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Give Taxes and the People Will Find Their Own Way

Taxes and the Cost of Living

SINCE few of us really have any comprehension of what we mean by a billion dollars, discussion of the \$39.6 billions the federal government proposes to spend this coming year is necessarily rather vague.

It is only when you break it down, as the Indiana State Chamber of Commerce has just done, and find that the average Indiana family is expected to pay \$1061.12 of it, that it begins to have much real meaning.

It is going to be more than the \$20 a week grocery bill that the average Indiana family probably will pay this year. It is what it would cost to rent a house at \$85 a month for the whole year. It is considerably more than most Indiana families will pay for clothing in 1948.

This comes out first, of course, before any food or clothing or rent. Since it is an "average" naturally it means that while some families will pay less than \$1061.12 many families will pay a great deal more. Nor is this their whole tax bill. There's about \$300 more—maybe \$400—for this same family to pay toward the cost of state and local government besides.

ALTOGETHER, again on the "average," government will cost about 28 cents of every dollar any of us earn this coming year—about 21 cents for federal government, about seven cents for state and local government.

So the man who works a standard five-day 40-hour week puts in the first day-and-a-half working for his government, and the remaining three-and-a-half days working to support his own family. With prices up where they are today that three-and-a-half days' pay often has to be stretched pretty thin to cover a family's needs—but taxes take another bite out of it there, too.

Every dollar that is spent for bread or milk or hamburger includes—and has to include—its share of the taxes on the farm where it was grown and the mill where it was processed and the store where it was sold. And that helps to keep prices up.

NONE of this \$1061.12 by the way, is intended to pay on the national debt, which now amounts to around \$6450 for the average family in Indiana, although it does include interest payments on that debt. Any debt reduction that is made, however, would have to be added to the \$1061.12.

Many of these expenditures, obviously, are necessary and just simply can't be avoided. But, as the Chamber's statisticians point out, a good many of them can be cut out of that spending program, and a good many of them should be pared down.

After all, a man with a family to support can't be working a fourth of his time for somebody else, and expect to make ends meet indefinitely.

He Knows Politics

THROUGH the many years he served as Senator from Montana, Burton K. Wheeler prided most his independence of conscience and action. He spoke and voted according to his own beliefs, and didn't care much who liked it or who didn't.

So it is not surprising that Mr. Wheeler, in considering the offer to become director of AFL's Political Education League, should promptly announce that he does not favor the defeat of all Congressmen who voted for the Taft-Hartley Act. That is what some union bosses have been advocating and threatening, but Mr. Wheeler makes it clear he will not go along with a policy that is both unfair and politically stupid. He disapproves some provisions of the Taft-Hartley Act, but he knows that many Senators and Representatives friendly to labor voted for the law and thinks that neither this, nor any other one measure, should be the sole test of whether a candidate receives the political support of union members.

If Mr. Wheeler's saner attitude prevails, organized labor's political effort in this campaign will be more effective than it was in 1946.

The People Gain One

HIROHITO continues to ensnare our interest because he is an individual in a peculiar transitional stage. He is an ex-god trying to get a job as a man—experience limited.

Recently we made note of his reputed ability to hold a fan between his toes and fan himself while swimming in the rain with an open umbrella in one hand. To do this he may have had to draw a bit on some of his old-time powers, so the fact is none too conclusive evidence that he had descended all the way from divinity.

But now comes new testimony of his progress. In a speech opening the Japanese Parliament a few days ago he used the significant phrase, "We, the People."

Japanese quickly noted that it was the first time the former emperor in a formal statement had put himself in the same category as an ordinary citizen.

In Africa, Too

THE native of Portuguese West Africa does not commute or ride the subway. The din of traffic, the juke box, the singing commercial are as foreign to him as the supercharged tempo of western life in general. Yet he has stomach ulcers—even as the most civilized worrier.

The reason, says a medical missionary, is the witch doctor. He scares his patients right into peptic and duodenal tizzies. All we can say is that if he can achieve the net result of civilization's myriad annoyances by his primitive witchcraft, there must be powerful magic in masks, rattles and mumbo-jumbo.

