

Michigan Mirror

INTERPRETING THE NEWS

The prospect of a multi-million deficit in the state treasury, due to diversion of 75 per cent of the 1947 sales tax back to home governments including the public schools, still is the A-1 top problem of the Sigler administration.

"A major part of my day, from early morning to late at night, is now working on this matter of finances," said Governor Sigler. "I am now working on the budget message to the legislature. We're going to meet the issue frankly. The people must realize the seriousness of the financial situation which today confronts the State of Michigan."

The governor said he was concerned over the impression, still prevalent in the minds of many citizens, that the sales tax amendment diverted one cent of the three-cent tax back to local governments. The loss of 23 per cent of the state's major source of revenue is one thing; the loss of 76 per cent is something else. Simple arithmetic will reveal that the difference is 43 per cent which on an annual collection of \$100,000,000 would involve a cool \$43,000,000 of additional revenue diverted from the state treasury.

A variety of solutions have been advanced by members of the legislature.

Senator Haskell L. Nichols of Jackson proposed a referendum in April on whether a state constitutional convention should be called. Nichols feels that the present constitution has been amended to a point where a brand new charter should be adopted. The need for such a revision has been recognized at Lansing for many years, but state officials have been reluctant to risk such a convention at a time when the voters' temper was subject to drastic fluctuation.

Economic stress in Michigan, contributed to a change in the governorship every two years from 1930 to 1942. Prior to the adoption of the civil service amendment, this brought a biennial turnover of department heads and thousands of employees. The commissioner of agriculture, for example, was an appointee of the governor; he barely got acquainted with the office staff and became accustomed to where he was to hang his hat before a new appointee was announced.

This fluctuation at Lansing did not make for intelligent and orderly thinking on the problem of the state constitution. Perhaps the 1947 financial crisis at Lansing may overcome the usual objections.

Representative Elton R. Eaton of Plymouth has introduced a resolution proposing that the sales tax issue be re-submitted to the voters at the coming April election. Eaton was named chairman of the house taxation committee, and he is fully convinced that many citizens were unaware of the consequences of the sales tax amendment when they voted in

It's a Husky

Senator G. Edward Bonine of Ann Arbor has introduced a bill which would solve the problem of how to finance the \$270,000,000 veterans' bonus. Bonine's measure would earmark three mills of the 15-mill property tax for the bonus. It would produce around \$22,000,000 each year, based on present valuations. This is about enough to cover the cost of interest and bond retirement.

Senator Harold D. Tripp of Alpena would whittle down the prospective deficit by returning to the state the liquor license fee rebates which are now given to cities and villages for enforcement of liquor laws.

Other schemes to whittle down the deficit would put the state-supported colleges into one school district and thereby make them eligible for state school aid; would dip into the \$50,000,000 veterans' bonus fund to help finance the \$270,000,000 veterans' bonus. It is likely that the financial problem will come to a head soon and that legislative leaders, together with the governor and state officials, may arrive at some conclusion.

With the financial problem at the top of his list, Governor Sigler has been disturbed by recent developments which have focused public attention on the personal needs of the governor and his family.

We refer to the so-called "governor's mansion," a highfalutin title of what would be an official "white house" in Ferris Park for the governor, his family, and a staff of servants including the governor's bodyguard who is assigned annually by the Michigan State Police.

The "mansion" idea is not Sigler's creation. It popped up in 1946 when the state legislature decided that the State of Michigan should provide suitable housing facilities and business offices for the governor and his family, and others who are needed to maintain the building to the new year.

The state board of auditors in 1946 engaged Allen Dow, famous Midland architect. Designs were submitted to the board shortly after January 1, thereby focusing public attention on the whole matter.

The governor is a public figure of major importance; his job does not end daily at 5 p. m.; the office imposes upon him unusual responsibilities and duties.

The proposed official "white house" at Lansing would include business offices where the governor could attend the official business in evening hours; several apartments to house the governor's bodyguard, members of the staff and their families—all of whom are needed to prepare meals, tidy up the rooms, tend to the fire, and otherwise be on hand for a variety of needs including state official functions.

We recall hearing Mrs. Harry F.

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