

Tax limitations pose federal 'puzzlement'

By DAVID S. BRODER
WASHINGTON — In the immortal words of Yul Brynner as the King of Siam: "Is a puzzlement."
The domestic politics of the United States is dominated by a welter of proposals for putting a lid on taxes, spending and the growth of the government. According to the Coalition of American Public Employees, 36 states are considering statutory or constitutional limitations on state and/or local spending. Congressional committees, responding to pressure from the legislatures, will soon hold hearings on a variety of proposals to restrain the budget.

Commentary

against the rising cost and scale of government. But a pair of recent studies suggest that the causes and cures for this ailment may be more of a "puzzlement" than most would suppose.

The National Governors' Association asked its policy research staff to examine last fall's referendum on tax and spending limitations. There were 23 separate propositions on the ballot in 18 states. Fourteen of them passed and nine failed.

Somewhat to their surprise, the researchers found no "relationship between the relative tax burden in a state and the voters' decision to impose or reject fiscal controls."

Neither the level of taxes, nor their rate of increase, nor the level of government expenditure turned out to predict the outcome of a referendum.

"Obviously," said Gov. William G. Milliken of Michigan, "the level of taxation alone does not explain the tax revolt." The governors' association staff does not attempt to find an explanation, but points to polls suggesting that the voters' wrath may be aimed at perceived waste in government, rather than taxes themselves.

The other "puzzlement" is why government keeps expanding, if the costs of that expansion are such a matter of complaint. An explanation that is both unconventional and challenging is offered by David R. Cameron, a Yale political scientist, in an article in the new issue of the American Political Science Review.

For his study, Cameron compared the growth in the governmental sector (as

measured by tax burdens) between 1960 and 1975 in 18 advanced industrial nations, ranging from the United States and Japan at the bottom of the scale to the Netherlands, Sweden and Denmark at the top.

After weighing the impact of a variety of political and economic forces, he found the best single predictor of the rate of growth of the governmental sector was the "openness" of that country's economy to international trade. The greater the share of a nation's economy dependent on exports and imports, the faster the increase in its tax burden and government programs.

Cameron offers an ingenious explanation — really more of a theory than a provable connection — between the scale of foreign trade and the expansion of government. Countries with "open" or international economies, he says, tend to have a high degree of industrial concentration in a few big firms and a high degree of unionization. Collective-bargaining involves government intervention, and the political strength of the unions helps create frequent left-wing governments which provide income supplements from public funds to smooth labor-management relations and help keep the industries competitive in international markets.

Cameron acknowledges that the explanation appears to work better for small countries like Sweden and Denmark than for the industrial giants, and he said, in an interview, that he did not want to make it a "deterministic theory" for the United States.

But the implications are interesting, because the United States is becoming much more dependent on foreign trade. Between 1960 and this past year, the export-import share of the American economy has almost doubled, from roughly 11 percent to almost 20 percent.

