

America Sleeps Amid Bureaucracy

NOT LONG AGO, a news item from Chicago told of burglars ransacking a home while the husband was upstairs asleep and the wife was downstairs, lying on a sofa, too frightened to move. She just hoped someone would come along and run the burglars out of the house.

This might be an appropriate analogy for what is happening to the freedoms of citizens of the United States of America.

Half of us are "asleep upstairs" and don't realize what is taking place. Others may be aware of the circumstances and are just hoping that somebody else will do something before it is too late.

Erosion of individual and business independence ranges from nationalization of railroads and energy to nit-picking regulations about the air we breathe and neighborhood matters.

A month ago, the federal government allocated \$97,000 to Oklahoma to hire "thermometer inspectors" to enforce ambiguous rules concerning

temperatures of non-residential buildings.

Nothing has been reported of their activities, if any, but the invasive idea was summed up by the conservation director for New York State, who said: "In large measure, this is a voluntary program, even though it's mandatory!"

This is a reverse switch in semantics from federal actions being used to impose the metric system upon the public, the majority of whom don't want it. It is being made mandatory by bureaucratic regulations, even though the law says it is voluntary.

In about a month we will tinker with our time again. Under this notion, by resetting our clocks twice a year, we are supposed to believe we gain usable daylight. Most people probably would be better pleased to reset their clocks 30 minutes and leave them there.

Other "infringements" by federal government on rights of local citizens assume larger proportions. A current example is a directive from

Washington that says if federal funds are to be used in building Central Expressway, Oklahoma City must preserve a slum area that has become a center of poverty, delapidation and crime.

Federalization of our schools is just around the corner. When considered in conjunction with unionization of teachers and other employees, it means that parents and local school boards will have little to say about future policies and what children are taught.

Business Week magazine says that deregulation and limitation of government intervention in the economy are being discussed endlessly but that observers foresee a kind of hybrid corporate statism — part government, part private — that will enforce even more regulations.

Meanwhile, the "Great American Bureaucratic Propaganda Machine" is trying to convince us that everything is headed in the right direction — toward Washington.