

**C**OLLEGE students of all lands have often been known for their so-called "radical groups," those that for one reason or another adopt views differing from those of the majority.

There was a time when certain colleges were horrified to find groups among them that claimed communistic tendencies and others with socialistic leanings.

Because these groups are considered to be out of step with the majority, it is a little disturbing to note the organization on the University of Wisconsin campus a "radical" group identified as the "Conservative Club." It is not disturbing because of what the students hold out as principles but because they seem to consider themselves a minority.

The Conservative club's aims are stated to oppose further government controls and to recognize that the international communist movement is a conspiracy. Many people both in and out of college have held to those principles for a long time but never regarded themselves as being radicals or revolutionaries. They simply considered the principles to be good old American beliefs.

## Education in Demand

**N**EARLY one-fourth of the population of Oklahoma is enrolled in schools within the state. That fact explains the growing demand for tax money to support the educational system. Getting an education is big business in Oklahoma.

Latest tabulations show one person out of every 50 in the state is now enrolled as a college student, three-fourths of these in state-financed institutions. From the same 50 persons, another 12 or 13 will be enrolled as elementary pupils, and about four as junior high and highschool students. Nearly all are in public schools.

**T**HE number and location of schools and colleges in Oklahoma appears to be ample and reasonably well-spaced, in spite of drastic population shifts. Perhaps most of the buildings are adequate, although opinions may differ as to definition of what is adequate. Possibly a lesser number have sufficient modern facilities within the buildings, suitable for training pupils to meet the requirements of the world of tomorrow. The great demand for teaching in the various branches of science and mathematics has emphasized the importance of more laboratory space and equipment in numerous schools.

But given students, buildings and facilities, other vital factors include curricula and teachers. These are the areas where economies often are first put into effect and it is here that real weaknesses are likely to have lasting and unfortunate effects. An able teacher may overcome lack of facilities. But the finest buildings and laboratories are wasted without a suitably planned course of study and devoted teachers.

**R**ECENT newspaper reports have shown that other states spend more per student than Oklahoma. This is not because Oklahoma doesn't have money to spend, but because it is appropriated for things other than schools. Tax increases are not popular and a legislature that imposes one may encounter drastic reaction later. But covering all demands for funds is not an easy matter.

Education is a subject dear to the hearts of Oklahomans. Many good citizens did not have opportunity to obtain a good education but they want their children to have one, even if it means doing without some roads, or whatever else public money may be spent for.

The whole proposition needs to be carefully studied. Buildings should be provided where needed, but no more. The rest of the money available should be used to insure results. The fact that some 520,000 of Oklahoma's 2,277,000 residents are students is ample evidence of the important place that this subject holds in their lives and hearts.

## Gravy Train to All Points

**F**ARMERS are not the only people who depend heavily upon the government to keep them in business. A current report published under the byline of Dr. Ernest Dale, Cornell university professor, says that "even a fully free enterprise concern like IBM makes almost one-fourth of its direct sales to the government."

Writing for marketing men in "Printers' Ink," Dale lays heavy emphasis upon the importance of public spending as it relates to the continued operation of big industry and high employment.

Marketers are counting on public spending to grow in the years to come, not only in terms of dollar potential, but also as a proportion of total national expenditures. Exclusive of defense spending, Dale says that "incredible as it seems," the proportion of our gross national product going to public services is about the same as in Herbert Hoover's day, although dollar amounts are much larger. Substantial increases are anticipated for roads, schools, sewers, police protection, parks, transportation, postal services and other public activities. Regardless of what may happen to defense spending, the outlook is for continued high outlay by the government to develop civilian uses of atomic energy, missile development and space exploration.

**M**AIN reasons for this pressure applied by big business to keep Uncle Sam's pursestrings loose are (1) industry's capacity for producing more than the American public will buy strictly as private citizens, and (2) increasing competition from other countries for export markets.

So when you read about government appropriations for farm subsidies think also about how much Uncle Sam is spending to keep factories running, business booming and the voters happy. Most of it is charged to national defense, but a lot of it would be continued at the taxpayers' expense regardless of war.

