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Nation Endangered by Public Debt

THE "U.S. Perpetual Spending Machine" has the same basic fault as the elusive "Perpetual Motion Machine" that inventors have sought to build for centuries. The Spending Machine cannot create money as fast as Congress can spend it.

Politicians may be honored more for what they give away than for good deeds they might do in office. So more government agencies are devised to accelerate the give-aways.

One cabinet member said: "Government agencies have three urgent needs, which, in order of priority, are: (1) More; (2) More; and (3) More." Congress fills their demands.

The federal payroll totals almost five million persons, including the military. In case it might be supposed that these are poorly paid office workers, note that the bureaucracy includes 145,000 engineers at around \$15,000 a year; 13,000 lawyers at about \$35,000 each, and 15,000

plumbers, among other skills.

There are 211,000 clerical workers, with beginning typists to receive \$6,772 a year when new rates go into effect in October, and beginning file clerks to get \$5,913. Government pay scales often exceed industrial rates. Top career officials will be raised to \$39,600 annually in the October pay boost.

Besides generous aid to foreign countries, there are many domestic emergencies that take cash, like bailing out New York City.

Politicians curry favor by spending public money on pet schemes of any special interest group that appears to command a bloc of votes. Reports of waste and dishonesty in dispensing public funds are too numerous to recount or even list.

Both President Ford and candidate Carter have said a major goal is a balanced budget. Ford has been unable to keep the deficit from increasing. Carter would be expected to approve spending measures

passed by a Democratic Congress, if elected.

During the current fiscal year, the government will take in at least \$60 billion more than the record amount collected in 1975-1976. Spending also will rise, and so will the deficit. Government borrowing will keep interest rates high.

Some congressmen, including Oklahoma's two senators, have been fighting for a balanced budget, with little to show yet. Eight states and last week's Southern Governors' Conference have passed resolutions urging a balanced budget. Spending goes on.

The present situation apparently was foreseen and feared by founders of the United States of America. Thomas Jefferson said:

"I place economy among the first and most important virtues, the public debt as the greatest danger to be feared. To preserve our independence, we must not let our rulers load us with perpetual debt."