

Farm bureau hits back

United Press International
HOUSTON — The president of the state's largest farm and ranch organization Tuesday said its members will work to pass a constitutional amendment permitting agricultural land to be taxed on its productive value rather than its market value.

Marcel Chaloupka of Dalhart, a grain and cattle man, said the Farm Bureau was taking the lead in response to an attorney general's ruling that a new tax relief program was unconstitutional in its present form.

Texas Attorney General John Hill said the opinion in Austin then sent him to Houston where he personally explained the situation to 1,500 convention delegates.

Chaloupka said he did not blame Hill or Gov. Dolph Briscoe for the decision. "I have no reason to blame him (Hill)," he said. "I don't blame Briscoe."

"We in agriculture have got to do a better job. We've got to cause the legislature to move when they need to move. We're going to do everything we can to make it legal."

"The Texas Farm Bureau is very disappointed by the ruling of the attorney general, but we know he did what he had to do," Chaloupka said. "We must work harder to have the amendment to the constitution approved so we can put it to work."

Hill's decision said a bill passed by the 1977 Legislature providing for taxation of farm and ranch land on its productive value is unconstitutional without a change in the constitution.

He said sponsors of the bill originally made its effect contingent upon passage of a constitutional amendment, and changed the wording of the bill only after the proposed amendment failed in the House by one vote.

"Tax relief for farmers and ranchers is imperative and is of the highest urgency," Hill told the group.

"It is essential for those who have chosen agriculture as a livelihood, and it is essential for everyone of us who depend, as we all do, on food and fiber produced on Texas farms and ranches."

Hill said the issue — House Bill 22 — simply did not conform to the Texas Constitution.

"No amount of sugar coating will hide the bitter taste of the invalidity of House Bill 22, just as no amount of gimmickry or legal acrobatics will save the bill unless the Constitution is amended," he said.

Hill, conceding he risked the anger of the state's agricultural industry by facing the Farm Bureau meeting, said he made the trip because some state leaders wanted to embarrass him.

"It could hurt me some politically, but I'm not worried about that," Hill said. "I just want the truth out so when I am governor in 1979, we can come down here and deal effectively with this issue."

Prof to address P.E. association

Dr. John R. Hoyle of Texas A&M University will deliver the keynote address Dec. 8 before 2,000 delegates at the 54th convention of the Texas Association for Health, Physical Education and Recreation (TAHPER) in Dallas.

Hoyle, associate professor and coordinator of research, planning and evaluation in the Educational Administration Department, will speak on "The Future — Fumbled or Fantastic?"

Hoyle holds three degrees from Texas A&M and has done doctoral study at Colorado University and post-doctoral study at Texas Christian University. He is a former teacher, coach and administrator at Odessa and Midland.

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Hill accused of deciding for votes

United Press International
HOUSTON — Comptroller Bob Bullock Tuesday accused Attorney General John Hill of "weighing the scales" before deciding on the constitutionality of a law permitting agricultural land to be taxed on its market value.

Hill ruled the bill passed by the 1977 Legislature was unconstitutional, and could not be implemented unless the legislature or Texas voters approve a constitutional amendment authorizing assessment of taxes based on some value other than market value.

The attorney general contended in a news conference Monday that his political opponents had attempted to embarrass him by forcing him to rule on the validity of the bill.

"The truth is," Bullock said, "that Hill has shown he is fully capable of releasing his opinion on House Bill 22."

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He noted Hill, who is opposing Gov. Dolph Briscoe in the Democratic primary, had closed an Amarillo adult movie theater on the eve of a campaign visit to Amarillo, and a federal court said Hill's action was in bad faith.

"John Hill wanted to ride into Amarillo on a white horse and a wave of publicity," Bullock said. "But the attorney general of Texas, above all people, should know he's got to put the law of the land ahead of personal political gain."

Bullock said, "Hill sounds like the boy who cried wolf, crying 'politics, politics,' at every turn, even while admitting he consulted his political advisers about when and where to

release his opinion on House Bill 22."

Hill told reporters Monday he had talked with his campaign staff and decided to announce his decision on the agricultural land bill at the state convention of the Texas Farm Bureau in Houston, one of the groups which unsuccessfully sought the tax break for farm and ranch land.

Bullock and Speaker Bill Clayton had contended the bill could be implemented to give tax breaks to farmers and ranchers without any change in the state constitution.



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