

Justices' OSHA Ruling a Good Start

AFTER seven years and 400,000 illegal "spot checks" of business places by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, the Supreme Court finally has ruled the inspections unconstitutional.

Businessmen and citizens have hailed the decision as a blow for freedom. Maybe it fanned hopes that the court might some day get around to other parts of the Bill of Rights.

The OSHA ruling involved Amendment 4, which outlaws unreasonable search. Amendment 10 says, "The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States, or to the people."

Many citizens think the federal government is dealing with matters that should be left to the states or local governments. Some federal agencies just might exist in violation of the Constitution, even if Congress did pass laws creating them.

Social reformers and extremists are behind a movement to establish

a "federal policy" on just about everything, always creating a federal agency to write and enforce rules. Not much is being done to stem the tidal wave of money and power that is flowing toward Washington. Local government is deteriorating.

Increasingly, states and municipalities may take only limited action before checking with Washington officials. This goes for almost anything from state highway departments to local school boards.

The Oklahoma City Council is in a hassle with the Environmental Protection Agency, which says the city must spend millions of dollars on new sewer facilities to achieve idealistic EPA standards of water purity.

The city proposes to finance the costs by assessing users of the facilities. Estimated rates would be so high that at least one major industry is considering shutting down its plant. Other businesses, as well as residents, would face similar high costs.

Does the federal government

care? Apparently not. Two years ago, EPA went to the Supreme Court and obtained a ruling that declared EPA need not concern itself with whether minimum pollution standards it sets are technologically or economically feasible.

The cost of EPA demands was indicated in a speech by Dr. George E. Mueller, former director of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration's manned space program, now a business executive.

□ "Capital expenditures needed to meet just water pollution control laws could be as high as \$670 billion," Mueller said. "For that amount of money, we could create an atmosphere around the moon, and thus make productive an area equal to the entire land area here on earth."

A danger in making such comparisons is that just mentioning a possibility might start a demand for another federal program. OSHA and EPA are two examples of what could happen again.