

"Think It'd Be Better if We Got Behind and Pushed?"



EDITORIAL PAGE

LA GRANDE OBSERVER

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"Without or with friend or foe, we print your daily world as it goes"—Byron.

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And About Time, Too

Income tax revision is in the air. At least there is increasing of the need for reviewing the income tax structure and seeing if its complicated machinery cannot be made to apply more fairly without depriving the government of needed revenues.

All of us can look hopefully at these reports, for most must feel that there is something unfair about his particular income tax or it wouldn't be so high.

The National Chamber of Commerce has endorsed the Baker-Herlong Bill. Under its terms all individual tax payers would be given a rate reduction of not less than 25 per cent over a five year period.

The top bracket would be lowered from 91 per cent to 47 per cent and the lowest bracket from 2 to 15 per cent. Corporate tax rates would drop one per cent per year for five years, until a floor of 37 per cent was reached. The bill also deals with depreciation allowances, capital gains, state and gift taxes deductions.

But how, one may ask, can everybody's rates be reduced without making a comparable reduction in the government's services which these tax moneys are used to pay for?

The U.S. Chamber offers this explanation: "Our tax history since the 1920s shows that within a year or two after most reduction laws have gone into effect, revenues have exceeded those under the old rates. The stimulus of tax relief generates greater economic activity. This offsets any immediate loss caused by lower rates."

The assumption here is that the additional money placed in the hands of the consumers when their taxes were cut would so stimulate business that the amount of tax money the government receives would be little if any diminished.

The Tax Foundation, another independent group, is beginning to do battle again for tax revision.

In a current 32-page study, the Foundation points out that while tax

rates today are nearly the same as in 1952, and the taxable income brackets are exactly the same as they were 17 years ago, the impact of the tax structure is heavier now because of inflation.

"For example," says the Foundation, "while a married person with an income of \$3,000 paid a tax of \$269 in 1942, a married person with the same income in 1959 adjusted for changes in consumer prices over 1942 (\$5,310), would pay a tax of \$716. While consumer prices increased by 77 per cent, this person's income tax would have increased by 166 per cent."

The Foundation also stresses the point that the present tax structure reflects depression days' efforts to redistribute the income and the war time objective of controlling income.

The Foundation repeats what needs to be repeated until some heed is given—that it is morally wrong to confiscate income on the assumption that there is such a thing as a person having too much income. Present taxes take as much as 91 per cent of every dollar a person earns above a certain figure, if he is foolish enough to let his earnings go that high. No one wants to be working for the government to that extent, and such confiscatory rates discourage enterprise and initiative and therefore do harm to the objective of expanding business and thereby increasing tax income.

All serious efforts to remove some of the inequities of the income tax structure have failed in recent congressional sessions, mainly because of ever heavier federal spending, and because of fear of office holders that tax revision will be interpreted as helping the rich at the expense of the poor.

But at least the subject is a live one, more alive than usual—and, for the long suffering tax payer, where there is life there is hope.

Sounds Like Real Team Work

A fire-police integration experiment in Winston-Salem, N.C., has been recommended for permanent stature.

As the result of a recent annexation that community assigned a fire-police patrol to the annexed area on an experimental basis.

Fourteen men were assigned to the company with four men on duty at a time. Two of the four are on duty at the area's new fire station and the other two are patrolling assigned areas in a passenger vehicle. Of the fourteen men, six work the shift of regular firemen and the other eight work the same shift as the police department.

Members of the fire-police patrol are under the immediate supervision of the

captain of the fire company and have the same authority as regular police officers. They take the same oath of office and are subject to the same discipline.

The Winston-Salem city manager recently told the American Municipal Assn. that the fire-police patrol has produced a fire-fighting team as efficient as a station-based company and a unit capable of performing almost as much police work as a two-man police car restricted to a given area.

The police chief stated that the fire-police patrol is affording better fire and police protection in the area covered and at a lower cost than is possible under the conventional system.

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