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REPORT

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WHAT will happen to lobby regulation? Buck Wood of Common Cause says the Senate subcommittee version is "a joke." He thinks it weakens present lobby law, that Lt Gov. Hobby's Citizens Conference on Ethics wasted its time, because not a single one of that Conference's recommendations got into the bill. This drew a response from Hobby, who said the Senate is in the process of "drafting effective legislation to replace the lobby control bill passed by the House and held unconstitutional" by Atty Gen. Hill. Hobby said the subcommittee version of HB 2 needs to be strengthened. Hill had four points of invalidity on HB 2, including infringement on free speech by requiring registration of those who influence legislation by advertising, omission of the judiciary from those exempt as officials, arbitrary discrimination between classes of people, and general vagueness. Speaker Daniel had been critical of the Senate, so Hobby replied in kind that Daniel's "record of ineffectual efforts at intelligent legislation on these matters speaks for itself." And so went the issue of "reform" this week. Gov. Briscoe signed HB 3, the open meetings bill, into law, effective Jan. 1, and the barrage of attacks and fiscal notes on HB 6 by State agencies sent it to a subcommittee of Sens Meier, Harris, Adams, Wallace and Herring, who will decide about open records of public agencies.

CHMN Caldwell and his House Appropriations cohorts spent the \$9.7 billion they found available, sprinkling the \$300,000,000 from three years of Federal revenue sharing around. The current biennium's spending is \$8.2 billion. Caldwell says the budget balances on the no-new-tax line being taken. It reflects the more liberal view of this House committee in that State employe classifications 2-7 get 10.2% raises in September, Groups 8-12 get 6.8% and Groups 13-21 get 3.4%. Next year, all would get 3.4%. A hold-em provision is money for an extra 3.4% for employes who attain five years' continuous State employment in '74. The colleges are treated similarly, with 10.2% for under-\$6,500s; 6.8% for up to \$9,500s and 3.4% for overs on the staffs; and 3.4% for faculty in each year with an extra 3.4% in '75 for under-\$15,000s. Other education items: \$189 million for junior college vocational, \$6,400,000 for adult and bilingual, and \$236,000 for pre-apprentice training at the State Tech Institutes. The main new program was \$5,600,000 for kidney dialysis services by the Health Dept. Community MH-MR gets \$28,400,000 and MH-MR construction \$12,700,000. The Bldg Cmn can keep buying land in the Capitol complex, but no parking garages. Parks & Wildlife gets \$24.7 million for parks planning and development and \$5,500,000 to expand its

warden system if the hunting-fishing fees are raised. The bill wiped out the Industrial Cmn instead of giving it the \$5,000,000 for rural development Gov. Briscoe had proposed. The House will start debating the bill Tuesday, with Wednesday being held in reserve.

PROSPECTS for competitive insurance rates got a boost when Gov. Briscoe brought out a bill he says will lower car insurance by as much as 15%. Sens Mauzy and Blanchard are Senate sponsors; Rep. Cavness substituted the Gov.'s measure for HB 64 in the House Insurance Cmte, but then laid out some amendments to change it up again, so no one's sure just what will emerge. Insurance Board Chmn Christie lent a hand in writing the bill, which would keep the Board in the rate-making business, but would allow companies to deviate from those rates. Christie also announced new rules allowing companies to charge rates less than present Board-set rates on fire, homeowners and extended coverage.

SENATORS put in a five-day week, but the Friday session was cut short when Sen. Blanchard suffered what doctors later described as a mild heart attack. Blanchard was taken to Austin's Brackenridge hospital, with doctors discussing transferring him to the UT Medical Branch center at Galveston. Blanchard's exact condition was still in doubt as AR went to press...The Senate approved SJR 36, Aikin, a proposed constitutional amendment making provisions in joint House and Senate rules part of the constitution; SJR 25, Traeger, amendment exempting rural water supply corporations from ad valorem taxes; SB 407, Clower, putting venue in suits on consumer transactions in the county where the consumer lives or signed the contract; SB 854, Snelson, insurance coverage on children from the moment of birth; HB 188, Hollowell, up to \$10,000 property damage liability for governmental units under the Tort Claims Act; HB 9, Hendricks et al, bribery in Speaker's races; SJR 19, Sherman, to create a Legislative Compensation Cmn to set lawmakers' salaries; SB 593, Mauzy, health screening for school children; SB 701, Meier, licensing insurance claims adjusters; SB 465, Brooks, surveying land around Armand Bayou in Harris County for a park. SJR 29, Traeger, constitutional amendment to let local governments issue "unlimited tax bonds" for up to 10% of the tax value of issuing entity, failed to get the necessary two-thirds vote.

HB 311, Finney, allowing 75% of the working interests and royalty owners in an oil or gas field to force unitization, got House approval, despite opposition from members from East and West Texas oil-producing areas. A slightly unusual combination of Reps. Head, John Allen, Grant and Williamson attempted to remove all of their counties from the bill, or to put the bill on a local-option basis. Opponents also circulated a cartoon showing oil companies removing the star-clutching, grim-faced "Old Lady" from the Capitol dome and installing the Exxon Tiger. But the proponents had little trouble in defeating amendments and finally passing the bill 91-37...Other bills clearing the House included HB 158, Caldwell and Atwell, increasing hunting and fishing license fees; HB 564, Joe Allen and Doyle, monthly sales tax payments to cities; HB 1158, Short, ap-

pointment of "county managers" by commissioners courts; SB 195, Hightower, allowing revenue bonds to buy air pollution equipment; HB 417, Carl Parker et al, consumer protection (including class action suits); HB 79, Cobb, requiring insurance companies to write a \$250 deductible on auto liability insurance policies. The House tabled HB 440, Washington, providing attorneys for inmates of Youth Council facilities, and Rep. Leland laid HB 750, requiring pharmacies to post names and prices on the 100 most commonly prescribed drugs, on the table after the House refused to table a substitute by Rep. Von Dohlen. The House refused to allow Von Dohlen to introduce an anti-abortion bill, which would have prohibited abortions under nearly all circumstances, by 97-39. Rep. Weddington announced she is abandoning her attempts to give women 16 and older the right to obtain abortions without anyone else's consent. The legislation has been stalled in a House Human Resources subcommittee.

