

# Night Spot Hires Camera Bunny to Pad Expense Account Report



**ENJOY NEW FEATURE**—John Blewald (L) vice president of the Chicago Tabulating Service, and Ronald Mueller, assistant production manager of the same organization, enjoys the added service offered by Lynne Larson. She is taking pictures at the 71 Club to be used for verification of expense account entertaining as called for in new rule of the Internal Revenue Service. (UPI)

By **GERALD S. SNYDER**  
United Press International

A cafe in Chicago has three tape recorders on hand to take down the conversation of its customers, if requested.

Another restaurant in the windy city is thinking about hiring a shorthand stenographer for the same purpose. And in New York, a posh night spot boasts a "camera bunny" to take "you-were-there" pictures.

The reason? Taxes.

Last November, the Internal Revenue service laid down a strict new expense account rule calling for a full

accounting of the time, the place, the purpose and the business relationship on all expense account deductions.

Not since the days of World War II, when the federal government slapped a 20 per cent tax on all amusement spending, has the food-and-drink industry complained so bitterly.

Since January 1, when the new regulation went into effect, the reaction could be summed up in the words of one eater owner in Washington, D. C. . . "It's a stinking law!"

In city after city, hotels,

night clubs, restaurants and almost every type of business involved in entertainment claim the new regulation is cutting business by as much as 15 to 30 per cent.

From the corner of a night club on Hollywood's Sunset strip: "The little guy is afraid to use his credit card now."

A restaurant manager in the nation's capital says: "The regulations have scared customers. They are afraid to go out and eat."

"It will have a serious effect on conventions," says a New Orleans hotel man. "Those men who took large

suited for entertaining, just won't do it any more."

The IRS, which promises a more complete interpretation of the regulation later this month, says it is out to eliminate chiseling by doing away with deductions on the basis of mere approximations — as had been done in the past for business travel, entertainment and gifts.

"We want to see the elements of an expenditure," explained one IRS official.

Many business executives are turning to the credit card to satisfy this requirement.

The diner's club, the largest of the credit card companies, has revised its forms to make them available for IRS accounting. The club claims requests for new membership are up 40 per cent over the same period last year — apparently because of the increased need for expense — spending documentation.

In six key areas checked in a UPI survey, this was the general feeling:

Los Angeles - Hollywood area—"The cure is worse than the disease," said Gene Norman, owner of the Crescendo and Interlude club on the Sunset Strip and president of the 70 - member Associated Night Clubs of America.

"The expense account situation has vitally affected our business. The government will lose more money in cabaret and concomitant taxes such as employe income taxes than it will gain by the ruling."

"It is my considered opinion, however, that people will acclimate themselves to the ruling. It's a temporary problem. People are not going to stop going out forever. They will start going out again in a few months."

The Coconut Grove in the Ambassador hotel said it was hurting. "There is a resentment on the part of the public," said one of the executives. "It's been hurting business for at least six months—ever since the president began talking about what he was going to do. I don't think the bottom dropped out of things in January just because of this regulation."

New Orleans — "This thing is worrying a lot of people," said a top public relations man. "If we take a man and his wife out, we don't think we can claim his wife's meal or our wives' meals. We must talk business to claim it and you don't usually want to talk business on such an occasion.

having some effect on their business.

Lawrence C. Buckmaster, executive director of the Chicago and Illinois Restaurant Association, estimated that Chicago area dining and drinking spots over \$1 million in January and cut restaurant business throughout the state by 10 per cent.

A spokesman for the Hilton Hotels Corp., however, said: "Frankly, we've noticed little difference so far." But he added "It's really too early

to tell."

New York — "Business here is off 25 to 30 per cent," said Stork Club Owner Sherman Billingsley. "The better places are all way off except for those places where you can eat for \$1. Everyone is disturbed and upset."

"I think that management is going to absorb the difference. Prices will go up a little or the quality of the food will go down. Instead of filet mignon and sweetbreads, they'll go into pork chops, Irish stew and spaghetti.

An executive for a chain of restaurants in New York, New Jersey and Connecticut said: "It's not the IRS entertainment deduction rules themselves that have had an effect on business — it's that people don't know what the rules are."

Florida — This state is enjoying what might be its most lucrative tourist season despite the new IRS regulations. The general feeling seems to be that the "crackdown" will pinch some, but not much.

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