

'Mess' of Four Years Ago Still With Us

THE FOLLOWING is a true statement made by Jimmy Carter, candidate for president, in 1976:

"Our government in Washington now is a horrible mess. It is disorganized, wasteful, has no purpose, and its policies — when they exist — are incomprehensible or devised by special interest groups with little regard for the welfare of the average American citizen.

"This is not an inherent, unavoidable aspect of government. We must give top priority to a drastic and thorough revision of the federal bureaucracy, to its budgeting system and to the procedures for analyzing the effectiveness of its many services.

"Tight businesslike management and planning techniques must be instituted and maintained utilizing the full authority and personal involvement of the president himself. This is no job for the fainthearted. It will be met with strong opposition from those who now enjoy special privileges, those who prefer to work in the dark, or those whose personal fiefdoms are threatened."

If that statement was true four years ago, it is more so today. The "cell division" process that converted the gigantic Health, Education and Welfare Department into two sprawling and growing bureaucracies, plus creation of the huge Department of Energy, with its thousands of employees busily producing no energy, are sufficient examples to demonstrate this fact.

A few cosmetic adjustments have been made that affect the overbearing operations of such regulatory agencies as the Occupational Safety and Health Administration and Environmental Protection Agency.

Still, the bureaus continue to exist, wielding authority with, as Jimmy Carter described it, "little regard for the welfare of the average American citizen." And that includes businessmen.

A recent Conference Board survey of 300 businessmen on regulatory problems turned up the composite opinion that "a great number" of regulators are "pecksniffs — untrained, self-important, pious in the public service, overly concerned

with detail, jealous of turf and suspicious of all business."

T.L. Hurst has passed along an article written by James A. Duerk, director of the Ohio Department of Economic and Community Development, tracing much of the trouble caused by EPA to Social Activist Ralph Nader. Duerk wrote, "Environmentalists are driving industry nuts.

"Today there is an anti-business, anti-growth and anti-jobs attitude in official and unofficial circles in Washington that is severely harming the American economy and the security of the American family.

"No one quarrels with a reasonable, balanced approach to the problem of pollution, but when we find ourselves threatening the jobs of hundreds of thousands of our workers in the steel, rubber, glass, chemical, oil and automobile industries — the mainstays of any modern industrial economy — it is time to cry out," Duerk said.

Crying out might help. Voting out would be more effective.