MORE potshots were exchanged across the rotunda between Hobby and Daniel, this time on the Constitutional Convention. Daniel says Hobby is ineligible to serve as permanent chairman of the convention, because of the wording of the amendment creating the convention calls for the 150 House members and 31 Senators as members with the Lt Gov. as temporary chairman, until a permanent chairman is elected. Hobby has been quoted as saying he's interested in being chairman of the convention...The Constitutional Revision Cmn met again Friday and Saturday.

COMMITTEE action saw the House Criminal Jurisprudence fight to a draw on the Briscoe-backed drug bill, making possession of up to four ounces of marijuana a misdemeanor carrying up to six months in jail and a \$1,000 fine--with 2-10 years in prison for more than eight ounces of weed. The committee adopted and then wiped out amendments, leaving the bill intact after four and one-half hours...Rep. Geiger's bill to license massage parlors brought testimony from one operator that the head of the San Antonio vice squad interviews all masseuses personally, and that several people at the hearing have been customers. Some members blushed...House Natural Resources held up HB 1554, Nugent, making Kerr County a member of the Lower Colorado River Authority, even though the Colorado doesn't go through Kerr County...House Judiciary cleared HB 1516, Garcia, requiring persons with injury or damage claims against cities to file notices with city clerks (otherwise the city is released from liability)...HB 878 by Vecchio, requiring utility companies to determine the value of their property at rate-making time, drew the wrath of Ma Bell et al at a House Intergovernmental Affairs hearing...Senate Education okayed Sen. Brooks' SB 121, establishment of bilingual programs in school districts with 20 or more children with limited English...Senate Human Resources sent SB 615, Santiesteban, licensing mobile home and recreational vehicle dealers and requiring occupied mobile homes to be tied down, to subcommittee...SBs 797 and 798, Mauzy, requiring bonds from contractors, home repairers and swimming pool contractors, are waiting action in Human Resources...Senate Natural Resources killed SB 645, Schwartz, calling for an inventory of land and land use capability.

ATTY GEN. Hill gave an edge to the House conferees on HB 10, the news-men's shield bill, saying the Senate amendments to the bill allowing the Supreme Court to decide if a reporter will be forced to reveal confidential sources are unconstitutional. The House conferees (Reps Allred, Joe Allen, Luther Jones, Garcia and McAlister) wrote the Senate conferees (Sens Brooks, Aikin, Herring, Santiesteban and Clower) that they would accept the Senate version with removal of the provisions cited by Hill.

APPLICATIONS for women Highway Patrolpersons are being taken by the Dept of Public Safety. Several women have already applied as pistol-packing Ms's DPS says...Twenty-two witnesses from 19 State agencies told the Senate Jurisprudence Cmte that HB 6, Denton, the open records bill, would result in loss of revenue by holding charges for copies of documents to actual costs or would cause too many lost man-hours in locating information for the public...The Air Control Board ruled out transportation controls for reducing hydrocarbon pollutions in Texas cities...Mrs. Briscoe presented the first Mental Health-Mental Retardation Dept employee service award to Mrs Bob Burnes, Terrell State Hospital caseworker. Mrs Burnes has worked for MH-MR since 1930...Texas received \$46,000,000 for manpower programs for fiscal '74 under the Federal Manpower Revenue Sharing program, with \$34,000,000 going to cities and the rest to 12 councils of government...The Health Dept says males under 20 stand the best chance of getting bit by animals, with dogs the most likely biters.

APPOINTMENT of Howard N. Richards of Beaumont as an administrative assistant was announced by Gov. Briscoe, along with: Frank Douthitt, Henrietta, Midwestern U. Regents; Wayne Owen, Lubbock, West Texas State U. Regents; and Dempsie Henley, Liberty, Cmn for Indian Affairs (reappointed).

DEMOCRATS will make gains in the '74 Senate races, U.S. Sen. Lloyd Bentsen predicted in his first press conference since being named chairman of the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Cmte. Watergate and inflation are the two issues Bentsen sees as the big Democratic guns. Bentsen will address a joint session of the Legislature Monday...Republicans are rushing to the aid of Agriculture Secy Earl Butz, urging Pres. Nixon to retain and support him...Bexar County GOP Chmn Van Henry Archer, Jr, released copies of a letter to John Connally, urging him to make the long-awaited announcement, coupling the appeal with a light roasting "self-serving party officials." State Chmn Byron Fullerton replied with a light roasting of his own. So it goes.

TO & FRO: A new nuclear-powered guided-missile frigate now under construction is to be named the "Texas," the fourth vessel of that name (and third in the U.S. Navy)...David Reagan, unsuccessful candidate for the '72 GOP gubernatorial nomination, is now president of South Texas College in Houston...Former Rep. Delwin Jones was named as a \$2,000-per-month consultant to the Legislative Property Tax Cmte...Former Rep. Frances Farenthold presided as head of the Texas delegation to a 10-state conference on national health care legislation in Austin.