Even so, defense spending has assumed such significance in our national economy that an "outbreak of peace" might result in a depression. Few people would remain unaffected if government spending were reduced enough to make a really substantial tax cut possible.

## Better Luck This Time

**T**HE state senate is again looking into the operations of Ora J. Fox, self-appointed "protector" of the old folks. The senators seem to be curious again about how much money he collects and what he does to justify his "services."

The same routine has been followed before, with nothing of significance resulting. Hearings have been held, senators have made speeches and Ora Fox goes right on soliciting contributions from pensioners who probably need the money more than they need his "services."

This time it may be a little different. One of the leading exponents of the inquiry and advocate of bills which he claims will stop Fox from "robbing the old folk" is George Miskovsky, senator from Oklahoma county. Miskovsky formerly was attorney for Fox, employed presumably to advise him on operations and legal matters relating to his business. The senator should be well informed on just how to ask questions to bring out the facts and he should know pretty well what steps should be taken to stop the legal loopholes that Ora Fox always has found when efforts were made to corner him.

This should be the most revealing inquiry to date concerning this questionable but continuous campaign for funds from the needy of Oklahoma.

## Vicious Circle

**W**HEAT prices are too high because there is too much wheat. We have too much wheat because prices are too high.

The same reasons apply to high prices and surpluses of cotton, corn, peanuts, and other commodities that are manipulated by the sticky fingers of bureaucratic control. Caught in the middle, congress and the department of agriculture both would like to get out from under the farm price support program that keeps prices high and also get rid of the wheat surplus the government owns because it pays more for wheat than anybody else will pay.

Long ago it was demonstrated that the government could become involved in a subsidy deal much more easily than it could terminate one. The heat of public opinion hasn't been powerful enough to get congressmen to change direction.

**A** PRICE support program creates many distorted situations. Supports appear to be wholly unfeasible without some kind of production control. The plan for dividing up minimum acreages among farmers equipped to grow the controlled crop has done many things but it hasn't stopped big production. Yield increases have more than offset acreage reductions, and the total output has remained high, with much of the increase in wheat coming from farmers who can grow 15 acres of wheat without an allotment.

Because the price is kept high, the commercial market buys only for its immediate needs and the government takes the rest to store in rented granaries, whose owners have developed a thriving business on surpluses.

**C**ONGRESS would have substantial support for a program of reducing price supports at least on wheat. The American Farm Bureau Federation has proposed that instead of basing price supports on parity that a three-year average price be used. This view is supported by the Oklahoma Farm Bureau and others. Thus wheat might become lower in price sufficiently to develop new uses for the surplus grain.

But here objections are voiced by corn growers, who also have their fields dotted with rows of bulging government granaries. They fear that wheat might cut into the feed grain market, giving them competition. They seem to forget they've entered into the wheat growing business on a large scale to compete also for the high government prices.

Along with lowered prices, the Farm Bureau would like to see acreage controls removed, so that the economics of the problem would discourage marginal producers from growing so many small plots of wheat. Again come the objections from those who have found small plots profitable.

But assuming that all of these sore places might be ironed out, there still remains the biggest one of all—the political aspect. Neither party wants to accede to any proposals that might enable the other party to claim credit for solving the farm difficulties.

ROUND numbers are easier to deal with and the legislature is using some nice round figures in dividing up the available state tax money. Put on another \$12 million here, cut to \$48 million there and appropriate \$50 million for something else. It might appear that the money rolls around easily.

In other newspaper reports the highway department finds it has about 200 more employees than it needs. The board of affairs discovers it has 30 more employees than are needed to do its work. Other departments are talking about cutting back five or 10 or more.

Continual pressure is exerted to increase taxes or find some new sources of revenue so that more appropriations may be made for this or that request for funds. Both the governor and legislators have bluntly stated that either appropriations must be held down or more revenue must be found. That should be obvious to anybody who can count money.

