

Chairman PROXMIRE. Senator Symington?

Senator SYMINGTON. Doctor, in humor I ask you this question. A bright person in my State said he thought the State could distribute the money we collected more efficiently than the Federal Government. When I say we, I mean the Congress, which levies the taxes. He thought they could distribute it in the State more efficiently than the Federal Government could.

I said, "Then why don't you let us work with you to increase the State income tax and reduce the Federal income tax?" But, he said, "You down there collect the money more efficiently than we can." He should make up his mind.

This morning there was another suggestion that we allow the President to raise and lower taxes. If we give the money to the States to distribute and the President takes over the tax decisions, what would you recommend we of the Senate and House do? Maybe we could get work in the post office.

Mr. BURNS. Well, this is one reason why I have become skeptical in recent years about the wisdom of giving this authority to the President.

Years ago I thought it was a very good idea, and favored it in my lectures and also in some writing that I did. But I have come to believe that if the President were given the authority to raise or lower taxes, the Congress would become a less effective body not only in this one sphere of government, but in the entirety of its actions.

Moreover, there was once a time when I thought the executive establishment was concerned with the permanent good of the Nation, and that Senators and Congressmen were politicians concerned with votes. I no longer think that, Senator.

We are all human at the executive end and at the legislative end. I think that the Congress is just as concerned about the permanent good of the Nation as is the executive. My feeling at present is that the revenue power should remain with the Congress.

Senator SYMINGTON. Thank you.

Chairman PROXMIRE. Congressman Curtis?

Representative CURTIS. I hate to prolong this, but I mustn't let the record rest on this Heller plan without registering a grave doubt about it. The point I want to make is I think your assumption is that the real estate tax is incapable of further response, and this to me is something that just hasn't been studied.

It seems to me what studies are now coming to the fore reveal that this has been Cinderella, neglected it is true, but productive and responsive since World War II. With just a little bit of cleaning up and modernization, it could well meet what I do recognize and agree with you is going to be continued increase on the part of spending for education, community facilities, and so forth, which is really the area I think we are discussing. I simply want to register that on the record, if you care to comment.

Mr. BURNS. I have not studied this question sufficiently to be sure of an answer to your question, Congressman Curtis. What I see happening now is a move toward local income taxes.

This worries me. The individual communities may be making serious trouble for themselves by imposing taxes of this type. Now, what you say about the real estate tax I am not able to comment on usefully.