

To know how to grow old is the masterwork of wisdom, and one of the most difficult chapters in the great art of living.

- Henry Amiel

No one should begrudge men in important positions certain perquisites required in the exercise of their responsibilities. The President, as head of state and head of government should have airplanes and limousines assigned to him. The chairman of a congressional committee, going to an official function, should not be required to drive himself or to use a taxi.

As with all privileges, they proliferate if not scrupulously contained.

The question to be answered is how many of these perquisites are justified and at what level of officialdom. As with all privileges, they proliferate if not scrupulously contained. Undoubtedly the least justifiable of the perquisites of our special Nomenklatura is the magnitude of proliferation of its staff. Except for postage expenses, most of the perks cited cost the taxpayer little; the staff proliferation is a serious treasury item.

The following statistics are for the most part taken from a bulletin of the Heritage Foundation entitled *The Costly Congress Becomes More Costly*. Staff assistants attached to a senator, representative or a congressional committee are ostensibly there to assist their bosses in their legislative duties. A considerable portion of an assistant's time is devoted to keeping a legislator's constituents happy. The more assistants, the more happy constituents, and a happy constituent is a happy voter.

A major congressional expenditure is the salaries of 37,388 congressional staff, almost 14,000 more members than it paid for

Staff working directly for members of Congress has almost tripled since 1960, from 6,791 to more than 19,000.

in 1960. The Heritage report states that in 1987 the legislative staff was nine times greater than that of the Canadian Parliament, the second largest staff in the world.

The congressional staff includes beauticians, barbers, travel agents, mail carriers besides the personal support staff and committee staff. Staff working directly for members of Congress has almost tripled since 1960, from 6,791 to more than 19,000. Committee staffs have more than quadrupled, from 610 in 1960 to over 2800 today.

Probably the most shocking statistic is not comprised by the cost of perks and staff but the annual legislative cost in its entirety.

...the annual legislative cost...is estimated at three billion or the equivalent of \$6.65 million for each member of Congress per year.

In 1960 this amount was just over \$131 million. For 1992 it is estimated at three billion or the equivalent of \$6.56 million for each member of Congress per year.

Is it any wonder that the budget deficit for this year is now estimated at \$400 billion? If our Nomenklatura is this spendthrift at its headquarters, what can one expect? The only way this can be corrected is by us, the taxpayers and voters.

critic. William Lyon Phelps has called him "the best critic of his generation." At thirty, John wrote the daily book review for the New York Times, turning a book review in to his editor every weekday afternoon at five o'clock for three long years. He reviewed for Irita Van Doren at the New York Herald Tribune, for Time, Life and Fortune, for the New Republic, the New Leader, Harper's, Barron's, the Wall Street Journal — you name it.

John Chamberlain and I lunch together two or three times a year at Nicola Paone's on Thirty-Fourth Street in New York, a block and a half from my office. At eighty-seven John still writes in the space he

inherited from George Sokolsky nearly thirty years ago although the frequency is down. He writes only an occasional piece instead of six a week, as he did for many years. Every Tuesday he comes to town from his Connecticut home to chat with the fellows at The Heritage Foundation or the Syndicate and put the finishing touches on his current work. That's when we lunch.

It was very quiet at Paone's this particular Tuesday about a year ago, and we were, as we often did, lingering over our cappuccino. John mentioned that he had just been re-reading the reviews he had written for the Freeman nearly forty years earlier and had been struck by their relevance to today's

continued on page 6