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BALANCING THE STATE'S BUDGET

ALTHOUGH Governor Scott and the Advisory Budget Commission are not in agreement in their spending recommendations for the next biennium, it should not be too hard to close the gap.
The Governor wants \$38 million more than the Budget Commission recommended for these purposes: (1) \$17 million to establish the \$2,200-\$3,100 teacher salary scale on a permanent basis; (2) \$6,619,042 to continue the State's hospital building program; (3) \$10 million as a deficiency appropriation to meet the State's obligation to permanent improvement programs authorized by the 1947 and 1949 Legislatures; (4) \$1,845,545 to boost the pay of State employees; (5) \$200 million for civil defense; (6) \$1,468,000 for four new permanent improvement projects; and (7) an unspecified sum for expanding the Revenue Department's field force of tax collectors.

would be fully justified in reviving them upward.
A State expenditures plus an upward revision of revenue estimates will partially close the \$33 million gap between Governor Scott's requests and the Advisory Budget Commission's recommendations. That gap can be further closed, The News believes, by sharply reducing, or eliminating entirely, further hospital construction until such a national situation becomes more stable.
It can be closed still further by re-examining the permanent improvements program in the light of the current situation. The \$124 million for the State's building program was allocated out of surplus funds by the 1947 and 1949 General Assemblies. No war was in prospect then. Now prices are soaring and materials are becoming scarce. Rather than vote a \$10 million deficiency appropriation from current operating revenue to complete this capital investment program, as Governor Scott suggested, it would be wiser to review the \$44 million in projects still outstanding and try to eliminate all those that are not utterly essential. (Though it may be too late to do anything about it, the \$124,000 appropriation for a coliseum at the State Fair Grounds is a case in point.)

THE next step is to examine the Budget Commission's prediction of General Fund Revenue. It appears to be on the conservative side, as this table shows:

Table with 2 columns: Fiscal Year, General Fund Net Collections. 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