To the taxpayer who has just mailed in his checks for \$31.47 for an auto license, \$4 for a driver's license and \$104.68 for state income tax, having whittled down on other desired expenditures to "appropriate" this money, it is equally obvious that the way has been found to balance the state budget—in the taxpayers' favor. That is to cut off some more unneeded state employees and get those round number budgets sharpened to more pointed figures that will meet real needs and no more.

March 27, '59

## Now the Deluge

WHEN Alaska broke down the barrier to become one of the states, it seems to have opened the door for a parade. To nobody's surprise Hawaii walked in close behind. Now New York City leaders are talking about seceding from the commonwealth of New York to seek admission as the state of Gotham.

If the Manhattan islanders are serious and prove successful, there's no telling what might happen. Texas, which wrote a proviso into its agreement of annexation, can subdivide to form five states if it so desires. The panhandle of Oklahoma, whose residents sometimes say they feel like they're not part of any state, might seek a new status if they hit another good wheat crop or two and feel real prosperous.

EVEN tiny Puerto Rico might get ambitious and seek statehood, thereby gaining a little prestige at national political conventions and a more effective delegation to Washington. This could go on, with all the countries around the world that have been enjoying the largesse of our generous "help the world" program knocking at the door to ask admission to the union. If statehood carried with it forgiveness of whatever indebtedness they might owe to the United States an attractive inducement could be added. After all, if we're going to feed them, perhaps they'd just as well be given equal rights to demand larger welfare programs the same as other recipients now have.

This is frivolous of course. It isn't likely to happen for many reasons. It does serve to point up the possibility that the principal "state's right" which might be gained would be for a territory to start by asking the federal government in Washington for admission and then keep on asking Washington for something forever after. In fact, that might appear to be the principal "state right" remaining to the original 13 states as well as to those that have joined up since.

## Gag on Business

THROUGH interpretation of income tax laws the United States supreme court has placed a sort of gag on business advertising. A recent ruling says that expenses for advertising involving a stand for or against proposed legislation will no longer be deductible as a business expense for federal income tax purposes even if the proposed legislation might put the advertiser out of business.

The law does not prohibit a concern from advertising its views on legislation or political issues. But by applying the tax squeeze considerable pressure is used to smother the outcry. It might be argued that this is in line with the income tax law's provision that contributions to political funds are not a deductible expense. There may be differences of opinion on that.

HOWEVER, that is not the only aspect of the proposition. One is the continual expansion of governmental participation in various types of businesses. The government lends money at a lower rate of interest than most privately owned concerns, a fact that is made known through bureaucratic channels at taxpayers' expense. However, the private lender who chooses to use paid space to campaign against such practices or competition finds himself at a disadvantage. He must pay taxes to help support his competitor's promotion against him, and also must pay taxes on funds used for his own promotion.

The same thing is true of electric companies which may have a statement they wish to publish concerning the government-financed REA. Railroads that complain in paid advertising about the competition they get from subsidized airlines also apparently would find such expenses subject to taxation. It could be true of any business buying ads to speak out for or against some proposed law.

THE specific case in which the most recent policy-setting ruling came out involved a Washington state beer dealer who had donated to an advertising campaign opposing an initiative referendum law that would outlaw sale of wines and beer. The same principle is believed to apply in any similar circumstance.

Freedom of the press is a right guaranteed by the constitution of the United States, and that includes the privilege of speaking out against the government, proposed laws or existing laws. While this ruling does not prohibit such voicing of sentiment, it borders upon curtailment through tax penalties that undoubtedly will discourage or limit this type of advertising.

## A Fit Geographically

WE do not know whether the type of headgear worn by an officer of the law has any effect on his efficiency, but announcement that the highway patrol will adopt a western style hat seems to be a good one. With construction of the National Cowboy Hall of Fame to be started soon, this would be one way to call attention to our western status. Visitors might consider it more appropriate to see an Oklahoma lawman wearing a hat typical of the state than to see him dressed in the same kind of cap that appears on the streets of New York, Chicago and Los Angeles.

