

Lewis: 'New constituency' wants to get more, pay less

AUSTIN (AP) — Lawmakers' efforts to remedy the state's problems are confounded by a "new constituency" that wants more but is not willing to spend more, Speaker Gib Lewis said Monday.

Lewis and Lt. Gov. Bill Hobby spoke to a conference entitled "Family Health in Crisis," a day-long event organized by the Texas Maternal and Child Health Coalition.

The coalition is pushing for several changes that would expand health care for the poor, including a measure that would offer care to indigent pregnant women who now do not qualify.

"We must convince Texas legislators that pregnant women and children are as important as highways and prisons," said Michael Hudson, director of the Children's Defense Fund in Texas.

He said "poll after poll" has shown Texans are willing to pay increased taxes to support health programs. But Lewis told the confer-

ence he has seen evidence that indicates otherwise.

"I find a new constituency out there," Lewis said. "We have a constituency that is in favor of more money for higher education, more money

"We have a constituency that is in favor of more money . . . for human services. But at the same time, they . . . are opposing any new taxes."

— Gib Lewis

for public education, more money for human services, more money for highways and more money for prisons and wanting prisoners to spend more time in those prisons.

"But at the same time, they . . . are opposing any new taxes. We find ourselves in somewhat of a Catch-22

where we have to make that decision."

Despite the state's economic problems, Lewis and Hobby expressed optimism that lawmakers will find solutions.

Hobby said there is little room to cut.

"It's important to keep an open mind on new, creative ways to save taxpayer dollars, to eliminate duplication, to minimize inefficiency," Hobby said. "But our budget has undergone a thorough scrubbing for waste and inefficiency over the last four years. Most of that job has been done."

"Further cuts would go to the flesh and bone of state government, and it would come at a time when more people than ever are dependent on the state for help."

Hobby said the answer is a revamped tax system.

"That may not be the most politically palatable solution, but it's the only one that makes sense," he said.

Electric co-ops threatened by budget cuts

DALLAS (AP) — The Reagan administration's proposed federal budget threatens electric cooperatives that provide power to millions of homes and other programs vital to rural Americans, former Agriculture Secretary Bob Bergland said Monday.

"There is broad recognition by leaders of both political parties that the administration's budget proposals, if implemented, would be an unmitigated disaster for rural America, leaving its institutions and economy in a shambles," Bergland told the 45th annual meeting of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

About 10,000 delegates representing consumer-owned rural electric cooperatives will grapple until Wednesday with how to provide needed federal services and solve the national budget crisis.

"While increasing military spending by 3 percent to \$312 billion, the administration budget reduces or wipes out programs that undergird the rural economy," said Bergland, the organization's executive vice president.

Bergland said the Agriculture Department budget proposes big cuts in the Agricultural Extension Service, the U.S. Soil Conservation Service and other programs. The Rural Electrification Administration is targeted for extinction.

Bergland, who served in the Carter administration, said some 1,000 electric cooperatives serve more than 10 million families in 46 states.

Employees return to steel plant; strike ends after 184 days

PITTSBURGH (AP) — Workers trickled into USX Corp. steel plants Monday, some of them grumbling but most resigned to the pay and benefit reductions they accepted in ending the steel industry's longest work stoppage at 184 days.

"We took concessions and all, but we've got a job," said Augie Gatto, 52, as he waited at the United Steelworkers Local 1557 hall in Clairton, Pa., for his turn to be interviewed for resuming work.

Excessive supplies of steel — the reason prices have been low, corporate losses high and managements determined to lower labor costs — forced a slow, gradual restart of USX facilities following Saturday's contract ratification by the union, the company said.

Two of USX's major plants, at Baytown, Texas and Orem, Utah, were not scheduled for restarts due to a lack of business.

Gatto, a pipefitter with 32 years' experience at the Clairton plant of the USX Mon Valley Works outside Pittsburgh, said he expected to be called along with other maintenance workers for interviews within a day or so.

About 50 other maintenance workers were briefed and interviewed at the union hall and entered the plant Monday, he said.

Similar meetings took place Monday at major plants at Gary, Ind.; Lorain, Ohio; and Fairless Hills, Pa.

At Fairless Hills, outside Philadelphia, Local 4889 President Al Lupini said the pay cuts were hard to accept

because the contract that expired July 31 was itself a concessions package. But he said his local ratified the new pact by a vote of 2,050 to 315 because members wanted to work.

"Some of the men didn't like some of the things in there," Lupini said. "I didn't like all of the things in there myself. But we were outside six months, and they wanted to go back."

By a margin of nearly 5-1, USW members from 25 facilities in nine states ratified a four-year contract that cuts wages and benefits by \$2.40 to \$2.50 per hour immediately. The cut declines to around \$2 per hour in the third and fourth contract years, according to union estimates. Votes were counted Saturday.

In exchange for the pay cuts, plus the elimination of about 1,300 jobs and authority for management to define work rules and job descriptions, USX accepted restrictions on its use of non-union labor.

Those security provisions could restore 2,000 to 4,000 union jobs, union negotiators said.

The union also negotiated pension benefits for some laid off workers, early retirements from older workers, whose jobs will be filled by younger workers now laid off.

Despite any misgivings, some workers at Gary were so anxious to get back on the job they reported for duty even though they were not called to do so.

"It's been long enough, I tell you," said Richard Ingram, one of those who was turned away.

Clements plans Mexican journey for state governor's inauguration

AUSTIN (AP) — Gov. Bill Clements, who will travel to Mexico for Thursday's inauguration of a state governor, said Monday he plans to meet with Mexican President Miguel de la Madrid during the one-day visit.

