

Tax Diversions, Inflation Cripple State Financing

Inflation and diversion of state tax revenues from the general fund are the primary reasons for the state's poor financial condition, declared Auditor General John B. Martin at a meeting of the League of Women Voters Monday afternoon.

Reviewing Michigan's tax picture, Martin said that in spite of economies, the cost of state government is rising because it now costs more dollars to provide the same services that had been provided for in the past.

"There are many state services which we can't do without, such as mental hospitals, and a lot of expenses which we can't get away from," Martin said. "Inflation is the cause of these rising governmental costs."

MICHIGAN IS the only state in the Union asking for additional taxes this year, Martin said, and five states had surpluses. The reason for this, Martin said, is because Michigan is in an unusual situation since it diverts so much of the money from tax revenues to purposes other than the general fund.

"The sales tax is the biggest revenue producer in the state," he said, "and 78% of the total is restricted for purposes other than running the state government. The next biggest tax revenue is the gas and weight tax and there too, funds are earmarked for highway purposes."

"IF WE HAD any substantial amount to work with from our tax revenues, the state would be financially in good condition," Martin declared. "Our four biggest revenue producers are all restricted for special purposes and we can't use them for general funds."

Senator George Higgins from Ferndale has headed a special tax committee, Martin pointed out, and the purpose of the committee is to consider a more equitable treatment of taxes and possible sources of additional revenue. Among the suggestions from this committee, Martin explained, has been one to consider the transfer of the intergovernmental tax money which is now going to the cities and villages principally, back into the general fund.

ANOTHER SUGGESTION has been made that governmental agencies such as the highway department, he thought of as self-sustaining and pay their own costs of operation. "A used car transfer tax was another suggestion which would bring additional income to the state."

"All together, if the suggestions in the committee report were to be accepted, there would be \$2 million dollars minimum and about \$6 million dollars maximum for the state, without increasing taxes or imposing any new types of taxes, Martin declared.

There has been some talk of the possibility of an individual income tax, Martin said, but the problem is that the State Constitution seems to prevent anything but a flat income tax and tax experts agree that only a graduated income tax is equitable.

THE DEFICIT last June in the State was 40 million dollars and this year will increase about another 10 million," Martin estimated.

Mrs. Hope Dunne, State League of Women Voters tax chairman and a member of the Higgins Citizens Tax Advisory Committee stated that the recommendations made by the Higgins committee would not really solve Michigan's tax dilemma because of the sales tax diversion which keeps the State from working on a current basis.

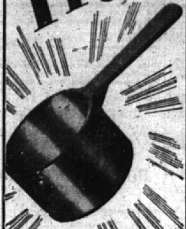
Mrs. Richard Van Dusen, local league of Women Voters tax chairman, presided at the meeting.

PTO Panel Discussion

The Bloomfield Hills School Parent-Teacher Organization will hear a panel discussion presented by members of the school board next Monday evening. The board will discuss its functions and several important current questions. A social hour, scheduled for 8 p.m., will precede the discussion.

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Fresh, CRISP ICEBERG Head Lettuce 2 48-Size Heads 29c

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U. S. No. 1 Grade Maine Potatoes 15 Lbs. 85c

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Southern Grown Firm New Cabbage 1 Lb. 10c

Florida Sweet Oranges 8 Lbs. 49c

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Wicacine Fresh Brick Cheese 5-Lb. 55c

Heinz Strained Baby Foods 4 1/2-Oz. Jar 10c

Heinz Chopped Baby Foods 1 1/2-Oz. Jar 15c

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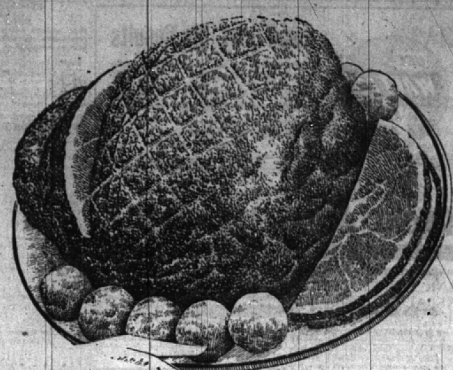
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