The Cradle Vote

THIS truly is an election year (what-will-they-think-of next division). A New York state legislator has introduced a bill at Albany permitting working mothers to deduct the cost of hiring baby-sitters in computing their state income taxes.

With exemptions for babies and, prospectively, exemptions for baby-sitters, our vote-seekers might as well make a clean sweep and promise free diaper service.

In Tune With the Times

SHOVEL AND PUFF

YESTERDAY, almost before the purple of night was thinning into the gray of dawn, thousands of citizens, all good neighbors, were out with their snow shovels, their coal shovels, their brooms, or whatever they could find, to remove the snow from their sidewalks.

It wasn't easy. It was a heavy, wet snow. It made their back muscles ache, their fingers numb. But they were good citizens, all doing their part to dig the town out of the heaviest snowfall of the year.

The shoveled sidewalks spoke well for what they thought of their town and their neighbors. And somehow we cannot, but think that any town in which the citizens voluntarily do so much for one another cannot be such a bad place after all. It makes us glad we live here where hospitality speaks with mitten fingers and a snow shovel so others may walk where it's safe and dry. —H. H.

We can live to be 200 if we breathe properly, says a French doctor. And we can live forever if we breathe at all.

MELODY AND YOU

Do I appreciate and recognize, The value of a song—

I'm glad I may have music

And listen all day long.

I know my heart would thrill

At any serenade.

While listening to a symphony, The present seems to fade.

When I am surrounded by tasks To be done

And hear a touch of melody,

Work seems like fun.

Yet if I were discouraged

And nothing seemed right,

A song would cheer me,

And life would seem bright.

Oh! Yes, I do love music,

And I will truly say

A song inside is sweet,

And welcome any day.

Familiar songs keep living on,

In most of us 'tis true.

But music does so much for me,

Because I once knew you!

—AVOLYN YOUNG BLAKE.

Los Angeles is expected to register a bumper crop of 40,000 babies in 1948. And they keep telling us they don't have squalls in California.

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WALKING IN THE SNOW

THE MAN who arises, looks out his bedroom window at the snow and grumbles, is missing something. While he wants to hop right back into bed until the middle of May, there are others who know what fun a snow can be.

When it is freshly fallen, dry and fluffy as the white wool on a teddy bear's ear, it's fun to make a fresh path, through the fields if there are any close by, and if not just to plod along down the street a few feet to the right or left of the sidewalk.

The air is cold and exhilarating. It bites a little as it goes up your nostrils and snaps your lungs into action like a quick-acting tonic.

If you are cold when you start out, you aren't long. Soon your blood is running warm into the far reaches of your last capillary. You are warm—from the tips of your toes to the tip of your nose. And it's strange, you aren't tired. Your cheeks take on a rouge pink and your eyes have a glycerin glisten. You are alive, every ounce of you, as you plant your feet rhythmically, ankle-deep or more, in the night's fall of snow, soft as pine needles and as white as the mothering clouds which linger overhead.

It's fun to lie in bed, but it's more fun to walk in the snow. Try it and see. —R. B.

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When the freezing days are over it'll be just as foolish to put alcohol in the radiator as in the driver.

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Currently making the rounds in Australia in connection with the U. S. loan to Britain is a poem which goes:

"Uncle Sam Hubbard

Emerged from the cupboard

To lend a poor Bulldog a bone."

But a tight-fitting collar

Designed like a dollar,

Was also attached to the loan."

NATIONAL AFFAIRS... By Earl Richert

Control Law May Aid Renters Who Lease

WASHINGTON, Feb. 5—Restoration of federal rent controls on the 1,600,000 houses and apartments which now are controlled because the tenants signed the "voluntary" 15 per cent rent increases was forecast today by Sen. C. Douglass Buck (R. Del.)

"I think Congress will end up by freezing the rents on these places at the increased 15 per cent level," said Sen. Buck. He guided the rent-control bill through the Senate last year and now is a member of the Senate Subcommittee drafting a new rent extension act.