"I've known him a long time. I met him before he was ever elected president," Clements said, who promised to work for improved Texas-Mexico relations.

Clements said he will meet informally with de la Madrid for about 15 minutes.

Both will be in Ciudad Victoria, the capital of the state of Tamaulipas, for the inauguration of Gov. Americo Trevino Villareal, who won the election in December.

"I view Mexico not only as a neighbor but as a strategic nation worthy of our sincere friendship and respect," Clements said. "Mexico should not be taken for granted."

"I am committed not only to fostering that friendship but cementing it through continued meetings that can only aid the economies of both sides of our mutual border."

Clements said he also hopes to meet with the governors of other Mexican states who will attend the ceremonies.

He said he would like to begin talks with them on the economy, immigration, drug smuggling and other mutual issues.

"I know that several of the Mexi-

can governors who have already been in touch with me have several things they want to talk about," Clements said.

"We're going to reopen some lines of communication and start down the road of establishing some reference points as far as our mutual interests are concerned," he said.

Clements said many of the issues are the same as those during his first term as governor, from 1979 to 1983.

Clements said after the preliminary discussions with the Mexican governors this week, he expects their staffs to do additional work before a more extensive, formal governors' meeting later.

Family claims man's death unnecessary, files \$3.5 million lawsuit against PruCare

HOUSTON (AP) — The death of a scientist who rose above the poverty of his native Ghana was unnecessary, coming at the hands of a health-care system in Houston, according to a \$3.5 million lawsuit filed by the man's family.

Theophilus Darko, 34, died of heart failure less than seven weeks after joining Texas' oldest health maintenance organization, PruCare of Houston.

He was an up-and-coming physicist who had studied under a Nobel Prize winner and had dreamed of one day winning the prize himself.

"The system failed him," said Don Wetzel, one of the Houston attorneys who is representing Darko's widow, Vina, in the medical malpractice lawsuit. "He died from a corporate decision that set up economic incentives for doctors not to treat him."

Eighteen days after doctors re-

sponsible for treating PruCare patients discovered Darko had high blood pressure, the young physicist was dead, his family's lawsuit claims.

During five visits to clinics, Darko received inadequate treatment, the suit alleges.

In his last visit, Darko was too weak to sit upright but was examined by a physician for only four or five minutes and told to resume medication another doctor had said not to take, according to the lawsuit.

He was told to come back in a week if he didn't feel better, the suit alleges.

Less than two hours later, he went into convulsions and died on arrival at Westbury Hospital in October 1981, the victim of heart failure, an autopsy concluded.

Dr. Sheldon Joseph, PruCare's medical director, said he could not comment on the case because the matter is under litigation. The lawsuit should go to trial this year.

But, in papers filed with the case, PruCare and the doctors who treated Darko denied all allegations raised by the lawsuit.

At the time of his death, Darko was working on a post-doctoral fellowship at the University of Houston, studying the properties of metals and their reactions under stress.

It was hoped the research would have practical application in fields such as space exploration, said Dr. Wayne Rabalais, a professor of chemistry who worked with Darko.

Darko was born in his mother's tribal village and raised by his father in Accra, Ghana's largest city.

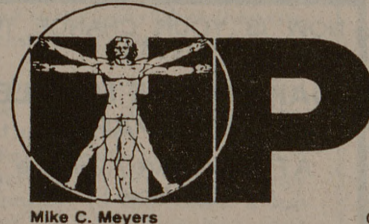
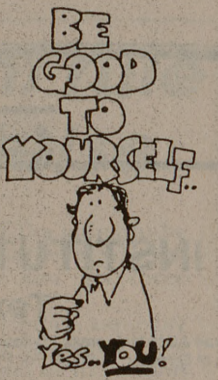
After graduating from Ghana's University of Cape Coast, Darko earned a doctorate degree in theoretical chemistry and quantum mechanics in four years from the University of Manchester in Manchester, England.

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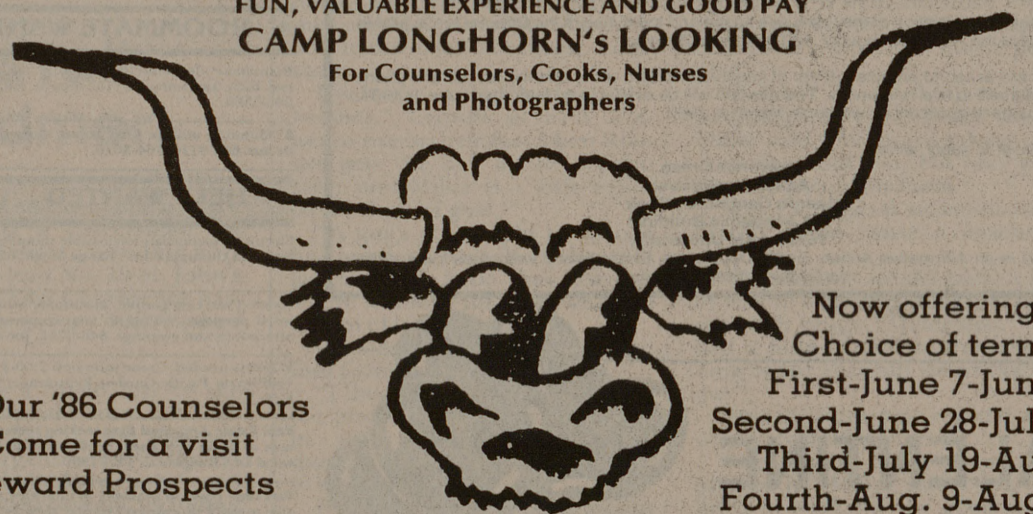
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