

WASHINGTONREPORT

By CONGRESSMAN
JAMES T. BROYHILL

JOINT ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Legislation to improve our environment remains one of the continuing priorities of the Congress, and a steady flow of bills in this area is being introduced and considered. Soon, the House of Representatives will consider a measure to provide a basic organizational change which would facilitate the study of environmental problems and their solutions. This bill would establish a Joint Committee on the Environment composed of 11 members from both House and Senate.

Although the new Joint Committee would have no legislative jurisdiction and would be limited to a study function, it would provide a much-needed focus for the study and investigation of the nation's environmental problems. The Committee would be authorized to conduct continuing studies of environmental matters and to develop policies encouraging private investment in means to improve environmental quality. In addition, it would review Presidential recommendations on environmental policy and report annually on its activities.

At the present time, the machinery of the Congress is not conducive to a broad overview of environmental policy and legislation. Traditional committee jurisdiction tends to divide environmental bills among many committees. This results in a lack of coordination and the failure to develop national policy in this important field. For instance,

water pollution bills are considered in the Public Works Committee, while air pollution bills fall under the authority of the Interstate and Foreign Commerce Committee. Any measure to provide tax incentives for companies or municipalities to reduce pollution is considered by the Ways and Means Committee. With the establishment of the Joint Environment Committee, this legislative jurisdiction would be continued; however, the Joint Committee would be charged with developing overall policy and making legislative recommendations for other committees to consider.

Similar legislation was passed by the House last year and the Senate also approved such a bill. However, minor differences between the two versions were never resolved, and it became necessary to begin the legislative process anew in this Congress. Earlier this year, the Senate again passed a similar bill, and House passage would make final enactment into law and the establishment of the Committee in the near future a good possibility. I feel that this measure is a needed step toward better coordination of environmental policy and legislation in the legislative branch and I support its passage.

CONTEMPT CITATION

In another far-reaching action last week, the House of Representatives defeated a proposal to cite the CBS network and its president, Dr. Frank Stanton, in contempt of Congress. This contempt citation was recommended by the House Interstate and

Foreign Commerce Committee because CBS had failed to comply with a subpoena issued by a subcommittee investigating the production of "The Selling of the Pentagon," a news documentary. CBS based its withholding of information on the First Amendment protection of a free press guaranteed by the Constitution.

This contempt citation raised serious Constitutional questions about the relationship between the government and the press which were debated on the House floor. Unfortunately, because of a parliamentary situation under which this matter was considered, debate was limited to one hour. In my opinion, this was not sufficient time to adequately explore the ramifications of the serious questions involved. I took an active role in the debate and vigorously opposed the contempt citation.

My position on this issue does not necessarily indicate approval of "The Selling of the Pentagon" or of other methods used by television networks in reporting the news. I have been very critical of many practices which televi-

IRS Questions and Answers

This column of question and answers on federal tax matters is provided by the local office of the U. S. Internal Revenue Service and is published as a public service to taxpayers. The column answers questions most frequently asked by taxpayers.

Q.—It has been more than three months since I filed my income tax return. When am I going to get my refund?
A.—Write the IRS service center where you filed your return and give them the details. If there were problems with your return, you should have heard from us by now. Be sure to give your Social Security number, name, current address, and when your return was filed. This information is needed to trace your return.

Q.—I just found out that I could have claimed a credit on my tax return for the excess Social Security taxes withheld last year because I had two employers. Is it too late to claim my credit?
A.—No. Just prepare an amended income tax return, Form 1040X, which can be obtained at any IRS office. On

three months since I filed my income tax return. When am I going to get my refund?
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Q.—During a fund drive, I volunteered to help my church collect money door-to-door, and I used my car to travel between neighborhoods to collect. Are my automobile expenses deductible?
A.—Yes. You may deduct your unreimbursed out of pocket automobile expenses directly attributable to services you render to charitable organizations, including churches. If you do not wish to deduct your actual expenses, you may use a standard rate of 6¢ per mile to determine your contribution. Under this method, parking fees and tolls are deductible in addition to the 6¢ per mile. Depreciation and insurance are not deductible in either case.

Q.—I've been called in for an audit of my return. Can I have someone represent me?
A.—Generally an attorney, CPA or someone enrolled to practice before the IRS can appear on your behalf. Details on what to do if your return is audited are in Publication 556, Audit of Returns, Appeals Rights and Claims for Refunds. It is available free at IRS offices.

Q.—I work as a waitress in a restaurant, and my employer requires me to report my tips each week instead of monthly. Can he do this?
A.—Yes. Tips of \$20 or more received in a month while working for any one employer, must be reported on or before the 10th day of the following month. However, your employer can require you to report your tips more than once a month. You should keep a daily record of your tips to help you prepare the written report you must give to your employer.

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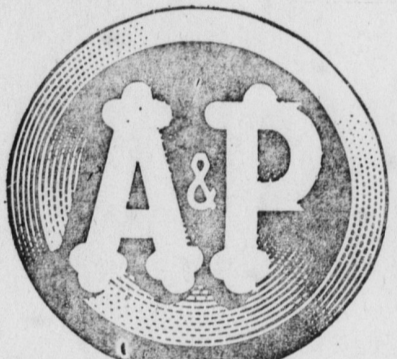
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Bufferin Tablets 100 Ct. \$1.49

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