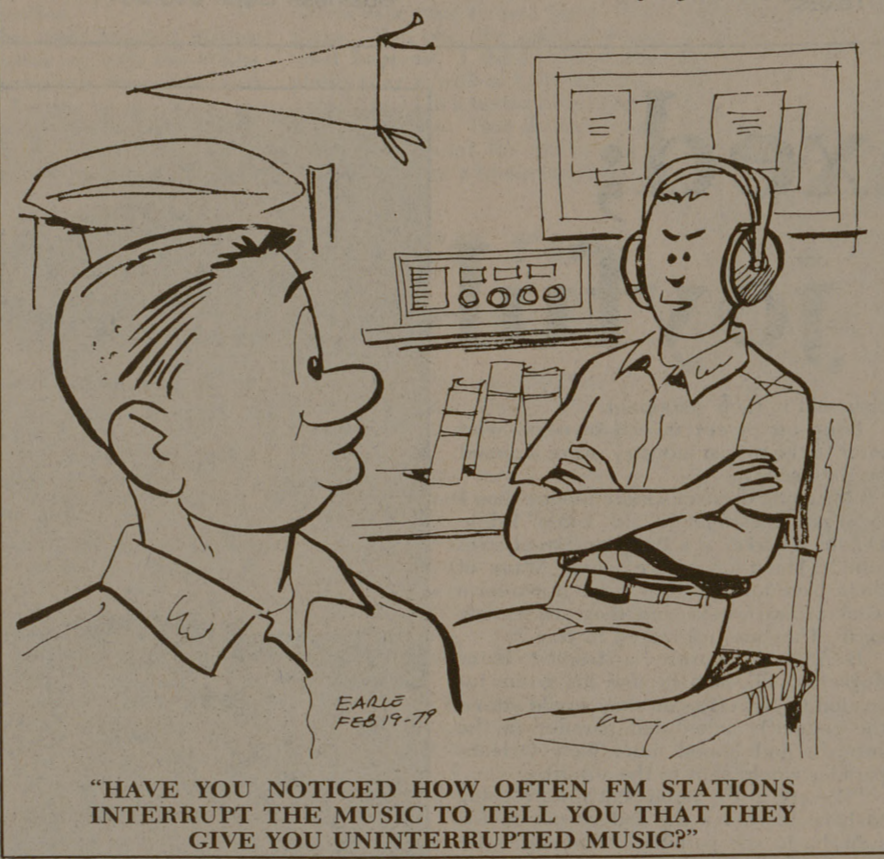
It is significant that, at the same time the Carter administration is trying to respond to the anti-big government sentiment by trimming the federal budget, it is sponsoring a "real wage insurance plan" which Cameron says is exactly the kind of expansion of government one would expect in a nation whose economy is increasingly trans-national.

All of which may simply suggest that the people who are promoting the tax-and-spending limitation measures, as well as those who are trying to analyze them, may have a tougher job than they suppose. "Is a puzzlement," said Yul Brynner.

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Slouch

By Jim Earle



By Dick West

Love's a full tank of gas

By DICK WEST
WASHINGTON — It's like the girl next door that you hardly notice until one day you suddenly become aware that she is really a knockout.

It's like Gigi's sparkle turning to fire and warmth becoming desire while you were either standing up too close or back too far.

I am referring, of course, to Mexico. Although we've been neighbors for years, I don't remember ever thinking of

Humor

Mexico as being particularly lovable. It was just sort of down there, the other side of the hyphen in Tex-Mex cuisine. One instinctively knew that no country

that made Carta Blanca beer could be all bad. But that was about as far as it went. Likeable, si; adorable, no.

Now, all of a sudden, Mexico is the cat's pajamas. Everybody from President Carter on down is making goo-goo eyes at it.

It was no mere coincidence that Carter spent Valentine's Day in Mexico City. When the love bug bites, you've got to scratch where it itches.

Why, almost overnight, has America started lusting in its heart for Mexico?

That question seemed to call for another Playboy interview. So I arranged an interview with Pedro Playboy, an expert on Latin-American affairs at the Energy Department.

Q. Was Mexico surprised to learn how much we care for her?

A. Surprised and thrilled. If Mexico seems to be playing coy, it's only because she doesn't want to be swept off her feet.

Q. Does she doubt our intentions are honorable?

A. Not exactly. Mexico wants to be sure we love her for herself and not just for her you-know-what.

Q. Whatever would make her suspect a thing like that?

A. Because we've become attentive so soon after our break-up with Iran. Mexico is afraid she might be catching us on the rebound.

Q. Are such fears groundless?

A. I'll admit that for a time America was infatuated with Iran. But that is all that it was. We were never any more serious about Iran than Lee Marvin was about his former mistress. But Mexico has stolen our hearts.

