

Budget 'Narrowly in Balance'; Calls for No New State Taxes

By VINCENT THOMAS
 Assemblyman, 68th District
 Budget time is usually headache time for us Legislators. In that respect this session promises to be no different from its predecessors. As always, we will have to struggle with fixed charges, uncertain revenues, need to expand service to meet population growth, and demands for new or improved service.
 A surprise to some, the total budget requested by the Governor was less than had been anticipated, slightly less than \$2.6 billion. The increase over the figure for the current year is about 4.5 percent, the smallest rise in recent years of comparable budgets. Termed "narrowly in balance", the budget calls for no new taxes.

OUR TWO legislative committees which have responsibility for the State's expenditure program, the Senate Finance and Assembly Ways and Means committees, are now busily reviewing the details of the budget, which once more will be the nation's largest.

They will again be assisted by our Legislative Analyst and his staff, who will devise as many suggested economies as possible. The budget requests will be supported by Department of Finance spokesmen, as well as by those of the departments involved.

ONCE AGAIN the committees' efforts will be hampered by the fact that two-thirds of the budget total is fixed by either the State Constitution or statute, thus curtailing our legislative authority to control spending.

Many of us believe that greater power over money matters should be restored to the Legislature so that a more equitable balance between income and expenses may be achieved. Some strongly urge that our entire Constitution be revised, shortened and clarified to make this balancing possible.

EDUCATION in all its State-supported forms will take the largest share of the proposed budget, 41.5 percent. Highways, vehicle safety and regulation come second, at 20.9 percent. Third comes social welfare and health, at 12.3 percent. Mental hygiene and corrections will absorb 8.5 percent. Bringing up the rear are general resources, 6.4 percent. Bringing up the rear are general and fiscal administration, 1.7 percent, and all other func-

tions, 8.7.
 One thing is sure, and that is that the final budget situation is not limited by our action on these requests in the formal fiscal document. Many other measures affecting the amounts taxpayers must pay for our California government are being introduced every day. All must be considered and evaluated in terms of their effects on the state financial picture.

SEVERAL bills to cut taxes of various kinds are already before us. A few to increase certain taxes have been dropped in the hopper. The fate of such measures seems problematical just now, since they are caught between the opposing pressures of those who believe existing taxation is too high, and those who want additional service.

Many proposals for more liberal welfare grants, broadened medical care programs, and increased educational allocations will be lined up against other demands for revenues from the general fund. Bills which would increase worker benefits in all categories will also present their problems as to finance.

IT NOW looks as though it will be several months before the committee of either house completes its review of the budget and reports it to the floor for action.

In the meantime, members of both will undoubtedly put in long hours of painstaking investigation to help in developing the most practical and economical budget possible under existing uncertain circumstances.

Officer in Bike Course

Five days of advanced motorcycle training have been completed by Sgt. Michael O'Leary of the California Highway Patrol's Compton Area.

Twenty hours of classroom instruction and 20 hours of field riding were included in the training which is designed to build a pool of skilled riders from which new assignments to motorcycle duty can be made.

Sgt. O'Leary, who lives in Torrance, studied nomenclature and maintenance of the cycle, all-weather riding, congestion control and other subjects. Training was conducted at the Patrol's Sacramento Academy.

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