One reason given for adopting the western hats, however, may not be of much importance in Oklahoma. That is because state troopers in other parts of the nation wear them as a distinguishing mark from local police forces. Western hats already are worn by most sheriffs, constables and officers in smaller cities and towns in Oklahoma. They also are worn by private citizens, such as cattlemen, drug store cowboys and college students.

The choice is up to the highway patrol as to what uniform it will wear. To the motorist in distress, it will always look good, whatever the color and design. To the law violator, the sight of the uniform should always be a reminder that laws are meant to be observed and that the patrolman is there to see that they are.

Mar. 20, '59

## Profitable 'Junk'

HIGHWAY signs that the state sold for "junk" were later turned at a profit by the dealer who bought them.

Some of the signs were reportedly in "perfect condition." The ensuing question is whether they were really of no further use to the state. Should they have been sold or should they have been repainted and restored to use by the state?

Still another question has been raised about whether it is proper for the state to keep property which is usable. This arose concerning the replacement of the limousine regularly furnished for the governor. The old car was "downgraded" for further use by the highway patrol chief, a common practice in many businesses. But now a bill is offered to require that all old cars be disposed of when they are replaced by new ones. While they would not necessarily be declared "junk," they would be rated unserviceable and every vehicle down the line would be replaced with new ones periodically, rather than passing used ones along for other purposes.

STILL a third question comes to mind in this connection. It is generally known that many divisions of government buy great quantities of road machinery, typewriters, and various other equipment. Frequently, these purchases are reported to the public, and most are bought by competitive bids. Rarely is there any mention of what disposal is made of the equipment replaced. What happens to it? Is it sold as "junk," like the highway signs were sold? Is it ever traded in on the new equipment bought to replace it? Or does some of it just get kicked around until it is lost, perhaps in somebody's backyard or possibly loaned to someone who forgets to return it? What does happen to it?

With each division of government more or less determining its own needs and spending money freely as long as appropriations hold out accounting is not an easy matter. It's the public's business and the public has a right to know.

## Along for the Ride

NOT all the pressure for high support levels on farm commodities come from farmers. Many persons and groups other than farmers benefit from the government farm program, adding to the complexity of the problem. One of these groups came out into the open in Washington lately. It's the group that owns bins holding government-stored grain.

The government pays nearly a cent a bushel a month to warehousemen for storing the grain placed in loan or which has been taken over under the non-recourse provisions. In addition, the government has helped to finance thousands of these elevators, warehouses and granaries that it is now paying for in monthly rentals. A lot of them are on farms, where the government is renting storage from the farmers who grew the grain stored in them.

However, it is the big warehouse group that is opposing efforts of the government to cut down on production. If the surplus is eliminated, some of the warehouses may be emptied. Then they would have no income. So they want support prices high enough to encourage farmers to continue to grow more wheat and corn than the country will use. Keep our bins full of government surplus grain and we will be prosperous, they say.

So, who is benefiting from the price support more, farmers or warehousemen? Whichever it is, it will continue to be called a farm price support program, because warehousemen know that they could never get a "support the warehouse" bill through congress.



THE versatility of the American motorist may be approaching its limits. The American Automobile Association in Washington, D. C., reports that at least 25 state legislatures have bills in the works to restrict outdoor advertising along the new interstate highways. It seems that the motorists are having to divide their attention among too many things while they drive.

Besides watching where he's going and where other motorists might be going, a driver has to be a pretty alert reader just to keep up with the traffic signs even where no advertising billboards stand. The official signs supply bulletins on speed limits, stop signs, left turns, right turns, oneway streets, narrow pavement, curves, intersections and names of streets. They also tell him where, when and how not to park.

Television is forbidden to drivers and radios are optional, as they have a turn-off knob, which passengers and billboards do not have. All of these things do not leave much time for looking at the scenery. Years ago a rhymester wrote a parody that mourned: "I think that I shall never see a billboard lovely as a tree, and perhaps unless the billboards fall, I shall never see a tree at all." Of course, they're not really that thick, but there are plenty of suggestions about which car to drive, which gasoline to use, which cigaret to smoke, what beer to drink, and where to stop overnight.