Q. I'll bet you tell that to all the petroleum exporting countries.

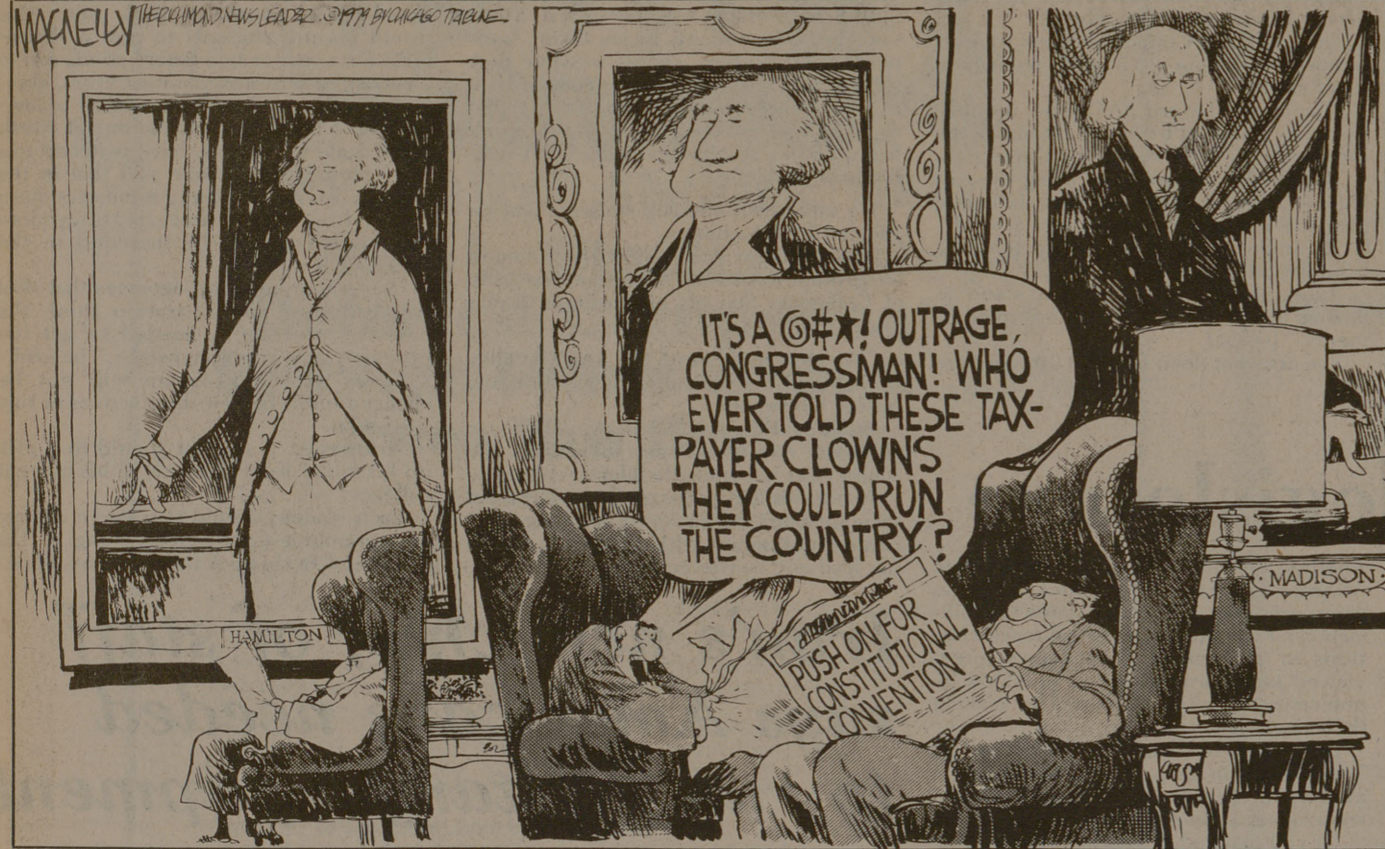
A. OK. If you want to hear me say it, I'll say it — Mexico truly does have lovely oil deposits. Maybe that was what attracted us in the beginning. But that doesn't mean we haven't grown to admire her many other good qualities.

