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Bureaucracy Overdoes Good Thing

A certain amount of bureaucracy in government, business or other institutions may be necessary and a good thing, but we are getting too much of "a good thing."

Bureaucracy generally has the connotation of administration or centralization of government into bureaus or agencies staffed with non-elective officials. It also may include any administration in which the need to follow complex or routine procedures may impede effective or efficient operations.

Because there are certain tasks that must be done by a set of rules known as "standard operating procedures" and because there are large numbers of people whose nature suits them for these functions, any type of organization might be able to benefit by a limited amount of bureaucracy.

There are hazards, however. One is that the bureaucracy tends to grow. If allowed to do so, it may reach enormous size and cost. Bureau employees are trained to perform assigned tasks in stated periods of time, but no more without extra pay.

That fact, plus the trait that seems to come naturally to supervisors for "empire building," stimulates continual growth of bureaucracies or departments to the extent of the money and space available.

The amount of work that needs to be done is a minor consideration because, as industrial experts have observed, work automatically expands to fill the time available in which to do it.

The 1973 edition of "Statistical Abstract of the United States", published by the Bureau of the Census, contains enough facts to bring us to our senses on governmental bureaucracy, but it probably will not do so. Besides, the bureaucrats are in control.

Not counting military personnel, the federal, state and local governments employ 13.6 million men and women. With 88 million people employed, this means one out of every 6.5 employed persons is on a government payroll somewhere.

Employees of federal bureaus and agencies total 2.8 million, which is greater than the total population of the state of Oklahoma and several

times the number of employed persons in most of the states. Almost one-third of these jobs have been added since 1950.

The American Heritage magazine points out that between 1930 and 1950 the population increased by 23 per cent and the federal bureaucracy increased 326 per cent. Between ~~1930~~ 1950 and 1974, the population grew by 71 per cent and the bureaucracy expanded 426 per cent.

Experts have repeatedly stated that federal spending has been a major factor for stimulating inflation. These figures illuminate this point.

In 1930, the federal budget was \$3.5 billion. Yes, for the whole year! The per capita cost was \$1.22. Taxes were low.

In 1950, budget expenditures had risen to the phenomenal total of \$39 billion. That cost \$260 per person, with more paying.

The proposed budget for fiscal 1975 is \$305 billion. If it doesn't go higher, it will cost each person \$1,500, on the average, but as many are not taxpayers, the rest of us will have to pay more.

It's no wonder the country is sinking toward socialism!