The motives behind the various proposed laws regulating highway signs may be varied. We don't know. Possibly some limits are suggested because we can't read as fast as our cars will go, and we certainly don't want to get there any later!

### Up in the Air 3-5-59

OKLAHOMA CITY is left somewhat up in the air on its airport improvement project. Taxpayers voted some \$7 millions in bonds last year on the understanding that the federal government would provide another \$6 millions. Despite record spending, Uncle Sam has come through with only \$2 millions so far and Oklahoma City will have to wait until a new airport aid bill gets through congress.

Because the federal government is participating in the project all plans must be approved before the city can go ahead. Federal action is not scaled according to federal participation in money, but on the basis of federal money being involved. From the national point of view, it is logical, perhaps, that some control be exercised to see that federal funds are well spent. From the local point of view, it is evident that local control is surrendered on federal-state-local propositions.

Because so much of Oklahoma City's future depends upon its development as an air center, it is hoped that congress will proceed to provide the federal government's share of the funds needed. The expansion project is well under way, and it would be a shame to leave it partly undone. With federal control over the project a reality, Uncle Sam and congress should also feel a federal responsibility for seeing that it is completed.

### Interminable Controversy

THE test road northeast of Oklahoma City apparently hasn't proved anything yet that will settle the long-drawn-out argument about whether Portland cement is a better highway material than asphaltic concrete. The road was built in 1953 to determine which was the more economical over a period of years. It now appears that no clear-cut decision is to be forthcoming any time soon, if ever.

Although the four-lane test section was built with the state highway department and contractors well aware that it was a comparison test, doubt has been raised as to whether adequate records have been kept on maintenance and use. Without the details, the argument could be as heated at the end of the test as at the beginning.

THE case was brought on by certain interests that wanted to sell more asphalt claiming greater economy than cement roads could afford. The cement people admitted their highways cost more in the beginning but claimed lower maintenance costs. This has been borne out in reports so far but results are not conclusive. Road failures that may have been due to inadequate roadbeds, poor engineering, insufficient materials or improper maintenance apparently are of relatively minor importance on this stretch of highway. It was built as a showcase, and probably nothing was lacking in its construction. Certainly, both kinds of road seem to be holding up well under heavy loads of traffic, and it will be many years before the longest-wearing road can be determined.

PERHAPS the public has a preference in the matter. If the new highway commission is interested in knowing, a survey might be made of motorists as they use the stretch of highway. Probably they would need to be told to watch out for differences, however, as highway users don't necessarily pay attention to paving materials. As long as the road is hard, wide and smooth, they're apt to be satisfied. The highway commission is the official worrier about how to provide more miles of this kind of road, and it needs to know the facts if it is to spend the public money to best advantage. Chances it will have to keep on buying both Portland cement and asphalt because nobody is going to come right out and say that one is better than the other.

THE proposed direct payment plan for supporting farmers' incomes apparently is getting nowhere in congress. That is just where it should get, because this plan would not solve the production-consumption problem at all. It would help to plunge the nation deeper into socialism.

The proposition has come up repeatedly for the last 10 years or so. Briefly, it is aimed at making the government the principal or only buyer for farm commodities. One price would be paid to farmers for growing crops. This would be determined by some bureau. Then the goods would be sold to consumers at another price, calculated by the government through another bureau. The difference would be made up out of the federal treasury.

Because practically everybody in the United States has enough to eat nowadays, it is extremely doubtful if lowering prices on the government-supported crops would have any great effect on consumption. People wouldn't eat much more bread if it went down to a dime a loaf. They wouldn't wear many more shirts or shorts if cotton dropped to \$160 a bale. These crops might be used for new purposes. Wheat could be used to make industrial alcohol if prices went down to compete with present sources, estimated to be about 85 cents a bushel, or somewhere around \$25 a ton. Would farmers be any better off at that price? Would taxpayers save any money if they had to make up a big difference in price?

This proposition ought to be killed before it gets any further.

