

15th report from Denver (Colorado)

Week from August 3 through 8. 7.

The Colorado Legislative Council

Mr. Lawson, Staff Member of the Council gave me the first briefing concerning with the organization and the activities of the Council.

The Colorado Legislative Council is an agency of the General Assembly, created by law, and its membership is appointed by both Houses (5 Senators and 6 members of the House of Representatives)

The Council's principal function is to perform research and "find the facts" on problems of state government which have been referred to it by the General Assembly for study.

When the Legislature is in session, Congressmen are called upon to study hundreds of bills covering wide variety of subjects. Time is always short and Congressmen have to perform their

duties properly.

The Council, with its professional research staff, is able to provide the legislators with a great deal of data necessary for an informed opinion on proposed legislation.

To facilitate the performance of its many and varied research activities, the Council appoints Committees to work on different projects. Memberships to these Committees are not limited to Council members, but, on the contrary, many legislators, who are not Council members serve on these Committees. Besides, many professional and lay people also participate, bringing a wide breath of knowledge and interest to bear on the problems which are being studied by the Council.

Then we had together a discussion on the necessity of such an institution which is set up practi-

Call in any foreign country.

The interview was completed
by a visit of the houses located
in the second floor of the Capitol.

The governor's Office

Mr. Goodrich Walton, Administration
assistant tried to choose the subjects
which are the most closely connected
with the field of my study - so he
discussed about the organisation
of state government structure, Tax
structure and operating methods
in these various departments.

He conceded that the old state
government was rather archaic, waste-
ful and inefficient - There were about
80 departments or divisions of all
kinds of activities placed under the
direct authority of the Executive
Branch - For example:

19 different autonomous

Departments or Govt. dealt with natural Resources only such as: Water control, Mining, Agriculture, Recreation etc....

There were many wasteful duplications. A study was set up 2 years ago with the participation of the State Officials, the staff-members of the University of Colorado, the population. A comprehensive report resulted and its recommendation is the creation of a single Department of Natural Resources which will include the activities of the 19 above-mentioned combined.

There could be no objection against this logical and rational trend toward concentration and coordination in the technical and economical sense of term.

The second big feature is the reorganization of Tax-Structure

Whereas other state governments are suffering financial strain and embarrassment by eating into surpluses accumulated so years or facing further deficits, Colorado is unique to be able to balance its budget by a revision of its tax structure.

The basic change is to achieve a more equitable over-all tax structure by shifting part of the tax load from property taxes, and from revenue-earmarked sales and excise taxes, to the direct personal and business income tax. The income tax is a more fair tax in that it spreads the tax burden among all income groups because it is based on the ability-to-pay principle.

It is interesting to hear in these following figures:

The amount of Colorado's budget for this fiscal year is \$ 71,000,000 for an estimated population of 1,800,000.

39% of the appropriations go to public schools

28% to colleges and universities

20% to institutions and rehabilitation

10% to all others

3% to natural re-

sources and agriculture

So $\frac{2}{3}$ of all the appropriations are dedicated for educational purpose.

Besides Colorado is the state which pay the highest rate of pension to old people - to wit: \$ 100 per month. Everyone of 65 ages old whose maximum revenue is \$ 1000 a year or less is eligible for this pension.

The third problem is the institutions problem.

There institutions (9 in number) are: penitentiaries

- hospitals for mental or defective patients
- training schools for juvenile delinquents

There are about 10.000 people in these institutions and it is ^{average} fantastic to remark that whereas the ^{average} income per capita is about \$ 1.800 per person, the maintenance per year for each of these 10.000 people cost \$ 2.000 to the Budget.

These institutions are overcrowded and understaffed.

Now, in this field a commission composed of experts from the government and specialists in the matter is working on the project for the complete reorganisation and administration of these

institutions.

The last problem is to reorganize and to reinforce local and county government.

Colorado is actually divided into 65 counties, most of them underpopulated without sufficient means to sustain local government.

It happens in many counties that public schools have no teachers and county courts are held by incompetent judges.

A same case could be judged differently in different counties and there are frequent bad communications.

The general situation is ridiculous, factastic, sometimes tragic.

Many times the Executive branch has failed in its attempt to introduce a Bill for a political territorial division of the state.

It seems that it would be better to reduce these 65 tiny and under-populated countries to 15. In so doing, these local governments would be able to have enough material and financial means to perform correctly and effectively their functions.

But, up to now, the legislature which is precisely composed of representatives of these numerous inefficient countries have constantly defeated these above mentioned proportions.

And this situation is very bad for the State of Colorado and its population.

Hoang van Loe.