

# inside business

## Questions for the candidates

NEW YORK—If you had the chance, what would you ask this year's presidential candidates about their plan for the U.S. economy?

Because of a previous engagement, I had to turn down an invitation to the one of three questioners of the Republican contenders at their televised debate in Manchester, N.H., Feb. 20. But I got to wondering what sort of questions might have been appropriate, and (since the answers at these affairs are usually less than totally forthcoming, anyhow) I thought I'd pass the queries on to you, for whatever they might be worth. Feel free to make your own amendments and additions.

First, I think we ought to try to pin down all the aspirants on their priorities — if any — for economic action. One of the problems with our recent incumbents has been an inability, or at least unwillingness, to make these hard choices. In other words, what is indeed the country's No. One economic problem? Is it inflation, what specific sacrifices would you be willing to make, or demand, in order to contain it? How would you resolve other conflicts between apparently deserving causes: for example, between increased energy production and existing standards of environmental purity?

FROM THIS, it would be logical to turn to the question of what are known in Washington as "special interests." To what extent will your campaign dissolve into politics-as-usual about the American economy — promising subsidies to farmers, legislative protection to unions, tariffs and quotas to businessmen — and to what extent would you really be a free man as president? How many "due bills" have you already passed out, in the form of

by Louis Rukeyser



specific commitments to specific groups? What reason do we have to believe that yours would not be one more mortgaged presidency?

Next, to more specifics:

On the budget — Don't just complain (as you surely will about Jimmy Carter's glaring failure to keep even his most basic 1976 commitments about reining in federal spending and balancing the budget. Tell us how you are going to achieve what he (and so many others) glibly promised — and then defaulted on. Would your budget for the fiscal year starting next October have been in balance? How? What, specifically, would you have cut out of the current spending projections? Would you have sought, not just an arithmetical balance at this date, but a significant surplus? How big? How would you have achieved this? What would you do with this surplus?

On energy — Can we expect to see conventional demagoguery from you, scapegoating the hated oil companies, or will you undertake the difficult task of educating the electorate about the necessity for private growth and profits? Which alternative sources would you favor? Would you burn more coal — and at what cost in increased pollution? Would you throw up your hands at the hazards posed by nuclear energy, or even ban it, or would you push for technological solutions to

technological challenges? How?

ON TAXES — Do you agree with Jimmy Carter that it would be imprudent and irresponsible to ease the U.S. tax burden in a year in which existing legislation would otherwise increase that load by \$50 billion? If not, whose taxes would you cut, and which ones: income, Social Security, energy, capital gains? Would you immediately propose commensurate reductions in federal spending?

On controls and regulation — Everyone wants to get the government off his or her back, but give us some details: Whose back? Which part of government? How far are you willing to go? Which regulations and controls do you think are desirable, or even essential? Are there any new ones you would propose? What wage-price intervention might you favor?

And, finally, I would try to get some clearer statement from the candidates of what would be their personal hope, and vision, for the U.S. economy a decade from now. The politician must deal with passing problems, but the statesman should have a guiding sense of where he wants to go. Do any of these men truly have it? Would any of them actually be able to give satisfactory answers to all these queries? Now, that's a good question...

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## Hearing set on trucking rules

The Oregon Transportation Commission will hold a public hearing dealing primarily with the adoption of rules and regulations concerning trucks and trailers beginning at 1:30 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 21, in the Main Conference Room of the Transportation Building in Salem.

Meanwhile, the trucking industry has "grave reservations" concerning provisions of the motor carrier regulatory legislation, the president of the Oregon Trucking Associations said last week.

However, the regulated motor carrier industry supports that portion of U.S. House of Representatives legislation which gives "specific directives to the Interstate Commerce Commission for future truck economic regulatory policy," said OTA President Robert R. Knipe.

The House trucking legislation was introduced last week.

At the Oregon hearing, the adoption of four proposed rules will be considered.

The first rule would consider whether allowing longer, greater-capacity trailers to operate on Oregon highways would result in any detriment to highway safety, and whether such trailers should be permitted to operate in rainy weather if equipped with special splash-guard equipment.

Present rules prevent the operation of certain combinations during rainy weather, but industry research has developed devices to suppress splash and spray. Adoption of the rule will result in significant fuel and cost savings, and aid in interstate uniformity in trucking regulation.

The second rule proposes a revision in existing rules

governing the lengths of vehicles and combinations of vehicles operating over state highways. The revision is necessary to achieve uniformity with statutory amendments enacted by the 60th Legislative Assembly.

Under the proposal, the allowable length of a single vehicle, when used in combination with other vehicles, would be allowed to increase from 35 to 40 feet. The 40 foot length is presently used by all adjoining states, and by a majority of all states.

