

State and Local

Conflict on tax-or-cut issue continues in Texas capital

White presses proposed sales tax increase

AUSTIN (AP) — Gov. Mark White enlisted the aid of former Gov. John Connally and two high-powered financiers Thursday to help turn up the heat on House Speaker Gib Lewis and press for his proposed tax increase.

Joining Connally and White in the garden of the Governor's Mansion were Ben Love, chairman of Texas Commerce Bancshares, and Walter Misher Sr., a Houston developer and chairman of Allied Bancshares. All three said they supported White's call for a temporary sales tax increase to help solve the state budget deficit.

Connally said, "I think the people of Texas are prepared for it. They understand the crisis that we face."

Lewis, D-Fort Worth, has voiced strong opposition to any tax increase now.

Without mentioning the speaker by name, Connally said raising taxes to help eliminate the projected \$3.5 billion state budget deficit is the responsible course.

"We do need to cut expenses everywhere we can," he said. "But it's clear to me that's not going to be sufficient... the sooner we face up to it, the better."

Love and Misher echoed Connally's feelings about a tax hike.

"We must pass this tax and be a responsible people," Love said.

White has proposed combining about \$1.4 billion in spending reductions with a one-year sales tax increase, which he said would raise about \$810 million.

White also downplayed suggestions that the House speaker may prove to be a major stumbling block to his plan. He had only praise for Lewis.

"I respect the speaker's desire to try to find a way to avoid any tax in-

crease," White said. "I'm satisfied that goal is unachievable without making those serious cuts in education."

He said Lewis "has a more difficult task that I do" because he must deal with 149 other House members.

Clements: State's income growing, new tax unneeded

HOUSTON (AP) — Republican gubernatorial candidate Bill Clements said Thursday that Texas tax revenues have grown \$3 billion per year since 1982 and the state doesn't need any new taxes.

Speaking before about 250 members of the Southwest Chemical Association, Clements also said Gov. Mark White should contact his Democrat colleagues in the U.S. House of Representatives to protect the oil depletion allowance and the intangible drilling fee provision.

White has proposed a temporary sales tax increase to help cover an anticipated budget shortfall of \$3.5 billion.

"We do not need new taxes," Clements said. "Revenues are ample. I'm opposed to the liberal Democratic philosophy of tax,

tax, tax and spend, spend, spend."

Clements also said White has gone on a spending spree. Texas can avoid a budget shortfall by living within its revenues, he said.

"Texas tax revenues are up 38 percent from January 1983 through January 1986," Clements said. "And the first nine months this fiscal year, Texas revenues are up 14.7 percent."

Addressing a question of how he would balance the budget, Clements said the governor's office needs to organize its programs and either merge or eliminate low priority programs.

The former governor also criticized White for not establishing a good working relationship with President Reagan, citing White's absence at the recent oil summit meeting at the White House.

Plane crashes short of runway at Tulsa airport

TULSA, Okla. (AP) — Six Texas men escaped serious injury Thursday when their single-engine plane apparently ran out of fuel and crashed short of the runway at Tulsa International Airport, investigators said.

Firefighters said the plane's pilot, who was not immediately identified, apparently knew he was nearly out of fuel because they were notified by airport traffic controllers of a landing emergency before the plane went down.

The Rev. Rex Kyker, 64, of Austin was taken by helicopter ambulance to St. Francis Hospital after the crash one mile north of the airport. Hospital officials said he was treated and released.

Neil Hopkins, 51, of Austin was treated at the Hillcrest Medical Center emergency room, officials there said.

The four other men aboard went to St. Francis Hospital on Thursday afternoon and were being examined by doctors but were not believed to be seriously injured, hospital officials said.

News Briefs

Hammer murderer gets death penalty

HOUSTON (AP) — Jurors deliberated about an hour Thursday before recommending the death penalty for a 28-year-old carpenter convicted of capital murder in the claw-hammer slayings of three people.

Richard Gerry Drinkard was convicted Tuesday in State Dis-

trict Judge William T. Harmon's court. The jury returned the death penalty verdict about 2:30 p.m. Thursday.

No execution date was set Thursday.

The jury deliberated two days before convicting Drinkard.

UT approves pledges for Cronkite chair

AUSTIN (AP) — University of Texas regents Thursday approved gifts and pledges totaling \$501,999 to establish the Walter Cronkite Regents Chair in Communications at UT-Austin.

The gifts and pledges will be matched with university funds

for a total of over \$1 million.

Of that sum, \$358,000 will be used to increase the endowment to the DeWitt Reddick professorship, which will be redesignated as the DeWitt Reddick Regents Chair in Communication.

HL&P accused of sabotaging agency

AUSTIN (AP) — A consumer group Thursday criticized the Houston Lighting & Power Co. for what it said is the utility's bid to wipe out the agency that represents residential and small business consumers in utility rate cases.

