

Government Shrinking State's Status

PEOPLE feel they are being oppressed when government officials compel them to do things they don't like to do.

Widespread grumbling and overt actions, such as the "tax revolt," reflect an adversary situation in the United States today that seems to be growing worse.

Industry executives are concerned about the proliferation of government do-nothing jobs while they are plagued by low productivity of employees protected by regulations.

Business people are unhappy with minimum wage laws and kowtowing to union bosses. Many workers feel that congressmen and bureaucrats are overpaid, while adding to inflation.

Federal waste irritates the public. Fraud costs taxpayers as much as \$25 billion a year. Excessive paper work, duplication of programs, and unwanted agencies are sore spots.

An independent study estimates that by next year federal regulations now on the books will cost

industries, taxpayers and consumers more than \$100 billion a year. A federal official says they add three-quarters of one percent annually to inflation.

Taxpayers deeply resent persistent reports that many who are on welfare are there just because they don't want to work.

"People are upset about virtually all aspects of government that affect them — from taxes to litter in the streets to minority-preference hiring," says U.S. News & World Report.

More perceptive individuals see cumulative effects of trends as changing our form of government.

In an article titled "How to Lose a Federal Republic without Even Half Trying," published in Oklahoma Law Review, Maurice H. Merrill, research professor emeritus of the University of Oklahoma, Norman, writes:

"One well may ask whether the states have not been reduced, vis-a-vis the federal government, to well below the status of counties in the

ordinary commonwealth. All of this has been accomplished without the aid of constitutional amendment. If it stands, have we not replaced our federal republic with a unitary policy without even half trying to do so?"

Merrill cites the federal highway speed limit and "loose craftsmanship" by federal judges as examples of "arrant violation of federal republicanism."

The road back is long and complex, he says, because many established ways of doing things must be altered gradually before the patterns of the federal republic can be restored.

"Before centralization can be abandoned, the states must be willing and able to resume their responsibilities," he adds.

"By one way or another, probably a combination of many, we must roll back the tide, or we must reconcile ourselves to a unitary republic, and perhaps to a dictatorship if a president of the wrong bent should be elected," Prof. Merrill concludes.