

Matter of Fact By Joe and Stewart Alsop

Is That So?

By EUGENE BURNS Ranger-Naturalist

POLITICS AND THE BUDGET

Washington — Before President Eisenhower submitted his budget to Congress, Secretary of the Treasury George M. Humphrey and Dr. Arthur Burns, chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers, had a long running argument...

Burns took the position that some continuing growth in the economy ought to be assumed. He agreed, as all government economists do, that the boom will slow down. But the national economy has been expanding steadily since the war, and Burns argued that some continued expansion in the level of the national income and the level of corporate profits must be allowed for.

Humphrey, on the other hand, took the exceedingly conservative view that the budget should be based approximately on the current level of personal income and business profits. In the end, Humphrey had his way. The budget for fiscal 1957—which begins in July of this year—is based on the assumption that business profits in fiscal 1957 will remain at the 1955 level of \$43,000,000,000. It is also assumed that the national income will be at the level of \$312,000,000,000, which is about what it is today.

THE importance of the Burns-Humphrey debate, which was quite amicable throughout, can be easily illustrated. Suppose that the national income grows by 4 per cent next year, which has been about the postwar average. Call the growth \$12,000,000,000. The treasury's take on that \$12,000,000,000, judging from past experience, will be in the neighborhood of \$3,000,000,000 to \$4,000,000,000, plenty to permit a balanced budget, some reduction of the national debt, and a nice, sweet tax reduction as well. All these pleasant things will be possible, moreover, without any increase in business profits, which ordinarily increase along with the national income.

The other side of the coin is less happy. Virtually all economists, including the President's advisers, have accepted the thesis that the national economy

has to continue to grow to take care of increases in the labor force and labor productivity. Thus, if Humphrey is right, and the national income remains at today's level, there is certain to be a sharp increase in unemployment. In short, the Humphrey budget in effect assumes a mild slump.

SECRETARY of the Treasury Humphrey is a conservative businessman, and conservative businessmen tend to take a cautious view of the economic future. But the political aspects of the cautious assumptions on which the budget is based are also rather obvious.

In the first place, the budget neatly boxes in the Democrats. The Humphrey budget, because it is in very close balance, allows no room for a tax cut. If the Democrats vote a tax cut big enough for the voters to feel in their pockets—they will be accused of fiscal irresponsibility. This is a charge to which the largely conservative Democratic leadership in both Houses is peculiarly sensitive.

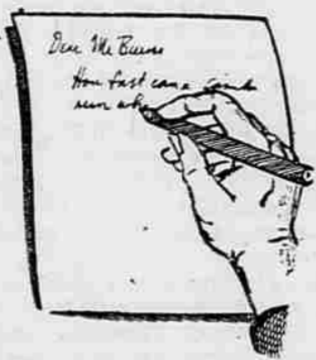
By the same token, the Democrats are effectively barred from voting any substantial increase in expenditures. The administration has achieved the prospect of a balanced budget by cuts in defense and security expenditures. The Humphrey budget, for example, is actually more than \$4,000,000,000 higher in the non-defense category than the last Truman budget, while it is \$17,000,000,000 lower in the defense and national security category.

BECAUSE the administration has shrewdly swiped so much of their programs, the Democrats are at a loss for a winning issue on the domestic front. They are obviously inclined to make the defense cuts a major issue. But it is hardly possible to make defense cuts a major issue without demanding increased defense expenditures. And here again the Democrats are impeded by the charge of fiscal irresponsibility—plus of course, the President's reputation as a military man.

Finally, if the boom continues to hum along, next summer Secretary Humphrey can take a second look at the economic future. He can then announce proudly that, on second thought, a balanced budget, debt reduction, and a nice tax cut will all be possible—and only a few months before the presidential election. All this is enough to suggest why a good many Democrats darkly suspect that the cautious assumptions on which the Humphrey budget is based derive as much from political as

Some clear winter night when you are driving across our southwestern deserts, turn off the paved highway and follow a winding dirt road through the thorny shrubs and ghostly cacti. Ahead, and down between the wheel tracks you may see a dull ruby-red light, glowing steadily. It winds out—no, there it is again. Look sharp and you may get a fleeting look at the tiny galloping ghost of the desert—a miniature kangaroo that looks like a mouse. An incredible creature really because it has made a fantastic, triumphant adaptation to its dry surroundings: from birth to death, even though eating bone-dry seeds, it never takes a drink of water.

The fleeting apparition leaves an impression of a large round head, a mouse-like body perched on two still-like legs, and a slender tail. If you were to look at him more closely, nothing about



this inveterate teetotaler would give any indication of his incredible abstinence from all potatoes. His fur is silky and long—on the back a soft shade of tan or gray, the underparts snow white with black facial markings and a white line around the rump.