Republican leaders have promised to renew the rent-control law for one year after expiration of the present law, Feb. 29. And the most perplexing problem has been what to do about the control-free houses.

Many Senators and Congressmen regard the renewal of rent controls on these units as breaking a contract between the government and the landlords who signed leases running to Dec. 31, 1948, under a law which said they were to be control-free after next Jan. 1.

Unfair to Tenants Who Signed Leases

BUT THEY say it would be unfair to permit rents to go up on these places after the leases ended while those tenants who did not sign leases still would have the protection of federal rent controls until March, 1949.

As it is now, a landlord can charge any rent he can get for an apartment or house vacated by a tenant who had signed a 15 per cent increase lease.

Congressmen say most tenants who signed these lease agreements do not realize that they are now out from under rent control and that they do not go back under rent control upon termination of the lease—unless the law is changed.

Wants Freeze at Increased Level

HOUSING EXPEDITER Tighe E. Woods told the House Banking Committee he knew of several instances of "evasive practices" by landlords to get tenants out of leased apartments in order to raise rents.

He asked that the 15-per-cent-increase units be put back under rent control and frozen at the increased level. He said the alternative in order to bring about equitable rents for all, were either to roll back the 15 per cent increase or to raise other units 15 per cent.

The present dilemma occurred because Congress in passing the current law last summer thought it would be the last rent-control measure. It put in the lease provision so that the landlord could get an immediate increase in rent and the tenant could be assured of a place to live at a fixed sum for 10 months after expiration of the rent control.

Mr. Woods told the House Committee rents on uncontrolled apartments and houses were 69 per cent higher than on controlled, capricious units.

"What has happened to these uncontrolled rents indicates what would be likely to happen to all rents in an uncontrolled market," he said in urging extension of federal rent control until March 31, 1949.

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There Will Be a Slight Delay



WORLD AFFAIRS... By Marquis Childs

Soviet Hand Feared in Palestine

WASHINGTON, Feb. 5—Behind the headlines is so much that is unspoken, so much that is whispered. Above all, that is true of the festering wound of Palestine, where mankind's hope of peace seems to die a little each day.

The fear motivating British policy is a fear that Palestine is well on the way to becoming a Communist state. It is a fear that rides Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin. He believes that within 10 years Palestine will be completely communized.

Some reflection of this was seen in a recent dispatch to the New York Times containing details supplied by the British Foreign Office on Communist infiltration from Soviet satellite states into Palestine. Of the 15,000 unauthorized immigrants on two seized refugee ships, the Pan York and the Pan Crescent, 1,000 were said to be members of militant Communist organizations.

No one was willing to stand for this statement officially. In the same way, Mr. Bevin has never expressed publicly the extent of his fears over what he believes is happening in Palestine. But those fears are deep-seated. Mr. Bevin puts the blame on Washington for what he thinks is happening.

Here is the significance of the Bevin viewpoint. It has been communicated to top policy-makers here, and today it overshadows what is done, or rather not done, with respect to Palestine.

There is a terrible, explosive potentiality in this approach to the Palestine problem. Keeping the problem under cover or ignoring it will only increase the explosion more disastrous when it does occur. That is why it seems to me to be long past time to try to get at the facts and bring them into the open.

U. S. Knows What's Going On

THE Department of State and National Defense have both received reports of Communist infiltration like those which have come out of London. They are perhaps not so detailed as those in the possession of the British Foreign Office, but they appear to have convinced leading policy-makers of the serious danger of a Communist Palestine.

The argument runs more or less in this fashion. Since the refugees were assembled in Soviet satellite states, they would not have been permitted to depart without the approval of Moscow. Approval would not have come unless the exodus served Moscow's objectives both directly and indirectly. British intelligence has furnished what purports to be proof of the infiltration.

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Side Glances—By Galbraith



"When your uncle came he said he was going to spend Christmas with us—I wonder if he's got it mixed up with Valentine's Day or Easter!"

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SO THEY SAY... In the News

Every time a member of the Cabinet refuses to give information to Congress, we have to pass a special law to get it.—Sen. Robert A. Taft