

## Form reform

Senator William Proxmire of Wisconsin normally maintains a high profile as a crusader against government waste, and as the 1976 elections approach, his profile is getting higher. Lately his attention-getting targets have been drugs and sex, as well as waste. In one particularly brilliant stroke he combined all three, condemning a \$121,000 program at Southern Illinois University to



Proxmire surrounded by the enemy

determine whether marijuana affects the ability of college men to become sexually aroused while watching pornographic movies.

Before you rush off to S.I.U., however, pause and ponder one of the Senator's other windmill-tilts that will probably attract far too little attention. It is S. 2132, the Form Reform Act, under which all government forms would be abolished, a fifth each year over five years. Any new or reissued form would have to be approved by the Comptroller General of the U.S., who first would have to determine that it was necessary and had been revised to make it shorter, simpler and more understandable. Proxmire even anticipated the flaw in the law for form reform: "Let me warn of one real danger, namely that the bureaucrats will devise a new form to carry out the act."

## Tokenism

A few canny New Yorkers made a short-term profit of 43% in token futures last month. The mechanics of their coup

were simple: they merely ignored the claim of the transit authority that new tokens would be issued when bus and subway fares went up from 35¢ to 50¢, and hoarded. When the old tokens were kept in use, the profit was automatic. Such coups are frequently possible these inflationary days, but they take planning and keen understanding of a few token tactics:

► Consider the size of the fare increase. If it is barely enough to pay the increased costs of the system, let alone pay for new tokens and adapting fare boxes, a switch is unlikely.

► Take into account the number of times city officials have gotten away with threatening a change. If it's never happened, chances are they'll try. If it's happened once, they'll figure that you'll figure they'd never try it again, so there's a good chance they'll try it again. If it's happened twice, the odds are against you because of the old cry-wolf rule.

► Be not dismayed if you guess wrong. Hoarded tokens can be turned in, and if you hold onto them they may come back some day, considering the cost of minting new ones. If, as rumored, New York raises the fare again to 60¢ in January and brings back warehoused stocks of 15¢ tokens that went out of circulation in 1966, hoarders stand to realize a profit of 300%.

## Xerox in the fifth, 4 to 1, if it doesn't rain

R.H. Bruskin Associates, a market research firm, recently asked 2,536 adults to evaluate forecasters by their ability to predict what's going to happen in their fields. The ranking:

1. Sportswriters and announcers
2. Weather forecasters
3. Sporting events oddsmakers
4. Political forecasters
5. Astrologers
6. Economists
7. Stockbrokers

## Never mess with welfare

For years, Blenda Jenkins of Basalt, Idaho shied away from the state's old-age assistance program because recipients had to give the state a lien on their houses. She had two sons, and, she said, "these boys will need a place to live."

At the beginning of 1974, however, the state program was replaced by the federal Supplemental Security Income program; eventually welfare workers persuaded Mrs. Jenkins to sign up, since there was no further danger of losing the house. She did so, reluctantly. Sure enough, nothing happened to her house. After the first check, however, the computer declared her dead.

## Balance of power

For the 30 years since they began, the annual meetings of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank have always been held at the end of September. This year the Arab oil countries requested a change because the last week in September was part of Ramadan, the Moslem period of religious fasting. The meetings were held the first week in September.

## Wanderlust

**GRAD STUDENT** desiring flight privileges will pay to marry stewardess. Preston. P.O. Box 3205, Berkeley 94703

The ad in the Aug. 29 San Francisco Chronicle was classified but eye catching. Seems that "Preston" (which turns out not to be his real name) had heard from a stewardess friend that she and her husband enjoyed unlimited free flight privileges and that this was common throughout the airline industry.

The response, he says, was mixed. Members of religious groups wrote to say they were outraged by his "abusive attitude towards marriage" and airline stockholders were appalled by his flippant designs on their dividends. The ad also produced genuine offers, although Preston won't say how many. There were enough, though, so that he can accept the lowest bidder, who, he says, is bidding very low. "I've got other things to offer besides just money," he explains.

Right now, the main thing Preston is anxious to attract is less attention. "The way I figure it," he says cautiously, "I have everything to lose and nothing to gain by further publicity. If the idea caught on, the airlines might get aroused enough to stop spouse flight privileges altogether." **END**