

New Budget Will Be Key Issue in 1965 Session

By VINCENT THOMAS
 Assemblyman, 68th District
 Now that the bruises resulting from the recent general election are beginning to fade, it is possible to do some thinking about the shape of the forthcoming 1965 general session. It's a little hard to realize, but in only a few short weeks we will be back in Sacramento, settling ourselves into harness again for the long pull.

One reputable commentator has predicted that the session is likely to run into nine months — that is, not adjourn until sometime in September. This prediction assumes, of course, that the 1965-66 state budget will not be passed in the general session, but that it will be forced into a special meeting, as has happened the last few times.

tion mark, the spending program will be outranked by only two others in the world, those of the U. S. government and of the City of New York. While the Governor has announced that he will not recommend any new services, and no expansions except those necessitated by workload growth, we are still confronted by the basic problem of paying for the increased support of public schools authorized at our last sessions.

I have written recently in this column about the certainty that new state revenues will be needed to keep the budget in balance, and about the many ideas for sources of additional funds which are being tossed about. I referred to the studies being conducted by both the Senate and Assembly Committees on Revenue and Taxation. Since I wrote, the total "take" from new taxes being suggested has been increased to more than \$300 million annually, then to \$600 million. One tax expert said that reference to such totals is dangerous, be-

cause it tempts local agencies such as school districts to demand more funds from state government.

coming session. So many other states are being compelled to redistrict their Senates almost immediately that chances of securing Congressional approval of a constitutional amendment to preserve our "federal" system are fading fast.

Another important and controversial field which will receive much attention is social insurance. Both our state unemployment insurance and disability insurance systems are in serious financial diffi-

culties. At present, UI benefit payments and annual revenues from employer taxes just about balance, at \$500 million. But the reserve, at \$657 million, represents only about 4 percent of taxable payroll, regarded as dangerously low. Yet labor organizations have announced that they will press for extension of coverage to agricultural and government workers, and for liberalized benefits.

All observers agree that the coming session looks like the roughest in many years.

THE NEW budget will obviously be a primary issue. Coming close to the \$4 bil-

ion mark, the spending program will be outranked by only two others in the world, those of the U. S. government and of the City of New York.

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Graham D. McGruer, son of Mr. and Mrs. John W. McGruer of 22902 Adolph Ave., completed basic training Oct. 23, at the Recruit Training Command, Naval Training Center, San Diego.

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