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Food Stamps Illustrate Our Problem

RECENTLY I heard Dale Minnick, Woodward economist, point out that 9 percent of Americans are receiving food stamps and 3 percent of Americans are farmers and ranchers producing food.

Those two figures reveal much about what we are up against in getting our country back on a self-reliant, self-governing basis. We have too few producers taking care of too many non-producers.

A chart in the U.S. News & World Report shows that half of all Americans now depend upon federal, state or local government for their pay, pensions, welfare aid or other income, one-third more than in 1960.

The process of taking money from one class of citizens and distributing it through government agencies to other classes is called "transfer payments." Transfer payments now account for 13 cents out of each dollar of personal income.

Social reformers have pushed transfer payment programs with arguments that it is unfair for productive people to be able to sell their skills, labor or property for more

than the average. They demanded that Congress tax away earnings of productive people and give to the less productive to sort of equalize things.

One result is deterioration of the productive "middle class" in the United States without equalizing either the rich or the poor.

While this system of social, economic equality (if it may be called that) might appeal to many citizens, we are now realizing that we couldn't afford to spend all of that money that way.

Congress has been spending borrowed money. We are nearly a trillion dollars in debt and interest on that debt is the government's third largest expense.

President Reagan is trying to turn things around to get the country back on a cash basis, producing more than we spend and depending upon ourselves instead of upon government. Oklahoma's congressmen seem to agree that this is what our citizens want — most of them anyway.

Free enterprise and responsible

local governments were strong points of this nation when it was founded. The Colonial Articles of Confederation said: "Each state retains its sovereignty . . . and every power . . . which is not by this Confederation EXPRESSLY delegated to the United States Congress assembled."

Dr. Richard B. Morris, noted historian, points out in a USNWR interview that the adverb EXPRESSLY somehow was omitted in the Tenth Amendment to the Constitution, which "opened the back door to implied powers for the federal government."

The battleground is in Washington but the real soldiers in the war to protect our freedom are those responsible citizens engaged in free enterprise, who are producing their own livelihoods, and those local governments.

If we are to maintain our freedom, we must accept responsibility. This is the end of the line. Those who have been riding "The Gravy Train" are going to have to get off and walk.