

Legislators' salaries become subject of convention

AUSTIN, Tex. (AP)—One of the Texas Constitutional Convention's most delicate, and for the legislator-delegates, most personal issue gets its big test today.

Legislative salaries are at the top of the day's debate agenda.

The convention's Legislative Committee voted for compensation of \$8,750 a year—not even

double the \$4,800 set by a 1960 constitutional amendment and unchanged since then. An attempt to raise lawmakers' pay failed at the polls last year.

But it also included an alternative submission by which the voters could opt for a special commission to recommend maximum legislative salaries. The con-

vention must approve this, however, before it can go to the voters.

In Wednesday's session, the delegates first appeared to favor four-year terms for House members—double the present terms—but then rejected them. Senators already serve four years between elections.

The vote was 96-70 against

tabling an amendment by Rep. E. L. Short, D-Tahoka, to give representatives four years in office. But after two hours of talking and amending, they rejected the Short amendment by a 100-69 vote.

Sen. John Traeger, D-Seguín, said he favored putting the House member's terms on a par with the senators'.

Most people think representatives have four-year terms anyway, he said, and often approach campaigning House members with, "Are you running again already? I thought you just got elected."

But Rep. Bob Davis, R-Dallas, said two-year terms keep the representatives close to their people.

"Getting elected is essentially the process of representative government," Davis said.

The legislative article's section on redistricting was amended, 100-61, with a "minority protection" clause proposed by Rep. Joe Pentony, D-Houston.

Pentony's amendment covers situations in which a county might have population left over after one or more House districts have been carved out of it. If the excess population is equal to at least half of that needed for another district—about 37,000 peo-

ple currently—it cannot be divided among more than one more district.

Rep. Jim Mattox, D-Dallas, failed 127-40 with an amendment

requiring that legislative districts vary in population by no more than 5 per cent. Current districts have a deviation of more than 9 per cent.

Payments may force Nixon to borrow

(Continued from page 1)
back taxes left open the question of the future of Nixon's vice presidential papers, on which he claimed \$476,431 in deductions. IRS now refuses to accept.

Nixon said last Nov. 17 that if

IRS raised any question about the deductions, "let me tell you this: I will be glad to have the papers back and I will think they are worth more than that."

Asked if Nixon now would claim the papers, Deputy White

House Press Secretary Gerald L. Warren said, "that's a subject that no one's discussed around here."

James B. Rhoads, the archivist of the United States, would not comment Wednesday night when asked whether Nixon could have the papers back. Rhoads said he wanted time to study the IRS findings.

IRS said nothing publicly about Nixon's tax troubles but the White House said its still-secret report "rebutts any suggestion of fraud on the part of the President." The official statement said Nixon was innocent of any wrongdoing, declaring:

"Any errors which may have been made in the preparation of the President's returns were made by those to whom he delegated the responsibility for preparing his returns and were made without his knowledge and without his approval."

A White House source said Nixon was not legally obliged to pay \$148,081 in back taxes for 1969, which IRS said he owed, because the statute of limitations for that year has expired.

Saying the payment would be made nevertheless, the source said Nixon was "doing this because he said he would do it."

In unveiling personal financial details in December, Nixon asked the Joint Congressional Commit-

tee on Internal Revenue Taxation to look into his 1969-72 tax returns. He said at the time he would abide by its judgment of whether he owed more than the \$78,651 he actually paid for the four years.

A committee staff report, made public Wednesday, calculated Nixon owed an extra \$444,022 plus interest.

This preceded the announcement that IRS also had found Nixon's payments inadequate.

A White House official said IRS and the committee staff basically agreed on items in the Nixon returns that were subject to challenge. It said differences in money terms reflected varying methods of making tax and interest calculations.

Nixon was described as convinced his lawyers "can make a very strong case" against the major adverse findings. But the White House said he would pay up without quarrel because of his December pledge to abide by the findings of the congressional panel.

Students

(Continued from page 4)

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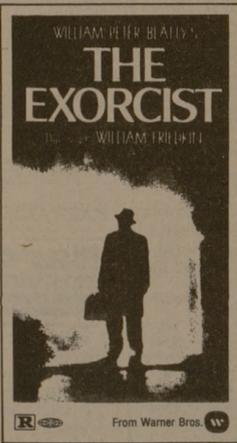


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