

# editorials & commentary

## Too Much Too Soon

In the past two weeks county residents have been treated to the spectacle of responsible county employees pointing the finger of blame at each other for the shortfall in CETA funds. One man, assistant CETA director Robert Penski, has resigned; the county's administrative assistant, William P. Collins, has had to defend himself from a public accusation that he is to blame; and the administrative ability of CETA Director Carlton Doane is being questioned.

So far, no one has mentioned the real culprit -- the federal government, which dispenses such vast amounts of money and expects local civil servants to administer them.

The question, it would seem, is not, "How could such a thing happen?" but "Who among us (other than bankers) could administer a \$7.5 million budget?"

Just a year ago the total CETA budget for St. Lawrence County was about \$2.5 million. In one year it jumped five million dollars.

Now, as any corporate executive will tell you, a company which has more than a 10 percent increase in business in one year faces some serious reorganization problems. It takes a lot of professional know-how to absorb and manage such an increase.

CETA's budget increase, on the other hand, amounts to a whopping 150 percent in one year! That's a staggering amount of money to be responsible for, to manage and to keep track of. It is doubtful that there are more than a handful

of men in this county capable of administering such an amount. Carlton Doane, fine man that he is, came up through the ranks of the 4-H service, moved into the position of assistant director in the former county Manpower office, and after several years that was suddenly faced with becoming the director of something totally new--The Comprehensive Employment Training Act, called CETA. He was handed a huge sum of money to spend as fairly and honestly as he could and he did his best, but like most of us, he's not Arthur Levitt.

The legislators should have known this and hired a fulltime budget officer to oversee the account-keeping of the CETA funds. But, in fact, the legislators -- with the notable exceptions of Don Livingston and Betty Bradley -- seldom questioned CETA programs.

As stated in this column before, there is a certain danger in being at the bucket end of the Great Federal Money Spigot. It is the danger of being corrupted by seemingly unending amounts of dollars which just keep coming and coming, an endless flow with very few accounting practices required. It makes for a spending spree attitude -- look at the Potsdam Urban Renewal program for example.

If huge sums of money are to be suddenly injected into a community there should be an experienced budget officer injected along with them. We small town rural dwellers are not incompetent, but neither are we experienced account executives.

St. Lawrence Plaindealer

## No Relief In Sight

Regardless of what liberal economists may argue, most Americans are firmly convinced that big federal deficits are a prime contributor to inflation.

President Carter is now responding to that perception, putting the screws on Congress and his own department heads to hold down federal spending.

His crusade will no doubt draw cheers in most quarters, but there is another element to the deficit crackdown that may not prove so popular. That is a conscious administration decision to abandon any further tax reductions beyond the modest cuts Congress is likely to enact this year.

With a big Social Security tax increase kicking in next year, and inflation driving all wage-earners into higher income tax brackets, the practical effect of Carter's decision will be to increase the total federal tax burden on a majority of Americans.

James McIntyre, Carter's director of the Office of Management and Budget, confirmed in an interview last week that "current policy" precludes any new relief in the fiscal 1980 budget the president will send to Congress in January.

The primary emphasis, McIntyre indicated, will be on reducing the deficit--a goal which could not be achieved if revenues drop.

The federal deficit reached its all-time peak of \$66.4 billion in fiscal 1976, under the Ford Administration. The fiscal 1977 budget after a transitional quarter in which the government shifted the starting date of the fiscal year from July 1 to October 1, carried a deficit to \$45 billion.

When the Carter administration took office, unemployment was the leading economic problem and stimulus policies were the order of the day. Although the president originally estimated that the deficit for the current fiscal year (1978) would be almost \$62 billion, it is now expected to wind up at \$51.1 billion.

Most of the drop is due to spending "shortfalls" by government agencies, although some is attributable to cost-cutting. For fiscal 1979, which begins on October 1, the administration is now asking Congress to reduce the deficit to \$43.5 billion.

Carter and McIntyre have set a deficit target in the \$35 to \$40 billion range for fiscal 1980, and OMB is leaning hard on all departments and agencies to hold spending requests to a level that will permit the further reduction.

"We're very serious about a tight budget for 1980," McIntyre said. "The size of the deficit has a tremendous psychological impact. The American people feel deficit spending does have a significant effect on inflation, so we've got to get it down."

