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Taxes Perpetual in Civilized Society

TAXES are necessary in a civilized society and so they are perpetual. Taxes also may be something "out of this world." They defy laws of gravity by rising while taxpayers are being told they have been cut.

A bit of doggerel that has been around a long time is entitled "The Lawmakers' Chant." It includes these lines:

Tax his head. Tax his hide. Let the government officials ride.

Tax his house. Tax his lands. Tax the blisters on his hands.

Tax his car. Tax his gas. Tax the road that he must pass.

Tax the payroll. Tax the sale. Tax his hard-earned paper kale.

Tax the water. Tax the air. Take the sunlight if you dare.

Tax the living. Tax the dead. Tax the unborn ere they're fed.

Tax the coffins. Tax their shrouds. Tax their souls beyond the clouds.

Those in government generally think that more money is needed to provide more services. Taxpayers tend to think they ought to get more from the tax money they already

are sending in.

This is a risky year for lawmakers and officials in all levels of government. Many are thinking hard about how to raise taxes without the public feeling the effects at election time.

Putting the state into the gambling business via racetrack betting and proposed lotteries is a gimmick that seems to be based upon hope that others will be the losers.

The most sought-after tax form is the sales tax. It automatically rises with inflation and the public has become so numb to rising prices that folks might not notice the tax increase.

Only five states do not have sales taxes and sales taxes have been proposed in Congress under such names as value-added tax, consumption tax, excise tax, and perhaps others.

In 1933 Oklahomans voted a one-cent sales tax to aid distressed schools. It was due to expire July 1, 1935. Before it did the legislature enacted a new two-year sales tax law.

In 1936 voters adopted a one-cent sales tax earmarked for welfare and one cent for the legislature to spend. The temporary sales tax long ago petrified into permanency.

Latest changes proposed are to increase the sale tax to 3 or 4 per cent and remove certain exemptions to boost the take.

Cities and towns in Oklahoma struck a bonanza when they found voters willing to impose city sales taxes. A penny proved to be so satisfying that some places doubled or tripled the tax.

County sales taxes are possible but the state and cities beat county commissioners to this source of revenue and they haven't been able to cash in on it for jobs, jails and bridges.

Lawmakers would rather increase sales taxes by two per cent than to cut out one per cent of their patronage. They probably won't raise them as high as interest on unpaid balances. But then taxes are forever and combined sales taxes some day could add up to that.