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REPORT TO THE PEOPLE

by CONGRESSWOMAN

FLORENCE P. DWYER



Volume I, Number 14.

May 16, 1957.

Most people, at some time or other, have had cause to complain about "governmental red tape". But I wonder how many of our citizens realize that the Federal government actually buys red tape? As a matter of fact, it is on sale in the Capitol's Stationery Room - and has been for years.

The biggest red tape customer, just in case you might wonder, is the Document Room of Congress. It uses the red tape to tie up bundles of documents and copies of bills when they come from the Government Printing Office.

This practice may or may not have special significance. But the general subject of red tape in government is of vital importance to all Americans in these days when every baby born in our land starts out close to \$1000 in debt, on the basis of the present cost per capita of government.

Red tape denotes duplication of effort, cumbersome and unnecessarily involved government procedures, inefficiencies and all the other poor business factors which incubate waste and confusion in government. It is just such red tape practices that the Hoover Commission Reports have pin-pointed as the logical places to institute effective and lasting economies.

WIDE INTEREST IN H.R. 2494

This year's Battle of the Budget has stirred a growing public interest in the Hoover recommendations - an interest that has been reflected in my daily mail. Most of the letter writers ask the same question:

If Congress is so interested in economy, why doesn't it take action on the Hoover Report?

On the first Hoover Report, some 72 percent of its 272 specific recommendations were adopted by 1953 at an estimated annual savings of \$7 billion. But only 39 percent of the second Hoover report's 314 recommendations have been put into effect so far.

Congress, in particular, has been slow in acting on these recommendations. So far in this session, a number of bills dealing with these recommendations have

been introduced in the House and the Senate, but to date this legislation has remained bottled up in committee.

The greatest public interest seems to be centered on H.R. 2494, a bill dealing with a Hoover proposal known as "Recommendation No. 7". Under this proposal, the government would, in a manner of speaking, operate on a pay-as-you-go system. Appropriations for procurement programs would be voted year by year, and the Congress would review progress each year. If any programs were cancelled under this system, the money appropriated for such programs would be returned to the U.S. Treasury.

Under the present system, Congress votes the entire appropriation for a procurement program. It may be a huge order for long-range bombers or guided missiles, or any of the other items, large and small, purchased by various government departments. It may take years to produce these items; the program may be cancelled, or it may fall behind schedule. But, once Congress has let loose of the money under the present expenditure system, the taxpayer never gets it back again.

BILL STALLED IN COMMITTEE

Supporters of this measure, including President Eisenhower and Treasury Secretary Humphrey, point out that today approximately \$50 billion, or 5/7ths of the entire new budget, are outstanding in such carry-over funds. They maintain that enactment of this recommendation will return to the Congress control of the nation's purse strings - a control on government spending that will result in huge savings.

Yet, despite the unquestioned merit of this recommendation, it has encountered severe opposition, particularly in the House. Last year, this proposal passed the Senate, but died in the House. This year, H.R. 2494 and eight identical bills have encountered a cool reception.

A temporary subcommittee of the House Government Operations Committee held hearings on these bills in March. Its only action since the hearings has been the issuance of a critical report which, in substance, maintains that the proposed expenditure method would be too much trouble, require too much study and work.

PUBLIC SUPPORT NEEDED

This, to my thinking, is a weak excuse. No private business could continue to operate without keeping a tight control on expenditures and knowing where its

dollars are going and what they are buying. But, in effect, that has been the manner in which our government has been operating.

The most effective means, I believe, of working for this recommendation is for our individual citizens who believe in it to take their pens in hand and write letters - to the newspapers, to Members of Congress, to government officials. For, unless there is strong support by the public and by the press, H.R. 2494 may encounter the same House bottleneck that proved fatal last year.

For my part, I hope the full Government Operations Committee, on which I serve, is given an opportunity to act on this bill. I will give it my full support.

EISENHOWER'S STAND

I was pleased to note that President Eisenhower plans to go before the nation to discuss his budget. The Hoover recommendations typify the type of economy legislation he favors. In fact, just last week, he pointed out that experts have found areas in which economies can and should be effected. He also observed pointedly that everyone is in favor of cutting the budget "somewhere else" except the places affecting them. I am sure every Member of Congress, through bitter experience, realizes the truth of that observation!