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## ED ESHLEMAN'S WASHINGTON REPORT

Impoundment has become a big word on the national scene in recent days. It refers to the President's refusal to spend money that Congress has appropriated.

Some politicians are even saying that the President's impoundment of funds is a serious constitutional crisis. While there are some constitutional issues involved, the crisis is not as serious as much of the talk would seem to indicate.

Presidents ever since Thomas Jefferson have refused to spend some of the money that Congress approved. President Johnson withheld money - primarily that in the Highway Trust Fund - in the name of controlling inflation. At that time there were Congressmen who were unhappy about roads not getting built, but there was no suggestion that the impoundment was a constitutional crisis.

In fact, some of the same politicians who are getting the biggest headlines about the so-called constitutional crisis today are the same men who called the Johnson impoundment good, sound economic practice.

Therefore, we can assume that there is a good bit of politics in the present impoundment issue. However, that should not blind us to the serious conditions that have led to the President's refusal to spend certain money.

The reason that money is being impounded is because Congress has overspent. If the President released the \$12 million he is now holding, it would increase the deficit and fuel inflation.

It is also a fact of American political history that Congress often appropriates money with the hope that the President will somehow manage not to spend part of it. If this had not happened over the years, the waste of public money would be even worse than it has been.

What must be done to remedy the situation is more than complain about the impoundment process. Congress must do something about its spending habit. It must begin to exercise some responsibility by appropriating only that money which the Nation can afford to spend.

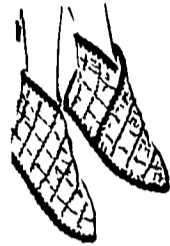
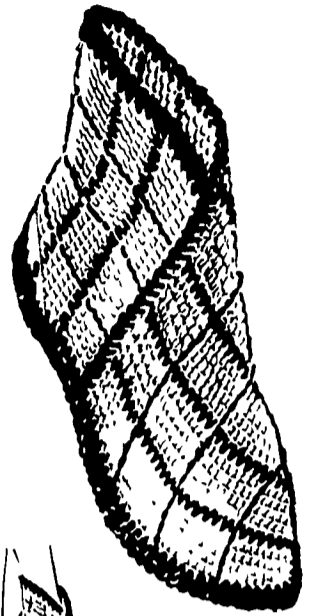
There may have to be some

changes in the budgeting and appropriations process to make sure that these things get done. In Britain, for instance, the budget is considered as a whole and not in parts as we do in the Congress. The whole budget is either voted up or down meaning that Parliament is constantly working with one overall budget figure rather than with fifteen to twenty separate budget items. Perhaps Congress could consider this procedure to get a grip on our budget.

We also may have to revise the way the committees of Congress consider the budget. There is some talk of forming a joint committee to prepare a congressional budget that would be considered along side the budget offered by the President. This would get the Congress back in the business of determining national priorities, and that is the kind of responsibility which is most needed.

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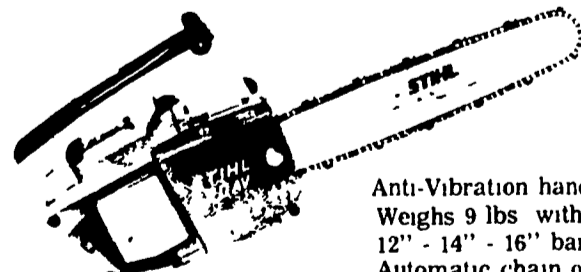
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