The third rule would permit the State Highway Engineer to restrict movement of over-dimensional vehicles or loads. The rule would be imposed to protect the safety and convenience of the traveling public, to protect the highway from damage, or to avoid conflict with construction or local traffic

conditions. The fourth rule will consider the adoption of the Attorney General's Model Rules of Procedures under the Administrative Procedures Act as a General Procedural Rule of the Oregon Transportation Commission, and the various divisions of the Department of Transportation.

Robert Hamilton, director of Permits, has been designated hearing officer. Interested persons may present their data, views and arguments orally or in writing at the hearing. Written comments will also be considered if received by the Transportation Commission by mail postmarked no later than Feb. 16.

Copies of the proposed rules may be obtained by contacting Robert Gormsen, manager, Commission Services, Room 121 Transportation Building, Salem.

## Tax relief refunds might be income

Refunds received under Oregon's 1979 Tax Relief Plan, as well as regular Oregon Income Tax refunds, may be considered income for Federal Income Tax return purposes.

"Recipients of Renter's Refunds are not required to include this refund as income on their Federal income tax returns," said Ralph B. Short, district director for Internal Revenue in Oregon. "It is not taxable."

The Tax Relief Plan provided additional Renter's and Homeowner's Property Tax Refunds, and a Rebate

of 1978 Oregon Income Taxes.

Refunds of Oregon Income Tax and Property Tax may be considered income, depending on whether or not taxpayers received a tax benefit in a prior year from deducting those taxes on their Federal returns, Short said. Only those who itemize their deductions for 1978 or 1979 are affected, however. Taxpayers not itemizing deductions do not have to include the refunds in income.

State income tax refunds have always been taxable on Federal returns under these

conditions. However, the issue will affect more people than ever before because of the special nine percent rebate authorized by the State Legislature.

Additional Homeowner's Rebates, under the Tax Relief Plan, were not sent out in the form of a check to most taxpayers. Instead, their 1979-80 Property Tax bill was reduced by the amount of the Property Tax Relief.

Those taxpayers who filed too late to receive a reduction in their property tax statements will receive a rebate check in the mail.

Taxpayers who received these refund checks in December do not include it in income, but must reduce their 1979 property tax deduction by the amount of the rebate.

However, taxpayers who receive their 1979 property tax refund by check in 1980 must include the amount in income on their 1980 income tax return if they used property tax as an itemized deduction in 1979. Taxpayers who did not itemize deductions in 1979 do not have to report the property tax refund.

## Telephone hearings appeals approved

A new rule has been adopted by the State Employment Division which provides for the use of telephone hearings in matters of appeals of claimants and employers pertaining to Unemployment Insurance (U.I.). Ray Thorne, administrator, Employment Division reported here today.

The new rule provides a policy for a single telephone hearing for parties whose locations are such that they cannot reasonably and conveniently travel to a single hearing location at which they and the referee

conducting the hearing and deciding the case can participate together. It further provides for taking testimony by telephone during hearings whenever it is advisable to do so because of the distance participants might otherwise be required to travel, and whenever taking testimony by telephone will not jeopardize the rights of the parties, Thorne reported.

Thorne said that besides the energy saving aspects of telephone hearings for U.I. cases, the system has definite other advantages. One of the most important is

that in the case of "split" hearings where the claimant is in one location and the employer is in another, the telephone hearing enables the two parties to confront one another.

Previously, when separate hearings for the claimant and the employer were held, this confrontation was not possible, Thorne said. Also, the entire telephone hearing is tape recorded for a complete transcript.

"The Employment Division started about two years ago to improve the hearings process and provide

quality hearings with time and money savings for all parties. We researched the work already being done in other states, particularly in New Mexico where Jerome Corsi of the University of New Mexico had undertaken an experimental project of telephone hearings, both interstate and intrastate. We set up our own 'experiment' in our Eugene hearings branch office.

"After viewing the results of this project we decided to expand telephone hearings statewide with all interstate hearings done by phone.

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## Logging meeting slated next week

Informational meetings on Oregon's new logging safety code will be held next week in Estacada and Molalla by the Workers' Compensation Department.

The Molalla meeting will be Monday, Feb. 25, at 7 p.m. in Room 408 at the new senior high school. The Estacada meeting, which also begins at 7 p.m., will be Tuesday,

Feb. 26, in Council Chambers at City Hall.

The meetings will be open to all logging operation employers and employees, including log truckers.

Loggers will receive general information on the new code and training program requirements employers will have to meet

by May 1 this year.

The meetings will cover new aspects of the code, which replaces the 1969 version. Code changes and new code structure will also be explained. The Department's Accident Prevention Division will conduct the meetings.

An APD spokesman said, "We'll have copies of the new

standard available, as well as employer guides on how to put together written training programs.

"In addition, attendees will have plenty of time to ask questions about the code, particularly the new requirements."

The free meetings will run three hours.

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