

TAXES INCREASE LIVING COSTS

Five Years Brings Big Jump
in Cost of Govern-
ment

PUBLIC DEBT CONTINUES HIGH

By HARRY B. HUNT,
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WASHINGTON, Jan. 16.—The increase in the cost of living, proportionately, hasn't hit the individual half as hard as the increase in the cost of government.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics shows the index figure for the cost of living as 188 compared to costs in 1913-14 and '15. If an index figure was established for the cost of government, on the same basis, it would stand somewhere around 400. The result is that the increase in cost of living is, to a very appreciable extent, the result of the increased cost of government and its consequent high taxes.

The cost of Uncle Sam's government to each of his citizens, men, women and children, in 1919, was approximately \$4, and his total government expenditures, exclusive of the postal service, \$318,917,000.

By 1900 the per capita cost had moved up to about \$6, covering the costs of the Spanish-American War and the "extravagant" expenditures incident to the "imperialistic" policy that kept us in the Philippines and in Cuba. Appropriations for 1900 amounted to \$385,037,000.

For 1910 Congress appropriated a total of \$793,831,000, or about \$7.75 per capita—and by 1913 this had increased to slightly more than \$8 per capita. Estimates presented to the present Congress, however, for the year from June 30, 1920 to June 30, 1921, call for appropriations of \$1,173,696,382, or on a basis of population of 110,000,000, just \$10.66 per capita! Where has the cost of living anything on that?

To be conservative, however, let us figure next year's governmental expenditures on the basis of estimated expenditures compiled by the experts of the Treasury Department. These estimate the government's cash outlay for the fiscal year 1921 at \$3,973,787,985—or \$36 per capita. That is believed to be the irreducible minimum!

Into this cost goes approximately \$1,300,000,000 in fixed charges resulting from the war.

Interest on the public debt will amount to \$1,017,500,000. Sinking fund charges take \$287,500,000. In all, the total fixed charges to be met by government in 1921 stands at \$1,313,000,000.

fore any appropriations are made for current government activities. Of this amount \$376,574,875.52 is interest on loans to foreign governments, the greater part of which interest has been waived by this government for the next three years, but accumulates as a credit to our account against the time of ultimate settlement.

The national gross public debt amounts to \$26,210,330,269, of which amount \$24,928,561,000 has been added since April 6, 1917, when we entered the World War. Loans to the allies and other European countries represent about 40 per cent.

The mere physical job of administering Uncle Sam's money chest, as a result of our bond issues and war taxes is expected to cost \$28,838,331.36 next year as against \$19,810,992.88 for the current year, and the total expenses of the Treasury Department to aggregate \$73,405,101.36 as against \$50,258,012.88.

A flat sum of \$21,000,000 is asked to cover costs of collecting war revenue taxes. For enforcing the new national prohibition law, including allowances for chemists to test suspicious beverages, laboratory supplies for their work and liquor sleuths to ferret out lawbreakers, \$4,000,000 is to be provided.

Including administrative costs, the Revenue Bureau alone expects to need next year no less than \$12,288,000, as against \$28,288,000 for the current year.

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Part of this money, however, would be paid directly back to taxpayers in the form of refunds amounting to \$12,000,000 of taxes illegally collected in previous years.

Paper costs, too, affect Uncle Sam's expenses, the mere blank forms and stationery needed for next year's work amounting to \$214,400 as against \$90,000 for 1920.

Uncle Sam's total estimated income for the year ending June 30, 1921, is placed by treasury experts at \$5,620,350,000, and his probable expenses at \$3,973,787,985, leaving a balance of \$1,646,562,015.

(offsetting this, however, is an indicated deficit for the current year of \$3,905,888,543. Even if revenues amount to Continued on Page Twenty-seven.

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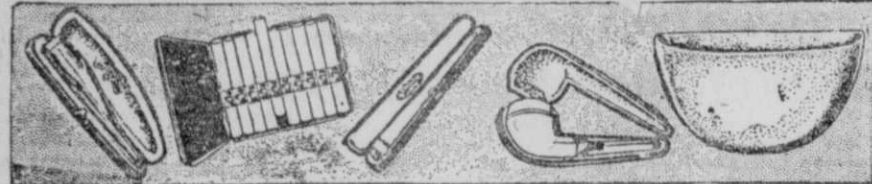
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