

EDITORIAL

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Paying the price of good government?

Taxes, we are told, are the price of good government. To assure good government, each of us must pay his fair share. If the rate of increase in the quality of government were to equal the rate of increase in the cost of government, surely there would not be a single dissatisfied citizen in this land.

Americans are now looking at an annual budget to run the government and its various programs. Its total cost? Nine hundred and twenty-five, point five, billion dollars.

In addition to the Pentagon's \$305 billion which includes \$6.7 billion for an orbiting space station, almost \$400 billion will be dispensed to individuals through federal pensions, social security, medicare, medicaid, aid to the poor, domestic price supports, and aid to farmers. Foreign aid will account for another \$15 billion.

Personal income taxes raise \$328.4 billion; corporations pay \$76.5 billion; excise and other taxes raise \$67.5 billion more. We take in \$270.7 billion in social insurance receipts. All that still is not enough to meet our projected expenses; we must borrow \$180.4 billion. Interest on debt, in 1985, will amount to \$116.1 billion.

A close look at some expenses to operate the federal legislature may shed some light on why it costs almost one trillion dollars to run our government. This is a partial list of how some of our tax dollars are spent in the House and the Senate:

- To operate House and Senate operations for 1984, including the General Accounting Office and the Library of

Congress: \$1.47 billion

- To fund expenses of House committees for 1984: \$1.43 billion

- To pay 1984 office expenses for members of the House (up \$10 million from 1983): \$67 million

- To reimburse the Postal Service for members' use of their franking privileges: \$97.8 million

- To cover costs of payroll, travel, and basic operation of 26 standing and select House committees and subcommittees: \$44 million

- To pay salaries to 14 operators of **automatic** elevators in House buildings: \$170 thousand

- To cover start-up expenses for establishing a day-care center for 60 children of Senators and other Senate employees (parents to pay this year's operating costs . . . temporarily the facility will be housed, rent free, in a Senate building): \$20 thousand

- To defray long-distance telephone charges from offices at the Pentagon to a DIAL-A-PORN service in New York City: \$300 thousand

Undoubtedly, some of the above-listed expenses contribute to good government; and unquestionably, some do not. Were the average American taxpayer in a position to separate those he wants to fund from those he objects to paying for, more average American taxpayers would willingly pay their taxes.