### Cars for Ransom

IF a private garage hitched up your parked car and hauled it off to hold until you paid a ransom, you'd be ready to start a revolution. That is, unless the private garage had made a deal with the city government to authorize such towing and storing until parking violation fines were paid—plus garage costs, of course. Then it would be legal.

That is one of the difficult problems that city traffic officials face. Vehicles illegally parked are subject to impoundment. Lacking facilities of its own, the city makes a deal with a few garages, virtually granting a "ransom monopoly" to the owners lucky enough to get the contract. As such, it is an attractive plum but split up, many garages probably would not want to be bothered with it.

A further complication was brought out recently when a check-up showed that different garages charged various fees. This has been solved, at least temporarily, by setting up a schedule of charges, limited to \$5 within certain limits.

The citizen who observes all parking rules and regulations is not greatly concerned about the problem, but it is one of the perplexing phases of downtown traffic. Towing in has proved to be the only way that certain thoroughfares can be kept open to moving traffic during rush hours.

### Their Work Is Never Done

THE proposed introduction of voting machines may prove more serious than at first suspected. Originally, it would have eliminated only the counters at the polls on election days. Now it apparently would also throw out of work the "recounters" who have been pretty busy for days after elections trying to find out for sure who was elected.

3-27-59

## Figures That Mislead

SOME misleading conclusions could readily be drawn from the federal report that Oklahoma's net cash farm income for 1958 was double that of 1957. The average for Oklahoma was reported as \$2,129 for the year. But this is after all expenses have been paid.

It by no means represents the cash farm income for Oklahoma's agricultural industry. The cash runs into a total several times that large and is to be reported soon. As money spent for operating costs also flows into channels of trade it is just as important to the Oklahoma business men as the net income.

The average figure does not give a true account of either gross or net, however, because it is based upon an obsolete divisor, the number of farms that were reported for the state in the 1955 census of agriculture. That year, it was shown Oklahoma had 118,979 farms but because many of them were part-time and residential units, about one-fourth of them sold three-fourths of the farm commodities. Since then, it is known that the number of commercial operating units has declined. A divisor representing the estimated number of operating units would show a substantially larger gross and net income per farm, bringing Oklahoma's agriculture into a more favorable light when compared with national figures and with those of other states.

It is not customary to include in these figures income that farm or rural people receive from other sources. Thousands of them have jobs in factories or businesses and some operate other enterprises in towns. A considerable number of farmers, ranchers and landowners also have income from oil and gas leases and royalties, which give them somewhat larger buying power than the average figure shows.

22 MONDAY

## Honored in the Breach

HARDLY anybody would say that speed limits weren't necessary. Yet there are some changes in speed limits and their administration that might well be made to help further in reducing the accident toll.

For example—excessive speed varies. It might be 20 miles an hour, 40 or 60 or 80. Much depends on the road, visibility and weather. Density of traffic is a big factor. Assignment of a 65-mile daytime limit on a given stretch of road because that is the state law may entail error either high or low.

Many curves are marked with lower speed limits in Oklahoma, often far below the anticipated margin of safety. People who use the roads regularly know they can negotiate such stretches at higher speeds, and do.

MOTORISTS are supposed to obey laws whether a cop is watching or not. That's honesty. How about honesty on the part of the state? Countless signs are posted that certain roads or streets are "radar patrolled," when as a matter of fact many of them haven't had a radar unit on them in months. Should we expect drivers to be any more honest than the enforcement to which they are subject?

In an interview a few days ago the state safety commissioner said more highway patrol units were needed because the sight of an officer every few miles served as a speed deterrent. He later advocated unmarked cars because they could sneak up on speeders. Is the purpose to encourage observance of the law or to trap motorists so a fine and justice of the peace fee may be collected? Respect for the law isn't built if the patrol makes a game of hide-and-seek out of it.

THEN what about drivers' licenses? It is estimated that thousands of motorists on Oklahoma highways are operating without a license. So what? It simply means they've failed to pay their taxes and doesn't prove that they can't drive capably. Nor does it prove that the people with licenses can drive capably. The drivers' license system should be more than a fund-raising device if it is to eliminate incompetent, careless and reckless drivers.

