

Coordination Of Government Major Problem

By VINCENT THOMAS
Assemblyman, 68th District

Continued efficiency and economy in your state government requires frequent review of its organization by the Legislature. Over the years the addition of new functions and the creation of new agencies have resulted in a sprawling giant, the operation of which produces considerable problems of coordination and effective management.

Some idea of the huge size to which state government has grown can be obtained from facts disclosed at a recent meeting of the Senate Interim Committee on Government Organization. This group has been carrying on an extended study of government operations for some time and has reported many of its findings and recommendations to the Legislature.

THE COMMITTEE states that the executive branch is now made up of 24 major departments and 45 independent agencies. In addition, there are 123 commissions and boards whose members are appointed by the Governor, though many of these bodies are attached to departments.

One suggestion advanced by the committee in the interests of better coordination between units of the executive branch is that the Governor be given three administrative assistants whose duty it would be to act as coordinators and expeditors for him with the many departments. This suggestion brought a mixed reaction from experts in government who appeared before the committee.

ONE SUPPORTER of the idea complimented the group for suggesting that its possibilities be explored, calling it "a fresh approach" to an important and difficult problem. Pointing out that California has traveled so far in assigning each function of state government to a separate agency that it would be very difficult to reverse the trend, and move to consolidate agencies, this observer stated that the committee's idea would assist the Governor to improve his "span of control."

Another expert took practically the opposite view. Referring to the proposed administrative assistants as "three superior department heads," he said they would in effect constitute another layer of authority inserted between the chief executive and existing major agencies. Their use would probably further separate the Governor from the existing agencies, he asserted.

AS A SUBSTITUTE for the committee's idea, he said that such reorganization of state government as might be needed could be best obtained by centralization of authority and consolidation of related functions within a reasonable number of departments. He pointed out, however, that the Legislature has within recent years turned down several proposals for consolidation of functions.

If centralization of administrative agencies under the Governor is desirable, this witness, stated, then all executive agencies except a few special boards should be consolidated into a manageable number of major agencies. In his opinion all of our executive agencies could be grouped into 12 or 14 major departments. This would give the Governor a small enough number of top executives so that he could reasonably be expected to supervise them.

From this meeting it can be anticipated that any major change in the organization of our state government which may be recommended will be very carefully studied and worked out before they are submitted to your Legislature for action.

ON COMMITTEE

Leo Carillo, Hollywood notable, and retiring Los Angeles County Sheriff Gene Biscuit, today were named co-chairmen of a state-wide Latin American committee for the re-election of Secretary of State Frank M. Jordan.

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