The ruby light was a reflection from his great black eyes as round as an owl's and proportionately larger proclaiming his nocturnal habits.

His crowning glory—worn at the opposite end from which most crowning glories are worn—is his handsome tail, half again as long as the rest of his six-inch body, with a fur banner at the end. His long hind feet have a brush of stiff, long hairs all over the soles, sand-shoes.

Misnamed Kangaroo Rat Like so many animals, he is misnamed kangaroo rat. He has no kangaroo pouch and in appearance he looks more like a pocket mouse than a rat, with that big terminal tuft which he uses to make sudden turns as he sails out in prodigious leaps. Because, he does not sleep

tuteness as economic conservatism. Copyright 1956, New York Herald Tribune Inc.

through the winter, he stocks his underground home with great caches of food. One alone had stored enough seeds and short lengths of grass to fill 7 gunny-sacks.

How has this little fellow mastered this greatest of all desert difficulties, living comfortably without water in the hottest and driest spots of our land? Succulent food? Not necessarily. Actually, as with most things in nature, the harder the question, the more amazing the answer.

To see how he accomplishes the impossible, he has been subjected to seemingly brutal and rigorous experiments: he has been kept under desert conditions of heat and oven-drying for 52 days and fed exclusively on a diet of especially dried barley seeds. And he not only remained alive but flourished. Offered water, he refused it. What's more, a post mortem disclosed no lessening of the proportion of water to normal body weight.

Of course his desert habits are good—like most desert rodents, he keeps to his cool underground burrow during the heat of the day. When he comes forth, it is in the cool of the night—thus he conserves moisture. Also, for him, there is no need for water for body heat regulation either by sweating from the pores of the skin or from the mouth by panting. But unlike the other neighboring animals, he avoids going out when it is moist. He abhors rain: a few drops on his body gives him the jitters. Even a fog will keep him indoors.

Manufactures Own Water But is this enough? Indeed not. His secret is that he manufactures his own water from the dry materials present in starchy foods. If you'll remember your high school chemistry, water consists of two parts hydrogen and one part oxygen. Now starch is a hydrocarbon and therefore contains hydrogen. Add oxygen, abundant in the air he breathes, and you have H2O. And with a most unusual metabolism, our kangaroo rat is able to convert his starchy food, however dry, into water.

Yet this is not enough: to go with it, he has developed what may be the most unusual kidney of any mammal: it permits his kidney fluids to condense to 17 times the density of his blood—and therefore, if necessary, he could quench his thirst with sea water!

How could you force him to drink sea water, or any other? By feeding him a diet so largely protein that he would not get enough hydrocarbon to furnish him with hydrogen. In that unhappy state, he will drink water, the nasty stuff!

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Meat Inspection Program Working Into Sixth Area

Salem—The state pilot meat inspection program will be working in the sixth area in the state within another week, J. F. Short, director of the state department of agriculture has reported.

At the same time, Short announced results of inspections and findings in the first four areas in which the survey has been conducted. The areas were Salem; Portland suburban and upper coastal; Klamath and Grant counties and central Oregon and Wasco county. The program is ending in Linn county and starting in Benton county.

In the first four operations, 3,882 animals were slaughtered under the compulsory program. The species breakdown was 1,849 cattle, 265 calves, 1,566 swine, 180 sheep and 22 goats. Both ante-mortem and post-mortem inspections are made at plants which the program enters. In the first four areas, eight animals were condemned during the live inspection. They included three cows and five sheep. In the post-mortem inspections, 36 1/4 carcasses were con-

demned as unfit for human consumption. Two of these were veal, 18 were sheep, 5 were hogs, and 11 1/4 were beef. Parts of carcasses condemned totaled 929 and included 863 livers, 49 heads, 1 heart and 16 tongues.

Meat food products condemned totaled 15,175 pounds, of which 1,807 pounds were fresh and the remainder frozen meats. All frozen meat condemned was withdrawn from trade channels because it had been held too long.

Short said that Dr. Rolla Sexauer, field supervisor for the program, reported one plant closed because of unsanitary conditions. Several plants were required to do considerable cleanup work before reaching minimal approval, while some plants operated under virtually ideal sanitation conditions.

The pilot program is conducted for three weeks in each area. During that period, a special meat shield-shaped stamp goes on all carcasses passed. This pro-

gram was authorized by the last legislature to determine whether statewide compulsory meat inspection is desirable and necessary, and what such a program would cost.

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