People who wouldn't dare get into an airplane with a pilot not licensed to fly think nothing of going in an automobile without even asking whether the driver knows how. Even more hazardous is the fact that there's no way for him to tell whether the vehicle headed toward him at 60 miles an hour is operated by a friend, a fiend or a drunk.

The matter of public safety will become a matter of greater public interest and respect when the inconsistencies are corrected.

## Uncertain Fate

STATE senators are turning a cold shoulder to the governor's request for a merit system law relating to state employees.

Perhaps the senators regard their present "system" as being adequate. This is a system of placing on the state payroll as many as possible of the faithful constituents from their home precincts, those who have been loyal in using their time, influence and perhaps money to elect the senator to office.

While the senators themselves may not be in position to offer attractive positions to their supporters, history records that few of them have exhibited any reluctance whatever to having them added to the public payroll.

It should be safe to assume that most taxpayers would like to have some assurance that state employees be hired only for jobs that are worth doing and which need to be done. Probably most taxpayers also would prefer that only qualified employees be appointed. Some would go even further and suggest that the state employees be given enough supervision to see that they deliver reasonable service for doing what they're paid to do. Unfortunately, circumstances have arisen in the past to raise doubts that these objectives are always reached.

CERTAINLY, the senators are in favor of selecting employees on a basis of qualification, but they want to determine the qualifications and select the appointees, insofar as they possibly can. We don't expect to see any of them come right out and take a stand against a merit system, but it would be surprising to see a majority of them impose restrictions on their present patronage system.

The bill may not be voted down, however. It doesn't have to be. The senate knows more ways of disposing of an issue than just voting it down. One way, which might be classified as the "get lost treatment," is to pass a bill around from committee to committee, revising and amending and conferring, until it's too late to enact it.

## Constitutional Revision

TWO possible reasons might be offered for rewriting the constitution of Oklahoma. One is that it now contains some provisions which particular interests would like to have removed. Another is that it lacks certain regulations that groups or individuals would want to add to the rewritten version.

The way is open to subtract or add new provisions without redrafting the entire document anyway. It is not an easy road, as has been demonstrated by votes on proposed constitutional amendments in the past. Some bitter disappointments have resulted from such elections and, whichever way the majority votes on April 7, many people will be unhappy over the outcome of the current prohibition repeal campaign. Nevertheless, both the legislature and the people have an avenue open to try to change the constitution if they believe it ought to be changed.

THAT brings up the question of just what are the motives behind the proposal to rewrite the entire document. Do the proponents feel they can get into the constitution something they couldn't put over by general vote of the people on the specific question? Do they expect to eliminate something the voters wouldn't repeal in a constitutional amendment election?

Members of the legislature have charged that the "demand" for a constitutional convention is coming from "a few pressure groups," rather than from the people themselves. The names of the alleged pressure groups were not mentioned, but since it is doubtful if more than a mere handful of voters ever read the constitution of the state, the implication sounds plausible. Possibly the majority of the voters are not greatly agitated about whether it be left as written or that it be completely rewritten, except for a specific point or two.

THE legislature is supposedly deeply concerned at the moment about spreading the prospective state revenue to cover the needed costs of schools, roads and other essential functions of government. There doesn't seem to be enough money in sight to do what needs to be done. Yet, the proposal is being made that a sizable sum be set up to rewrite the constitution in order to achieve some unknown objectives.

Fortunately, the people have to vote first on the question of even holding a constitutional convention. Before they are asked to vote, the groups that are demanding the revised constitution should be identified. Then they could be asked just what is wrong with the present constitution and what it is that they want to achieve by writing it out of the new document.

## Church and State

A PECULIAR question has arisen with the introduction into the state senate of a bill to recognize a certain denomination of Christians as "a major faith." The fact that the matter was even brought up has amazed many people, including leaders of other religious groups. Since when, they ask, does any church require official state recognition.

