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LETTER FROM WASHINGTON

Harris Ellsworth, M. C.
4th District, Oregon

A tax bill, which will increase the amount of taxes paid by all taxpayers by at least fifteen percent, has passed the House. But the talk about passing this bill to put the government on a "pay-as-you-go" basis is pure fiction. The Federal government is spending money much faster than it can be raised by taxation. In fact, several members of the Committee on Ways and Means stated that they knew of no way, short of a general nation-wide sales tax, of raising any more money.

The new bill is expected to raise seven and two-tenths billions of dollars. To illustrate how far we are from balancing expenses with revenue, while the tax bill was under consideration the Department of Defense sent to Congress a request for six and one-half billions to be used merely for the purpose of building airfields and other army facilities. That request is not far from being as much as will be raised in total by the new tax bill.

The bill to extend the law authorizing price and wage controls will be under consideration shortly. The law passed last year will expire at

the end of this month unless extended by Congress. Neither the House bill nor the Senate bill as reported by the respective committees contains anything like the additional authority requested by the President. In other words, what we are actually considering now amounts to very little more than a mere extension of the present law. I assume this control extension bill will be passed but so far as I am concerned I can see nothing in extending the present fumbling control organization but harm to the country.

You may recall that the President, using all four major radio networks in a half hour speech, urged the people to write to Congress demanding the passage of the price and wage control extension law. As I listened to his speech I visualized my office being swamped with hundreds, if not thousands, of letters. Next morning, sure enough, I received one telegram—but it protested the President's demands. More than ten days have passed since the broadcast. To date I have received less than a dozen letters which might be traced to the President's radio speech. Some of them, like the first telegram, have been opposed to controls.

I do not want to live in a controlled or police state and I feel pretty certain that most people feel the same way. I shall vote accordingly.

The government fiscal year ends June 30th. Appropriations are made for only one year at a time. Accordingly, unless Congress passes the appropriation bills before the first of July, the departments of government have no money with which to continue operations. But there is a neat way of solving that problem. A resolution will be passed which will continue appropriations at the present rate for whatever period of time seems necessary to complete the bills. That sounds fine but there is a catch in it. Departmental appropriations made last year were higher than those being approved this year. So the Administration and administration-controlled ap-

propriations sub-committees are not hurrying the remainder of the bills by the House, including the bill for Four have not yet been acted upon by the State, Commerce and Justice Departments. It is reported also that the huge Defense appropriation bill may not be ready for action until near August first. The military amount will be much larger than last year but the State department and the Commerce Department will be able to continue spending at the present high rate for at least an additional month, and possibly longer, because their appropriation bill is being held up and, therefore, will not be acted upon by the House in time for it to become law by the end of the fiscal year.

Economic Highlights

A revealing article on the weird workings of bureaucracy appeared in the June issue of Harper's Magazine. Written by C. Lester Walker, it deals with the amazing case of the United States Postal Service.

The post office is big business, with a capital B. It also enjoys a total monopoly in its field, which is true of no other business, big or little. Its annual revenues run around \$1,600,000,000. It has 500,000 employees, 42,000 branch offices, and 10,000 vehicles. Yet some months ago people in various parts of the country complained of sharp declines in the standards of postal service. All kinds of mail—air, first-class, special delivery, parcel post—was taking longer and longer to reach its destination. In some instances the delays seemed incredible—Mr. Walker writes, "Mail from London, England, was being received in Radio City as soon as mail posted at the same date and hour in the Bronx."

This was the result of cuts in service which were ordered in April, 1950. And the reason for the cuts, according to the Postmaster General, was that the department would have a deficit of about \$530,000,000 for the fiscal year, and something drastic had to be done.

Is it necessary for the post office

to lose money—and huge sums of money at that? Mr. Walker doesn't think so. The British Post Office has made a profit in almost every year since 1711. The Canadian Post Office is also a profit-making enterprise. What, then, is the trouble with the U.S. Postal Service?

Mr. Walker quotes a telling sentence from a Hoover Commission Report which said the department has "a creaky, over-centralized organizational structure; outmoded methods and equipment; cumbersome budgeting and accounting systems; a maze of tangled regulations and restrictions." One of these faults, excessive centralization, may be the worst of all. The whole tendency of modern industry has been to decentralize, in the interest of economy, efficiency and better service to customers. Mr. Walker cites as one example of this a chain store system with 1,612 stores, each of which has been given almost complete managerial autonomy. In the Post Office Department, by contrast, Washington runs everything. No decision of consequence can be made without permission from headquarters—and this often takes endless, time-burning correspondence to get.

Mr. Walker finds that the post office has been about 100 per cent opposed to mechanical handling and sorting methods which are used both in private business and in the

postal services of some other countries. It seems to be a case of what was good enough for grandpa is good enough for sonny.

Going on, Mr. Walker believes that the post office personnel system is impossible and inefficient. The postmakers themselves are political appointees—they are at the heart of the patronage system. And post office accounting methods, which are laid down by the all-powerful General Accounting Office, seem to be as archaic as the bow and arrow.

Mr. Walker goes into details in his article, and some of his revelations are staggering. At the end, he summarizes a plan which, in his opinion, would eliminate all or practically all of the department's huge deficits. In essence, this plan would simply have the post office operate along standard business lines—something which, apparently, government-businesses never do. It remains to be seen if they ever will.

Fluorescent Lights Popular for Home Use

New developments in fluorescent lights make them more popular than ever before, reports Mrs. Margaret Tuller, extension rural hopsing specialist at Oregon State college. Some of the newer tubes give softer light. This provides a warm,

more natural atmosphere than the neutral white light used in factories, offices and schools. Moreover, the flicker and the hum are gone.

Although fluorescent lights cost more to buy and install, they last longer, have less glare, and give more light per unit than incandescent lights. Incidentally it's the turning on and off—not the continuous burning—that wears out a fluorescent light.

Mrs. Tuller recommends fluorescent lights in kitchens for lighting work surfaces below wall cabinets. In laundries, these strong, true lights show up soil and prevent scorching in ironing. In living, bedroom and dining rooms, they combine with incandescents to light close work.

Because fluorescent lights are sensitive to fluctuating voltage, they are not practical in homes near the end of a power line.

Mrs. John Leper and small daughter, Linda Darlene have returned home to Steamboat Ranch and are both fine.

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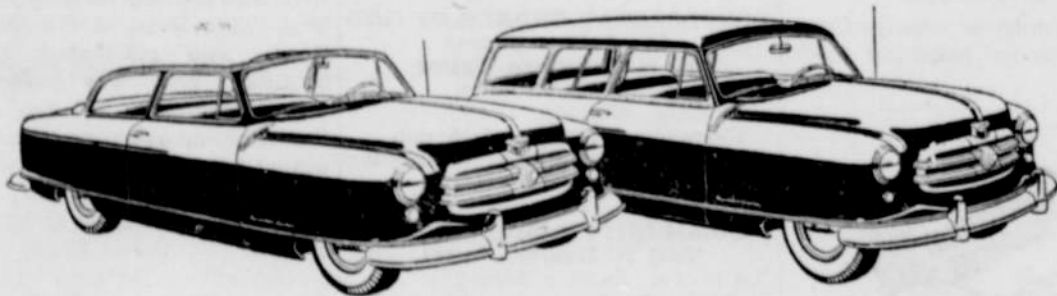
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