

Evans pushes for \$600 million budget

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Idaho Gov. John Evans had expressed hope earlier in the week that the Idaho Legislature will accept his quarterly income tax payment proposal to furnish the necessary state funding for the coming fiscal year. But Thursday, the House rejected a proposal that would require corporations to pay quarterly tax.

"I understand some of the legislators are considering the quarterly tax alternative and it would solve the budget deficiency problem," Evans said in a Post-Register interview before the House vote.

Evans said that if the plan he proposed in his budget message at the start of the session was adopted, it would enable passage a budget of close to his recommended \$600 million.

However, the Legislature only considered the corporate quarterly tax payments, and not that for income taxpayers. The corporation tax would have raised \$8.6 million for each of the next two years, rather than the \$20 million for each of the next two years under the governor's proposal.

He said the available revenue is now figured at about \$583 million. Both the Senate and House already



have rejected the Joint Finance-Appropriations Committee's budget of \$298.1 million for public education and \$84.8 million for higher education in their first try. The Senate approved a \$304 million public schools budget Thursday. Proposals of \$301.8 million for public education and \$87 million for colleges and universities met stiff objections from many lawmakers.

Evans said a state budget of much less than \$600 million would cripple state government, including education.

"We have got to have at least \$306 million for public education and \$90 million for higher education just to maintain school and college programs," Evans said.

"We do have a reserve fund of about \$5 million, and perhaps some other sources where some money can be secured, but that isn't much," said the governor.

He again pumped strongly for the quarterly collections to meet the budget, adding "it is fair and would require 10 percent of those with incomes of over \$20,000 to make payments. All others have to pay the tax."

On other matters, the governor said he:

- is still hopeful the new Department of Commerce will be created to help boost tourism and the state economy. The bill has passed the House.

- backs raising the drinking law from 19 to 21 years of age because it would save lives and money.

- expressed elation that a bill that

would transfer the state liquor store to the private sector was soundly beaten in the House. "If it is not broken why try to fix it," he said, adding it has proved efficient, brought revenue to the state, and further, that private liquor stores might create moral problems as it would make it easier to buy liquor. Previous stories which said the state would lose \$20 million in revenue with the transfer were in error.

- is pleased that a bill to grant tax exemptions to parents of students in state private school was rejected. He said he could see some merits in the proposal if the state had the money, but feels it could cost the state as much as \$20 million in public school revenue.

- thinks there are merits in the Clean Air Act which would prohibit smoking in public places, including restaurants, but that it has limitations.

- believes a non-partisan citizens commission should settle legislative reapportionment. He said he feels like most of the legislators, that reapportionment now likely will wait until the end of the decennial, or until the new census figures are obtained in 1990.

- Strongly opposes cutting the 50-50 home tax exemption by half as proposed in a bill sponsored by Sen. Vearl C. Crystal, R-Lewisville. He said this initiative was voted by the people and left little doubt he would veto it if it is passed by the Legislature.

Evans, who attended the National Governors Conference at Washington, D.C., last week, said his main thrust as a member of the farm and nuclear energy committees was to ease the financial burden for farmers and to help in bolstering construction of nuclear power plants.

"I don't believe the federal budget should be balanced on the backs of farmers," he said.

He proposed creation of some type of revolving loan fund, creation of a panel to review farm foreclosures, and seeking a moratorium on farm foreclosures.

Evans said he disfavors the Reagan administration calling for big increases in defense spending, with cutbacks or freeze for almost everybody else.

He contends the administration farm budget proposes to cut crop support levels, phase out "target prices," fails to set up a long-term land retirement program, slices Soil Conservation Service programs by 40 percent, and seeks to tighten farm credit programs.

Evans said it appears the multi-billion New Production Reactor is a year or more away from approval, but that he favors bringing it to the Idaho National Engineering Laboratory.

Evans, now 60 years old, repeated he is considering entering the race against Republican U.S. Sen. Steve Symms in 1986. He said he already has establishing exploratory committees with this in view.

He expressed pleasure that Bethine Church, widow of the late U.S. Sen. Frank Church, has withdrawn from primary election contentions for the Senate.