedure, after a report is finished, copies are supplied to the Committee, the Legislative Analyst, the Department of Finance, the State Controller, as well as to the agency involved. The agency is requested to reply to any recommendations given, indicating its acceptance or rejection. If no reply is received in

a reasonable time, or any recommendations are rejected, the Committee meets to decide what further action should be taken.  
 At this meeting, reports relating to more than 50 agencies were submitted in summaries outlining the recommendations rejected. Of the total of 187 recommendations which has been made to agencies, 170 had been accepted, and only 17 rejected.

AGENCIES involved ranged from the division of architecture, through education, highways, insurance, state hospitals, prisons, to the Veterans Home and water rights. No recommendations affected any great sums of money, but several areas of worthwhile economies were indicated. It is not possible even to name all the suggestions here, but a few examples will demonstrate the depth of the analysis made by

staff of the Auditor-General. With respect to the architectural revolving fund, which includes about \$80 million per year, it is recommended that revisions be made in the method of providing funds for emergencies in capital outlay projects. Such revisions will require legislative action. The present method, it was reported, does not provide the most efficient use of capital appropriations. Other recommendations about this fund also involve possible legislation.  
 IN THE educational field, the Committee was told that about \$600,000 in excess equalization aid had been paid to some school districts, but a 1961 change in the law will prevent such situations in the future. An additional \$200,000 in such aid was paid because federal grants to some schools were not properly accounted for, but readjustments in the future will offset this.  
 These are only a few examples of changes and improvements suggested which demonstrate the value of the Auditor-General in maintaining economy.

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