

Government Efficient? Just Look

POLITICIANS seem to have little difficulty in making people believe they are entitled to "free benefits" and that they will get more of them if certain candidates are elected.

Voters seem to enjoy the illusion that projects undertaken by the government will be done better or at less cost, even if not needed. They tend to ignore evidence to the contrary, such as these examples:

A recent report showed that in 1978, the Department of Health, Education and Welfare (HEW) had a payroll of 145,000 persons. The total was 1,126,000 when those supported by HEW grants and contracts were counted. Now HEW has been split into two departments and a new game is starting.

The Department of Energy employs an estimated 22,000 people who produce paperwork, which won't burn in existing cars and trucks.

The Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA) was created to make jobs safer. Since 1972, the number of injuries, illnesses and fa-

talities has declined, but the number of workdays lost has increased by one-third. Cancer incidence has not declined.

In order to qualify for federal subsidies, the Legislature enacted an automobile inspection law with a fee of \$2. About all inspectors did was to count the wheels, toot the horn and flash the lights, but they complained they couldn't make a profit doing that.

Instead of repealing the law, the Legislature raised the fee to \$5, giving inspectors \$4. Apparently, inspections will continue to be a farce, motorists will pay, and federal subsidies will trickle in.

Oklahoma City has a "City Bureau of Grants Management" because it derives one-sixth of its funds from federal subsidies. The head of this agency said: "Any time a city takes in federal money, the federal government gains control over how it is used." Sad but true.

Colorado State University has figured out that the standard hamburger is subject to 41,000 federal and state regulations, adding 8 to 11

cents per pound to the cost of hamburger.

A recent study of Oklahoma City's Stockyards City area showed 16 percent unemployment and 35 percent of its residents with incomes below the federally-defined "poverty level."

Yet, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is threatening to force closing of packing plants, the area's major industry, unless they install costly equipment packers say they can't afford.

The government embargoed shipment of grain, which is abundant, to Russia, but allows continued shipments of fertilizer, in short supply.

The government subsidized construction of many Oklahoma lakes, partly to provide public recreation. Now it is fencing out the public.

This might be a ray of hope. The U.S. Senate is considering a bill to create one more bureau, called the "Regulatory Policy Board." Its duties would include making recommendations for increasing the efficiency of federal rulemaking!