What remains to be seen is whether voters want to see continued shrinkage of the deficit badly enough to tolerate an actual increase in their total federal tax burden over the next two years.

McIntyre was careful to leave open the possibility of a Carter tax reduction proposal for fiscal 1981 presidential election. But that may not satisfy a public that is supposedly in the throes of a "tax revolt" right now.

Carter is effectively caught between a rock and a hard place, given the conflicting popular demands for lower federal deficits and lower federal taxes. Republicans led by Rep. Jack Kemp, R-N.Y., and Sen. William Roth, R-Del., who are pushing for a 30 percent reduction in income taxes over the next three years, insist you can have both. But most economists disagree, and the Democratic Congress is unlikely to take the chance.

As of now, Carter has decided to go for lower deficits rather than major tax relief. The results of the 1978 elections and their reflection--or lack thereof--of a real "tax revolt" could determine whether he sticks by that choice.

## letters

### Teamsters Chief Says 'How Much Longer?'

To the Editor:  
If California voters are indeed oppressed by excessive state local taxes, New Yorkers should not be voting on a proposition 13, but rather should be marching in armed formations on the state capitol and local city halls.

According to United States Census Bureau data, per capita state-local taxes in New York in 1975-76 were \$1,140, 18 percent higher than the \$964 levied in California.

Californians surely have a right to complain when in a decade (1965-66 to 1975-76) their per capita state-local tax bill soared \$569 (144.1 percent) compared to a United States average increase of \$441 (152.1 percent). In New York State, however, the increase was \$730 (178.0 percent).

In fiscal 1965-66 state-local taxes appropriated 12.5 per cent of the personal income total in California compared to a national average of 10.7 per cent and 12.6 percent in New York. Ten years later (1975-76) the national average was 12.5 compared to 14.9 percent in California and 17.3 percent in New York.

One can easily understand the fury of California voters when in the one year between 1974-75 and 1975-76 their per capita state-local tax bill skyrocketed by \$95 compared to a national average of \$67. What then should be the reaction of New Yorkers whose per capita state-local tax assessment increased in that one year by \$115?

It was not always thus. New York was not always the leader in the state-local tax parade. As late as 1964-65 the state-local tax levy in California was \$379 compared to \$372 in New York and a national average of \$266. In truth, New York taxpayers appear to have more patience and tolerance of their profligate lawmakers than do Californians. But for how much longer, oh, Lord?

Very truly yours,  
Joseph Terrotola,  
President

Teamsters Joint Council 18  
Fireman Apologizes

To the Editor:  
I would like to publicly apologize to Third Assistant Chief Steve Miles, the members of the Potsdam Fire Department, and all the bystanders for my unprofessional conduct at the scene of the fire at 43 Pierrepont Avenue on Monday, July 31, 1978.

Respectfully,  
Kirk W. Hostek  
H&L Co. No. 1  
Potsdam Fire Dept.  
Potsdam

### Dr. Hosmer Says Thanks

To the Editor:  
May I sincerely thank my many friends for their kind messages and calls at the time of my recent 80th birthday.

Helen M. Hosmer  
48 Elm St.

### Giannel Wants Auction For Urban Renewal Land

The strange matter of the fictitious contractor "Harold Clark" only confirms that the old adage we learned in Tuscan--"judi si bibe each other--still applies even from the local we go to the federal level. This makes us conclude that the only way to get justice is for the sovereign people to intervene and get rid of all officials concerned at the next election, then starting all over again with a new grand jury investigation.

In the meantime, however, let us see what else is happening. While all these past unresolved matters are still fresh in the people's concern, what do you think the local bosses are doing? They are cooking up the most unbelievable concoction with the developers of the Holiday Inn, which is going to result in more loss of taxpayers' money. We would appreciate very much if the local political bosses and the Potsdam Urban Renewal Agency's prestidigitators did not even try to further explain their circumlocutively involuted financing scheme. Drop it.

The sovereign people have reason to Urban Renewal officials, who, apparently, seem to be ready to sell their mothers to make it appear that the Potsdam Urban Renewal Agency has some redeeming social value. Let's remember all about these lupti too at the next election.

