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Legislator Seeks Mail From Voters

BY VINCENT THOMAS

Assemblyman, 68th District
I have discussed very briefly in past columns my appreciation to those in my district
who have taken time out of a
busy schedule to write me
their views on pending legislation.

Most of you have read of various problems confronting the legislators through the newspapers and have frankly expressed your opinion, or written for my opinion, and I have been most happy to respond with a frank answer when it has been possible to do so.

do so.

Unfortunately, not enough people take time to do this, or are just not interested. To me, letters from my constituents act as a sounding board of public opinion. And while I realize that members of the legislature are elected to make many decisions before them during the session, we some times get "too close to the forest to see the trees," and welcome suggestions, ide as, pro and con arguments regarding various measures pending before us.

JUST AS AN EXAMPLE: A

before us.

JUST AS AN EXAMPLE: A bill which could have saddled school districts with baby-sitting chores — for three-year-olds and up—has been publicized to some extent in the press. Fortunately, the bill was killed in one of the committees before it went too far, for it would be considered as the opening of a campaign to set up nursery schools in all school districts, and would have cost the taxpayers millions of dollars. No one, not even a school board member, wrote in opposition to this measure.

The Governor's tax program, which would levy a 3-cent-apack tax on cigarettes, 15 per cent wholesale tax on tobacco products, and make various increases in personal income taxes, hits everyone's pocket-book, particularly the latter tax. Yet the mail from home supporting or oposing the imposition of new taxes was very light.

The lack of communications

position of new taxes was very light.

The lack of communications from the public regarding these and many other important issues is somewhat frightening. Is it apathy on the part of the people? Or is it that everyone is too busy to express himself in letters to his legislator?

JUST LOOKING at the issues that have hit the head-lines of newspapers last week typifies what I mean—"Brown Urges \$1.25 Farm Pay Bese"; \$6,000 Raise for Judges Is Preposed"; "Increases in UC, Colleges Tultion Seen"; "Bill Restricts Vets Tax Relief"; "Senate Considers Cancer Quack Measure", "I deficitive Cate

so on down the line, day by
day.

We sometimes turn to "Letters to the Editor" column inour local newspapers for enlightenment on various subjects, for these columns are
widely read. Often our publishers write their own opinions in the editorial columns.
All of these are for public consumption, of course, and are
most appreciated, for newspapers are molders of public opin
ion, and have been recognized
as such for centuries.

Many people I have talked
with say they "mean to write,"
but are somewhat fearful of
int a letter. This is of no importance. Everyone cannot
write in so-called "flowery
language" like they think they
should. All I ask is for an exgarding leg is lation which
would affect an individual, or
group, or industry. It doesn't
one-page letter written in pen
or pencil.



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