Q. You mean like her wetbacks?

A. We've never tried to pretend that Mexico was perfect. She has faults like everyone else. But when you're really smitten, you overlook little defects like drug smuggling and illegal aliens.

Q. That's the most romantic thing I ever heard. I hope for Mexico's sake that it isn't just sweet talk. What does the word "love" mean to you?

A. Love means never having to wait in line at the gas station.



Letters to the Editor

Move your muscles, leave the car at home

Editor: The Battalion has devoted a lot of coverage to Texas A&M's parking problems, and the proposed study of alternatives by the Texas Transportation Institute. TTI's "alternatives" consist of two different kinds of parking lots, either a raised lot or a peripheral lot.

I would like to propose some other alternatives. Walk, ride your bike, jog, carpool, and improve the shuttle bus system. Get out of your gas-guzzling, polluting, lethal automobile.

I contend that Texas A&M's limited parking space is not a problem, but rather a good incentive to get people to leave their cars at home.

Too much of the earth's surface has already been sacrificed to the private automobile.

—Paul West graduate student in soil and crop sciences

Nuke record flawed

Editor: In response to David Eppes letter concerning nuclear power (Battalion — Feb. 19) I would like to say that you my dear

friend are merely a product of your instructors who have rather large sums of grant money donated to them by the Department of Energy.

If you expect them to relate any of the "negative" aspects of nuclear power to you in the classroom, well, you better think again. Some people go beyond what the media has to offer to justify their fears about this ominous threat.

I have a few questions: Is it not true that certain levels of radiation are emitted from nuclear facilities? Is it not also true that no level of radiation has been found to be safe? In my studies I have learned of the use of radiation to form genetic mutations.

Don't let radiation fade your "genes." Certain amounts of radiation are permitted to be released by federal regulation. And the energy department says they would never expose the public to this amount. However, if the suggestion is made to lower this permitted amount, the energy department fights it tooth and nail.

You speak of a flawless record. Nuclear energy starts with uranium which must be mined from the earth. More than 100 uranium miners are already dead, and an estimated 1,000 more are expected to die from a radiation-induced lung cancer. You

may not think 1,100 lives is a high price to pay to be able to flip a switch and have "illumination," but I do.

If you have the "safe and simple" solution to nuclear waste disposal, I sure wish you would let the experts know about it because they cannot seem to figure it out. All of the different states say let's dump the waste somewhere else, in some other state. I have the solution, let's dump it in your backyard. For the next 500,000 years it can irradiate you and everyone else for that matter.

You seem to only be thinking about radiation pollution. What about thermal pollution? It is my understanding that reactors are cooled with water. This water is then piped boiling hot into the ocean where it is released into the cool water. If you know anything about "life" in the ocean you know that marine plankton and microorganisms are very sensitive to change in temperature, pH etc.

If we disrupt the ecosystems in the ocean we just might as well kiss ourselves goodbye. How much do you know about alternative energy sources? In your years of studying nuclear engineering, did you ever study anything about solar power, geo-thermal or even the use of

plants as hydrocarbon fuel sources? I will close this letter with a challenge. Ask your beloved professors if they know what the most efficient form of energy conversation known to man is then heed their answer and use it for the betterment of "all" life forms on this planet.

—Charles Cody, '78

Athletic attire ok

Editor: This is in regard to Les Palmer's letter in the Feb. 14 Battalion. I'm sorry if you disapprove of our attire Mr. Palmer, but we athletes earned our "jerseys, windbreakers, etc." and we'll wear them any place we please. Seems to me there are more pressing issues at this university than what the athletes are wearing.

—Lynn Goldsmith, '81

Correction

The Monday, Feb. 19 Battalion incorrectly reported in the "Talk with Dr. Miller" section that the wrestling team's record is 7-2. The team has 12 wins and 2 losses. The Battalion regrets the error.