To avoid losing taxpayers' money in the case of the Holiday Inn and of any other future developer, the sovereign people have reason to insist that all urban renewal parcels be sold at an auction to the highest bidder, and the Potsdam Urban Renewal Agency dismantled instantly, leaving the development entirely to free enterprise, according to the good old pioneer American way.

In the spirit of the current taxpayers' revolt, let us get rid of one more aspect of excessive government, while working toward participatory democracy, where the sovereign people will decide on all important issues personally and directly by referendum. With natural individualism and real freedom, let the sovereign people recreate a pioneer America where everyone will be able to afford the luxury of integrity.

Cordially yours,  
Dr. A. Steven Giannel de Jannell

### PAT Blasts New Jail

To the Editor:  
To the Taxpayers of St. Lawrence County:  
Do you want to spend some \$2,500,000 (almost \$25 for every man, woman and child in the county) for a new jail to replace our perfectly sound existing one? If you've been following the legislative discussions in the papers, you know that most of your legislators are just itching to spend your money for this new jail, whether you want one or not, and the only thing that has saved us so far is indecision on whether to build it at the old county home site or at the present jail site.

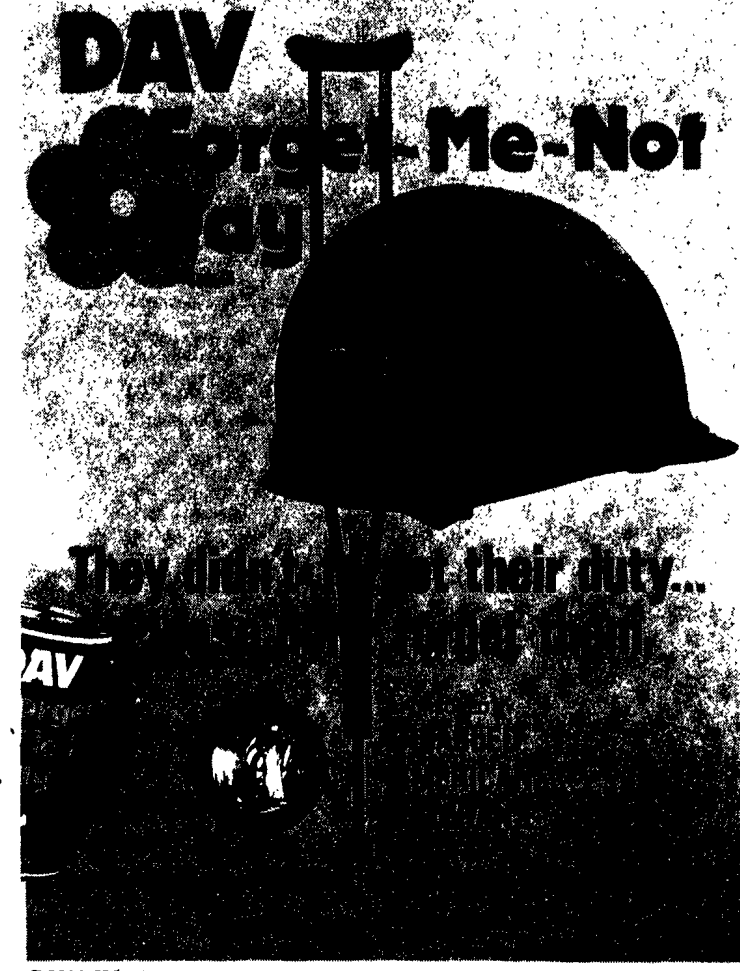
A more important question than "where" might be "why?" Do we really need a new jail? In our area, what do we want one? We think the answer to both questions is no. One legislator has stated a new jail is not mandated but he is in favor of building one anyway. They talk about "future need", but a recent survey indicates county population is less now than in 1970, and the Black River Regional Planning Board predicts a population increase from 1970 to 2000 of less than 3 percent. Perhaps one reason for lack of growth is that N.Y. has the "worst business climate in the continental United States" and the highest per capita taxes (Times, pg. 4, April 5, 1978) due in large part to excessive spending of public funds such as on this very jail.

