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REPORT TO THE PEOPLE

by CONGRESSWOMAN

FLORENCE P. DWYER



Volume II, Number 2.

January 23, 1958

President Eisenhower has handed to Congress his proposed budget for the fiscal year 1959. It is a budget which strongly reflects a determination to meet the threat of Communism by gearing our nation's defenses to the ever-expanding developments of the Space Age; it is also a budget which stresses the need for a tightening of the purse strings on the home front.

The need for strict economy in our domestic spending is evident in even a casual study of the proposed budget. For -- of the total estimated expenditures of \$73.9 billion -- nearly two-thirds, or \$45.8 billion, is ear-marked for major national security programs.

These defense expenditures are essential to our survival -- and the prospect is that they will be equally large, or larger, in the coming years. That is a fact we must face, and gear our economy accordingly.

BASIC APPROACHES

There are two basic approaches to the problem of effecting domestic economies.

The first is a curtailment, revision or elimination of certain existing domestic programs, and deferment of previously recommended new programs.

President Eisenhower has recommended this course of action to the Congress as a means of restraining non-military spending in 1959. He also has proposed the transfer of a number of grants-in-aid programs from the Federal level to the States by 1960.

There is no question that such measures would be an effective means of keeping domestic spending in check during this time of crisis when our national security must have absolute priority over lesser needs.

RESISTANCE SEEN

However, it is my belief -- based on my firsthand observations during last fall's nation-wide grants-in-aid hearings by the Intergovernmental Relations Subcommittee -- that there will be considerable resistance in the Congress to these proposals.

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Many of these programs are now considered essential by the people of America, and there will be a reluctance on the part of Congress, particularly during an election year, to cut back spending in these fields. There may be a deferment of new programs, but I do not believe there will be any large-scale curtailment of existing programs.

There is a second area, however, in which I believe sound and lasting economies can be effected.

That is through economy in expenditures and efficiency in operations in all departments of the government.

HOOVER REPORT CITED

The course for such action already has been charted by the Hoover Commission. Yet, action on more than 50 percent of the Hoover recommendations for economy and efficiency in government has been stalled for several years.

It has been estimated that these recommendations, if put into effect, would result in savings of more than \$4 billion annually.

Certainly, in these times when we are faced with staggering defense costs, we should no longer hesitate to act on the Hoover recommendations.

I also believe that -- if we are to meet the constantly increasing costs of high priority defense programs -- we should make certain that every possible economy is made in other, less essential defense activities. Also, every effort should be made to make certain the military's procurement practices, maintenance standards and supply management are effectively tightened.

SAVINGS REPORTED

In past Reports, I have frequently discussed my work on the Intergovernmental Relations Subcommittee, on which I serve as ranking minority member.

However, I also serve on another subcommittee of the House Government Operations Committee -- the General Government Activities Subcommittee. This subcommittee is charged with the responsibility of reviewing all proposed negotiated sales of government surplus property.

Last year, after considerable study and investigation, our subcommittee stopped the proposed sales of four valuable pieces of government property, including an aircraft plant in California and two air fields in Texas.

After the subcommittee rejected these sales, the properties were renegotiated and sold at far higher prices. In all, the final sales of these surplus properties brought the government \$564,794 more than the original bids which we turned down.

This is a good example of how sound and thorough committee work in Congress can protect the taxpayer's pocketbook.