Brad Wiewel, president of the Texas Consumer Association, said the Office of Public Utility Counsel has saved millions for

Texas consumers. "HL&P is the only group up here really fighting this (counsel). It's a kill, kill, kill situation. You see HL&P everywhere you turn," Wiewel told a news conference.

Wiewel said he wanted the Public Utility commission, which regulates utility companies, to determine whether HL&P customers were paying for the lobbying activities.

S. African vote proposal blasted

DALLAS (AP) — The Rev. Allan Boesak said Thursday the South African government's proposal of a council to give moderate blacks a voice will not answer the problems of apartheid.

"We don't want to give you (the white minority government) advice," Boesak said. "We want to use our vote so we can get you out of office." He spoke at the National Association of Black Journalists meeting in Dallas.

Boesak said he fears a bloody future for his country if apartheid remains in effect.

South African President P.W. Botha has suggested an advisory body to express the views of moderate blacks. Boesak said he would like to engage in dialogue with the government, but that will not be possible until black activists, such as Nelson Mandela, are released from prison.

He did have some advice for Botha.

"If I were he (Botha) I would pack my little bag and go to Paraguay while (Gen. Alfredo) Stroessner is still alive," he said, referring to the authoritarian dictatorship in that country.

Boesak, who advocates non-violent protest, is co-founder of the United Democratic Front. He faces a September trial date on charges of subversion. He said he is not allowed to speak directly about sanctions.

Plan for panhandle nuclear waste dump set back by funding cuts

HEREFORD (AP) — Panhandle lawmakers and residents are celebrating the setback handed the U.S. Department of Energy in its plans for a proposed nuclear waste dump near here.

The Senate Appropriations Committee on Wednesday voted to cut funding for testing proposed dump

sites in Deaf Smith County, Texas, and in two other states.

"Reducing the funding is a good sign," Rep. Larry Combest, R-Lubbock, said. "It's another approach to putting the dump on hold. It's hard to tell what will happen but with a unanimous committee vote, it will be hard to beat on the floor."

And George Drain, president of the Amarillo chapter of Serious Texans Against Nuclear Dumping said he was delighted.

"It's a step in the right direction," he said. "I think the message they're trying to send to the Department of Energy is to get their act in order."

The surprise Senate Committee

vote followed back-room bargaining among the lawmakers. The panel reduced the proposed funding for the nuclear dump testing from \$619 million to \$380 million.

Combest joined other congressmen in offering a bill Wednesday that would force the DOE to begin

the search for a dump site all over again.

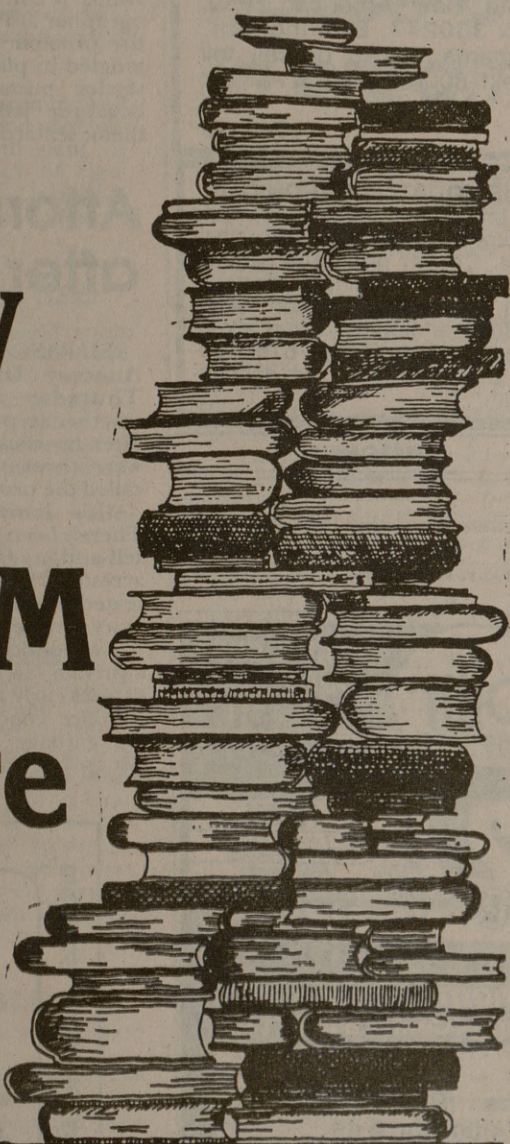
The bill is unlikely to come to a vote before the October adjournment, Combest said.

But he said, "I think there are better than 50-50 odds that no work will occur in Deaf Smith County in the

next fiscal year."

Danny Smith, assistant director of the Governor's nuclear waste program office in Austin, said the vote "can't do anything less than convince the Department of Energy that Congress is carefully monitoring what they're doing and is not at all satisfied," he said.

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