TOP OF THE NEWS CAMPUS

Variety Show deadline Friday

Auditions for the MSC All University Variety Show will be held on March 2, 3 and 4. The show is scheduled for March 23. In order to audition, an application along with a non-refundable fee of \$5 must be turned into the Student Programs Office by 5 p.m. Friday. "The show will act as a forum in which talented students, faculty and staff of A&M can perform, and it will provide an evening of entertainment for the university community," said Chairman Dorothy DuBois. She said that talent has been sought in such areas as music, dance, drama, comedy, magic, juggling and acrobatics.

Peace Corps, Vista to interview

Peace Corps and Vista representatives will interview students in the placement center, 10th floor Rudder Tower, and have a booth in the Memorial Student Center mall next Tuesday through March 1. Peace Corps is a two-year voluntary program and Vista is a one-year program.

STATE

TDC trial to stay in Houston

The 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals Thursday voided Tyler Judge William Wayne Justice's order to move the Texas Department of Corrections prison reform trial from Houston to Tyler. The decision cited federal law and said, "The district court was without authority to change the place of trial from Houston where the trial was in progress to Tyler under the facts and circumstances of this case." Lawyers for the state were elated, but federal civil rights lawyers were disappointed.

NATION

Arms demonstrators arrested

Seventeen demonstrators were arrested in Rosemont, Ill., Sunday for protesting outside an international arms bazaar they described as a "supermarket of death." They refused to be released even without bonds and were jailed pending court appearances. They opted to stay in jail "as a form of witness," one protest leader said. The "Defense Technology '79" exhibit included samples of electrical and wiring systems for radar and small components for arms.

Orphans found barefoot in cold

Five orphans aged 7-13 were found wandering Detroit streets barefoot and scantily clad in sub-zero cold Sunday. Two of the youngsters were hospitalized for frostbite and exposure and the other three were placed temporarily in a youth home. Police say they will seek a child abuse warrant against the orphans' legal guardian, Clark Hurd Jr., who threw the children out of the house.

Widows file three lawsuits

An attorney representing widows of two missilemen killed in an Aug. 24 fuel leak Tuesday filed three lawsuits in a Houston federal court seeking \$13 million from two California firms, Arrowhead Products and Garrett Corp., who made astronaut-type suits used in Air Force missile refueling. Air Force reports revealed a design flaw in the suits could have contributed to the deaths of Staff Sgt. Robert Thomas and Airman First Class Erby Hepstall.

Slain U.S. ambassador buried

To a snow-muffled volley of 19 shots and a bugler's "Taps," slain U.S. Ambassador Adolph Dubs was buried Tuesday at Arlington National Cemetery, in Washington, D.C. Flanked by Vice President Walter Mondale, Rosalynn Carter and Secretary of State Cyrus Vance, Dubs' wife Mary Ann, watched silently as an honor guard escorted her husband's casket to the burial site.

WORLD

Mild quake shakes Japan

A mild earthquake shook northern Japan Tuesday, but there were no reports of damage or casualties, the nation's Meteorological Agency reported. The agency said the tremor originated in the Pacific off Miyagi Province north of Tokyo.

Guerrillas bomb Rhodesian airport

Black guerrillas fired 15 mortar shells at the Salisbury, Rhodesia, airport in a midnight strike, the first attack on the vital complex in the 6-year guerrilla war, the military said Tuesday. A military communiqué said the bombs landed on the grounds of Salisbury International Airport shortly before midnight Monday and caused a blackout. Airport guards responded with bursts of small arms fire in the exchange. There were no reports of injuries or property damage and no guerrilla organization claimed responsibility for the attack.

WEATHER

Fog this morning dissipating this afternoon and becoming partly cloudy and warm. High tonight 70, low tonight 50. Winds moving southerly at 5-10 mph with a 30% chance of rain. 100% humidity.

THE BATTALION

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Letters to the editor should not exceed 300 words and are subject to being cut to that length or less if longer. The editorial staff reserves the right to edit such letters and does not guarantee to publish any letter. Each letter must be signed, show the address of the writer and list a telephone number for verification.
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