

POLITICS & GOVERNMENT

*Suburban
Welfare?*

"One County's Pipeline to the Treasury" by Irwin Ross, in *Fortune* (Feb. 20, 1984), 541 North Fairbanks Ct., Chicago, Ill. 60611.

If anybody in Washington is still trying to find fat in the federal budget, he need look no farther than just across the Potomac, to Arlington County, Virginia.

Ross, a *Fortune* writer, says that while congressional budget-cutters eye Washington's massive welfare and defense outlays, generous federal aid to state and local governments escapes attention. Those governments "are generally in much sounder shape than the U.S. Treasury," he notes, yet last year they received over \$90 billion in federal largess. That amounts to about 11 percent of all federal outlays.

Arlington, the nation's third wealthiest county in terms of per capita income (\$19,519), received \$24.2 million in federal assistance in fiscal year 1983. Half of the money was devoted to "means-tested" programs for the poor: refugee assistance for the county's Indochinese residents, rent subsidies, and job training for the unemployed. But the remaining \$12.9 million benefited people who could well afford to pay their own way.

Some \$2.6 million, for example, came in the form of a "no-strings" revenue-sharing grant. The county used this money to fund its fire department. (Local officials thus freed county funds for road and other construction, circumventing the Davis-Bacon Act, which stipulates that any construction undertaken with federal funds must pay, in effect, union wages.) Another \$4 million was used to complete a sewage treatment plant whose construction over 14 years has consumed \$60 million of federal money. Local officials say that they could have done the job more quickly and at lower cost with county funds.

Arlington's public schools, meanwhile, collected \$4 million from 22 federal education programs—for vocational education, writing seminars, and special help for gifted children. The U.S. Department of Agriculture sent Arlington \$643,445 in school lunch subsidies, including an 11-cents-per-meal subvention enjoyed by the children of the affluent.

To top it all off, Ross says, the county government's tax levy is among the least burdensome in the 11-county Washington metropolitan area. Last year, Arlington rang up a \$7.5 million budget surplus. Which suggests to Ross "that Arlington could tax itself more and dispense with a lot of federal aid. So, probably, could many other communities."

*Shaping Lincoln's
Public Image*

"The Lincoln Image, Abraham Lincoln, and the Popular Print" by Harold Holzer, Gabor Boritt, and Mark E. Neely, Jr., in *The OAH Newsletter* (Feb. 1984), Organization of American Historians, 112 North Bryan St., Bloomington, Ind. 47401.

The all-seeing TV camera makes today's politicians worry a lot about appearances—haircuts, waistlines, and wrinkles. Ironically, the U.S. politician whose image is among the most vividly etched in Americans' imagination was a homely man who seemed scarcely to care how he