

Don't Hold Breath for Tax Reforms

TAXES are inevitable and eternal. It might be appropriate to set aside a day, such as the mid-April deadline, to count the blessings and underblessings of our system of taxation.

Of course, that might be a little late for those due a refund on payroll tax deductions. Many of that group filed their returns early and by now might have spent their refund checks.

But for those still struggling with forms and trying to raise additional tax money, this is a time to remember. We might meditate awhile, also, on the hidden taxes that we pay.

Periodically, politicians announce "drastic reforms" that are supposed to reduce tax bills. They seldom do. Mostly they shift the tax burdens a little, without making any real cuts.

Taxing and spending are not about to come to an end. Spending has grown to about \$500 billion a year, equal to about one-third of what the economy produces.

The fact that other countries may

be in worse shape in this respect is no comfort. Trying to justify our spending spree on this basis is about like rationalizing personal wrongdoing on the grounds that other persons are sinners also.

Americans are aware that federal wage rates have nearly doubled in 15 years, twice the rate of increase of workers in private industry. Congress has created new agencies, too, that have greatly expanded the number of workers on the payrolls.

This doesn't seem to bother the administration as much as what has been called "the three martini lunch."

As long as Congress spends more than government takes in and no progress is made toward reducing the national debt, there is no reason to hope for any real tax reforms. Some are needed.

Inheritance taxes designed to break up large fortunes continue to be a burden on widows and orphans by taxing away family assets accumulated for their support. Congress

and legislature have provided some relief, but not enough.

Oklahomans still are paying taxes on federal taxes, as adopted under the "Fat Cat Reforms" of 1971. Only a small part of the deduction for federal taxes has been restored.

Another unfair tax that we might count among our tax unblessings is double taxation of corporate shareholders' earnings. Profits are taxed before they are distributed and again when individuals receive dividends. One or the other tax should be eliminated.

Americans believe that every person should have equal opportunities to enjoy the essentials of a good life, but most hold to the battle-scarred belief that everybody should work for them. Those who produce more and contribute more should have more.

Writers of our tax laws seem to have other views. Our system has become one which takes from producers and gives to non-producers, who in turn vote for those who give most.