Under the American system of government, freedom of religion is a constitutional right and privilege. The government is not supposed to exercise any influence whatever to cause individuals to join or not to join a religious group. Neither is the government to interfere with the peaceable and orderly proceedings of such groups. These things are so clearly set out and so generally understood that the reason behind the proposed bill is not discernible.

It is not that anybody objects to the sect in question achieving as much stature as its membership desires or can provide. In fact, in spite of its relatively small membership locally, many people have long considered it to be "a major faith."

Possibly the idea of having the government "recognize" a religious group may be traced back to the Roosevelt administration. It was then that the government of the United States officially "recognized" the Vatican at Rome as a political entity by delegating an ambassador to that body. However, so far as is known, no other American religious group sought or received a political ambassador from the United States or elsewhere.

On the surface, official recognition of a religious body by a state body might appear to be harmless, so long as no restrictions were imposed. But that is not the case. Once the precedent is established, the door would be opened for state control of religion. Although theocracies existed in Old Testament days, most religious groups today believe that separation of church and state are clearly set out in the New Testament. Aside from the scriptural interpretations, however, such control would be contrary to the constitution of the United States of America.

LOOK at the hazard a moment. Suppose other religious bodies applied for such recognition. There are many denominations of religious orders which enjoy certain exemptions and privileges. In addition, it is common knowledge that there are some grafters and frauds who operate as religious charlatans for personal profit. Official recognition couldn't be extended to all of them unquestioningly. The legislature would be too busy to investigate all applications and so it would have to create a religious commission to pass upon them.

Then one day an application would be denied and there would be a clearcut case wherein the government assumed the role of arbiter of religious conscience in violation of constitutional and scriptural admonitions. The legislature has enough problems within its proper sphere of influence without getting involved in determining which churches should be "official" and which would be left "unofficial." The bill should be killed promptly.

## Observing the Sabbath

PROPER observance of the Sabbath has caused trouble since before the time of Moses, as evidenced by the fact that one of the Ten Commandments deals with the matter.

That didn't settle it, because Old Nehemiah had a lot of trouble after the Jews returned from Babylon and rebuilt Jerusalem. When he discovered people treading wine presses, bringing in sheaves and selling "all manner of wares" and victuals on the Sabbath, he called for a "Sabbath closing." He even shut the gates of the city. Then he found the merchants had just moved outside the gates and business went on as before. So he told them: "If ye do so again, I will lay hands on you." And they came no more.

Still later on, the Pharisees got into a lot of arguments, even with Christ himself, about the observance of the Sabbath. The early Americans had strict laws about what could and could not be done, with severe penalties. Gradually, exceptions were made until today many places in the United States generally disregard any observance of the Sabbath, other than as church groups and individuals.

AS far as business is concerned, Sunday is the same as any other day. Now some Oklahomans say Sunday is even better for business, possibly because their competitors are closed.

Because there is demand for greater respect of the Lord's day by many people the Oklahoma legislature has again taken up the matter for deliberation and possible action. What it will do appears to be as uncertain as Oklahoma weather.

Bills and amendments to bills offered thus far seem to have one objective. That is to provide for closing of all establishments operated by people who want to close anyway and to grant enough exceptions to permit those who wish to do business on Sunday to stay open. Thus presumably everybody would be happy. People who observe another day than Sunday as the Sabbath would be exempt from the law, as would restaurants and other businesses whose services and products might be regarded as essential by the lawmakers.

ONE proposed exemption to provide for resort areas and their customers will serve as an example of the superficiality of the whole bill. It was to permit stores within two miles of state, federal and municipally owned and operated lakes to be exempt from the law. Other suggestions were to extend this to five or 10 miles. Why not make it 30 miles and thus exempt practically every store in the state? Then we'd have another law on the books that we wouldn't have to enforce.

Observance of the Sabbath or Lord's day is a matter of conscience and closing of stores in itself will not assure any great change of attitude on the part of the citizens. Many people sincerely feel that doing business on Sunday is wrong, while others see no harm in it. It is doubtful if any law can be devised that will please both groups simultaneously.