Our jail has room for about 38 prisoners on a single room basis as they are housed now, or about 66 on the double-cell basis for which the jail was originally designed. There is nothing in the written state law forbidding double bunking, but Correction Commissioner Dorothy Wadsworth has arbitrarily "mandated" against it, even though it is standard practice in many if not most state and federal jails. This is the same person who came up with the ridiculous "mandate" that "occupancy" more than 80 percent of capacity presents a danger. Why 80 percent? Why not 10 percent or 90 percent or the obvious 100 percent? Applied to your home, this means you'd have to build five bedrooms in order to occupy four of them. Pretty silly isn't it? No wonder state taxes are higher in New York.

Fortunately these arbitrary "mandates" can be fought successfully by local groups of taxpayers or officials. Recently the N.Y. Sheriff's Association succeeded in getting a temporary injunction against the issue of Wadsworth's other arbitrary mandates, and we understand from some county officials that this idiotic "90 percent mandate" is also no longer being enforced. It is also likely that the legislators, if they wanted to, could get an injunction against her arbitrary mandate prohibiting all double bunking, which would certainly remove the need for any more jail construction. But unfortunately election to the legislature seems to change otherwise rationally people into utter spendthrifts (with someone else's money) with an almost insatiable urge to burn money on their own ego. We remind the legislators that their last such indulgence at taxpayers expense, namely the Canton School-Smith Building boondoggle of five years ago helped out the party in power. Current voter trends are clearly toward a more responsible and economical government, as shown by "Proposition 13" and, at the local level, by the number of school budget defeats.

So far, our county is one of the few in the state with no bonded indebtedness. Let us close with the "Question of the Week": Should we the people allow our county legislature to run St. Lawrence County into debt for a building program that is not mandated or necessary, and that will benefit (hopefully) very few county residents? Will you be at the legislative meeting in Canton on Aug. 14, and at subsequent meetings until this issue is laid low once and for all? We will.

By Order of the Board of Directors  
Potsdam Area Taxpayers  
C. Austin Reynard  
Chairman of the Board



DONATIONS ASKED--The Elmer G. Murphy Post 164 of the Disabled American Veterans continues this week until Aug. 12. Post members will be soliciting throughout the town during their annual fund-raising drive.

### From Our Files

1902- West Potsdam-Thomas Sheehan has been engaged to handle the rod in our school next term.

1902- E.J. Hazleton shows his confidence in the hen as a help to the family by building a nice house for their comfort.

1911- Potsdam Grange Dance, May 1. Income, \$26.75 from tickets sold. Expenses music, \$12, janitor \$2, Mrs. Emery, work, \$1.50, groceries, \$1.99, ten pound ham, \$2.50, bread, 90 cents, advertising, 80 cents and cream 90 cents, for a total of \$22.50.

1910- Notice to the public- We wish to say that we have leased the Ames Farmers Sheds. Prompt attention will be paid to our patrons, especially to ladies who drive in alone. Good waiting rooms that are clean, sanitary and warm. Phones. Meals will be served at the same old stand over the offices by

Mrs. C. F. Heaton, also lodging. John and Frank Midgely.

1910- St. Lawrence County jail-Commissioner Edgar A. Newell, of Ogdensburg, in a report tells of an inspection of the jail at Canton. He called it a "modern facility, one worthy of the large and prosperous County of St. Lawrence."

1910- January clearance sale at Olmsteads, 18-20 Market St.-near seal fur coats, \$27, Isabella coney fur muff, \$3, heatherblom undershirts, \$1.45 and bearskin bonnet, 35 cents.

1910- Allens Falls- Mr. Alfred Armstrong had the Bell telephone put in his home recently.

1910- Ford Model T touring car- completely equipped for \$860, four cylinder, 22 H.P., wheel base 100 inches. Frank Mathews Club Garage, Potsdam. Compiled by Earl Pattison

## A Touch Of Class

Boston is color conscious this summer, but for a change it has nothing to do with race.

Traffic light poles are the issue between mayor Kevin White and diehard traditionalists. The poles have been yellow. The mayor wants to paint some 3,500 of them black, which he thinks

adds more class to Boston's appearance. Opponents say the change is less reflective of the city's image than of the mayor's temperament.

So it's going. Who said politics are no longer colorful?

## Courier & Freeman.

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