

# Solons Given Chance to Beat Assembly Deadline

By VINCENT THOMAS  
Assemblyman, 68th District  
Possibilities that we might be able to finish our major tasks in the current general session before the constitutional adjournment date of

June 18 were brightened ably recently. Two very important measures, the budget bill and the broad tax increase and reform bill sponsored by the Speaker and the Chairman of the Revenue and Taxation

Committee, were sent to the Assembly floor. No one believes their further progress will be smooth, but this fast action does make the prospects of a special session a little less certain.

Many Legislators and outside observers were surprised by the quick committee action on the budget bill. Not a single dissenting vote was recorded as the massive \$4.16 billion spending measure was

reported out of the Ways and Means Committee. In past years the Republican minority has fought bitterly for its suggested economies during committee consideration, and has generally voted as a bloc against the bill in the final committee action on it. This time however, two Republicans voted to send it out, one of them stating as his reason, "I want the minority to have ample time to study this bill before the deadline for Assembly action on it."

MAJORITY leaders are not being lulled into inaction by this apparent lack of opposition to the budget bill. They are quite conscious of the 49-31 party split in Assembly membership, and of the fact that it will take 54 votes to pass a bill containing any sizeable increases in expenditures. They well recall that solidarity of the minority group has blocked passage of the budget in previous sessions. The Republicans have publicly revealed their programs for reducing unemployment, for welfare, education, and crime. They could attempt to use the budget bill as a vehicle to advance any or all of these programs.

bill flew out of the Ways and Means Committee by a lopsided 14-5 vote. Called the "first major tax reform bill since 1933," the measure would raise about \$1.1 billion in revenue by a combination approach which would involve new taxes, increased rates in old ones, elimination of inventory taxes, and raises in state support of local schools to enable reduction in property taxes.

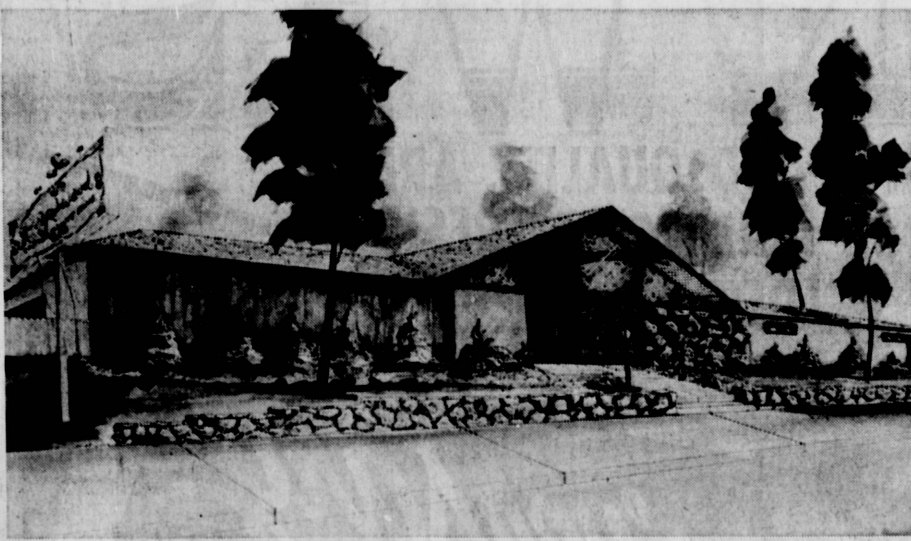
The wind was almost taken from behind the sails of this massive vessel when the Governor released the news given him by the Department of Finance that state revenues were much higher than previous estimates, so that there would be no need for any tax increases this year, except for the proposed five cent raise per pack of cigarettes and the equalizing tax on other tobacco. The bill's proponents countered that the Governor's new idea would result in annual tinkering with taxes, whereas their measure would stabilize the state's tax structure for at least ten years.

DESPITE this unexpected development, supporters of the bill proceeded to schedule the hearing on it. Since there was little opposition, their confidence seems justifi-

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PRESS-HERALD B-7

Some Republican committee members expressed lence by asking, "How do you yourselves as aghest at the fight a bill which raises lack of opposition by business taxes, but otherwise has something to give practically Later, some taxpayer everybody?"



NEW HOSPITAL . . . An architect's sketch shows how the completed Royalwood Convalescent Hospital, to be located adjacent to New Horizons, will

look. The 99-bed facility is now under construction and should be ready for use early next month. The hospital is at 22520 Maple St.

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