

rather see the committee ask for 100 percent of motor vehicle sales tax proceeds from the beginning.

"What concerns me is that we settle for too little," Hausman said.

Because the House has been focusing on working out details of a potential income-tax reduction, the success of a cut in tab fees remains an unanswered question in the House Taxes Committee.

Yet another way to raise transportation revenue is to increase the gas tax, but lawmakers have expressed doubts about doing so in light of the state's budget surplus.

The Senate Transportation Committee passed a tab fee reduction plan with a \$60 million provision for light rail funding, which has not been a priority for the House committees this year.

Rep. Tom Workman (R-Chanhassen), chair of the House Transportation Policy Committee, is sponsoring two bills that would address other aspects of transportation projects. One bill (HF939) would transfer the funding of the Minnesota State Patrol to the general fund, instead of the trunk highway fund.

The other bill (HF698) would set up a major transportation projects commission made up of legislators and a corps of gubernatorial appointees. In an attempt to "de-politicize" the process of getting highway construction projects approved, the commission would have the sole authority to rubber-stamp projects submitted by the Minnesota Department of Transportation.

Workman said he wants to see the dollars used efficiently for transportation-related projects. But he joins his House colleagues in their worries that transportation funding is not high-profile enough to get attention.

"If we've got good times, and we can't get an increase in funds, what's going to happen in bad times?" said Rep. Bernie Lieder (DFL-Crookston).

Where to find information

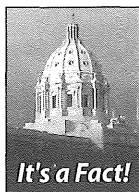
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Railroad heir brought family ethic to House



When former Rep. Louis W. Hill Jr. served on the House Civil Administration Committee in 1951, he received a letter from a young St. Paul lawyer urging him to support a bill that would raise district judge salaries from \$9,500 to \$13,500 per year.

The lawyer said that he was particularly concerned that judges make a decent living because he had judicial aspirations of his own.

In his reply, Hill promised that attorney — a fellow named Warren Burger — that he would support an increase but that he wasn't sure he could support the entire amount recommended in the bill.

While Hill may not have realized that his young solicitor would go on to become chief justice of the U.S. Supreme Court, he was no stranger to prominent Americans.

Hill's grandfather, James J. Hill, made the family fortune in railroads, and the family dominated public life in St. Paul at the turn of the century.

Louis W. Hill Jr. was the first member of the Hill dynasty to become politically active, serving in the Minnesota House from 1937 to 1951.

Although born to wealth and affluence, Hill was required to earn his way into the family business.

He was given his first job as assistant timekeeper, extra gang, for Great Northern Railway in St. Paul in 1927.

Hill adopted that same "common man" philosophy when he began his quest for office in 1937. He campaigned for seven months, pushing every doorbell in his district — the area along Summit Avenue in St. Paul often called the "silk-stocking ward."

But Hill didn't confine his campaigning to those who owned the stately mansions; he was often seen talking with kitchen help, maids, deliverymen, and doormen.

Hill, only 34 at the time, ran as a liberal and was elected in a year when Franklin D. Roosevelt swept to the presidency.

The Yale-educated Hill beat the incumbent, Albert Kueffner, in the primary and

defeated both Daniel D. O'Connell and Kueffner, who ran as an independent, in the general election.

Several pundits of the day wondered whether Hill was running because he had nothing better to do or because he was genuinely interested in public service.

One newspaper noted Hill was "rich enough to be an idler without distinction" but added that if he wanted to follow the family tradition of hard work, "he'll find plenty of it in government."

Hill brought with him to the House a broad background in philanthropic and civic organizations, including work with the Minnesota Historical Society.

His district included the Minnesota Club, which at the time boasted members including such luminaries as Elmer L. Andersen, president of H.B. Fuller Co.; Charles K. Blandin, president of Blandin Paper Co., and William L. McKnight, chairman of the board of 3M.

But Hill's tenure in the House proved to the satisfaction of most that his interests were varied and diverse. Among other causes, he championed setting up game farms for pheasant hunters. And his capacity to grasp the problems of the disadvantaged was large.

Hill's votes reflect a diversity of viewpoints, sometimes staunchly conservative — at least by today's standards — and at other times, quite liberal.

In his waning days in the House, Hill was appointed to the Tuberculosis Facilities Commission. The panel was charged with examining the 12 sanitariums in the state devoted to assisting people recovering from the dreaded disease.

Interestingly, some of the issues surrounding those institutions remain concerns today — adequate funding, rehabilitation programs, reducing the size and intrusiveness of the institutions, and providing adequate benefits and services. Hill expressed an inordinate capacity for care and concern where victims of tuberculosis were concerned.

Hill died April 6, 1995, at his home in North Oaks. He was 92.



Rep. Louis W. Hill Jr.