

village view

by Andrea Leonard

With the emigration of the summer tourists, now that Labor Day's but a memory, loom the fall elections. The upcoming primary deserves your attention, and once again, you're urged to cast your vote on September 19th.

Among the candidates for Governor of the Commonwealth is Edward F. King, a man whose dedication to changing the direction of how our state budget is allocated and spent, has attracted much attention in the past several years. He's been spending a lot of his time on Cape Cod recently because he appreciates that many Cape Codders are as serious about reducing taxation as were the Californians who passed Proposition 13.

Here on the Cape, in 1975, the most petition signatures were obtained for tax limitation legislation; although the goal wasn't met that year, it was achieved in 1977 when Cape Codders again lined up for the privilege of signing the petitions.

Recently the tax limitation bill came before the state legislature for final action. It passed overwhelmingly with a 222-23 vote; but there was, it later developed, inserted in the wording of the bill, a loophole which permitted a 1.2 billion dollar additional expenditure.

The story of the loophole's creation is a short lesson in how our government operates. A few days before the legislature was scheduled to vote, King received a call from Representative Robert McCarthy suggesting certain changes to improve the plan.

The two men and their attorneys met and discussed McCarthy's recommendations. It was agreed his suggestion would strengthen the bill; the changes were made and initial-ed. Immediately accepted by the legislators, there was a 239 to 2 vote to incorporate the McCarthy changes.

At this stage, before final passage of a bill, the law provides for a third reading by a committee empowered to correct grammar, spelling and punctuation, but the law specifically prohibits any changes of a substantive nature. Nothing can be rewritten by the committee to alter the meaning or intent of a bill.

After the final vote it takes five or six more weeks for the bill to be printed and distributed. It was not discovered until the bill appeared in its final printed form, six weeks after the vote, that the Committee on Third Reading, indeed, changed the wording to raise the ceiling on spending an additional 1.2 billion of the taxpayers' dollars.

Now a suit must be filed in court to have the original meaning of the bill restored. Mr. King believes another vote by the legislature will be unnecessary.

Putting a lid on state spending is only one of King's goals; another is to repeal the tax that so severely penalizes retired persons living on fixed incomes.

Working people, as inflation mounts, find their incomes tend to rise proportionately. This is not true of people who are no longer able to earn a living but must somehow survive on fixed incomes. Yet every dime of unearned income is taxed by the state at double the percentage rate paid by working people, those whose incomes are increasing through cost-of-living and merit raises. An obviously unfair burden is carried by the elderly, no longer able to compete in the job market.

Another of King's concerns is crime, particularly crime against the elderly. His concern is well-founded for he recognizes the vulnerability of the older citizen. Although no law

abiding person is immune from the possibility of criminal attack, older people are least able to defend themselves just because they are older, weaker, slower in their reactions. For this reason King opposes penal system changes that leave innocent people, older people in particular, at the mercy of criminals.

Unless changes advocated by King are made, he believes, older people will be forced to leave Massachusetts and Cape Cod in particular. Unless these changes are made, he feels, the Cape will lose its broad base of people spending their retirement years and incomes, here. These are the very individuals who contribute most to our economic, social and cultural stability. When they go, Cape Cod will become entirely dependent on conventioners and the tourist trade, King foresees.

Supporting King's gubernatorial campaign and visiting the Cape on September 7 on King's behalf, was Illinois Republican Philip M. Crane, a leading conservative congressman who met with enthusiastic supporters at three locations: Chatham, Dennis, and Barnstable.

And Peter McDowell, King's running mate for Lieutenant Governor, hails from the Cape's town of Dennis. As one of us, he's familiar with problems Cape Codders encounter in dealing with the state.

Among other things, King favors the wholesale elimination of many state agencies, an end to school board autonomy and massive cuts in the state budget; he opposes unrestrained spending, forced busing, and bureaucratic regulation. Whether, as governor, he could attain his goals we can determine only if he is given a chance to try.

We may not all agree with every stand this candidate takes; he supports capital punishment, and perhaps you don't. He's against abortion on demand, and perhaps you favor it. No single candidate in any election stands on a platform of planks that merits an individual voter's complete endorsement. Each man running for elective office must take a position on the issues and hope the majority of the electorate will agree with him more than they disagree with him; that he'll win a majority of their votes.

Every person entitled to cast his vote has an opportunity and an obligation to express his own views, first in the primary and again in the November election. Winning the primary is crucial is the first hurdle for every candidate, for unless people who believe in democracy exercise themselves at the primary, come November's Election Day, their candidate-of-choice has long ago become an Also-Ran.

How many times have you approached the voting booth feeling dismay because neither party's candidate is the man you wanted to have an opportunity to vote for?

How many times will that gray day in November roll around to give you a choice between two people, neither of whom you have much confidence in as a leader, as your representative, or your voice in government?

And where were you at the primary? Playing golf? Admiring the foliage in Vermont or New Hampshire? Did you just forget all about voting that Tuesday back in September?

And where were you when the campaign was under way? Were you calling friends and asking them to vote for the man who believes as they do, explaining his position on issues, asking for campaign contributions to help defray costs of radio spots, postage, phone and travel expenses?

Unless you, like the candidates for public office, are willing to take a stand, make an investment of time and money to support the man or woman who most nearly represents your own views on important issues like crime and confiscatory taxation, you haven't much excuse if you're a victim of crime or if your taxes continue to escalate.

Whether you think Edward F. King is the best man to serve as Governor for the next four years, or would prefer to see win one of the other candidates running for this office, please go to the polls and vote in the primary. If you've read this far, you can't plead ignorance of what at least one of the candidates wants to accomplish.

If you think his stand best represents you, back him; if you think he's wrong, you've a chance to support his opponent. Come November, the candidate you'd most like to see elected may have his name on your ballot. It's not likely to be there unless you vote in the primary.