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When Bureaucrats Rule Management

WHEN government undertakes to manage business it frequently fouls things up. Government can't even run its own business efficiently, as our national debt and state budget crisis demonstrate.

The most glaring current case of bungling by bureaucracy is the break-up of the telephone business under the guise of protecting free enterprise. Few citizens are saying it is a good idea.

People can see what is happening to their telephone service and they fear the worst about what will happen to their telephone bills. What they don't seem to see so clearly is that this action is only one in a series pushed by socialist reformers who want the government to run everything.

Just as regulations, laws and court rulings circumscribe individual activities, others are being applied to businesses and industries. It makes little difference how rules are put into effect.

In an article headlined "Rolling Back the Freedom to Manage" (Jan. 9, 1984) Fortune magazine says that

even most executives aren't yet aware of how the rules by which managers run U.S. corporations are being rewritten.

The writer says efforts in Congress to expand "corporate accountability" waned in the late 1970s and practically vanished under President Reagan. "But corporate reformers didn't surrender," it is stated. "They simply shifted the locus of their attacks from Washington to the states and from legislatures to the courts."

The American Law Institute, an association of lawyers, judges and law professors whose conclusions affect court decisions, is in process of restating "the area of law known infelicitously as corporate governance."

Businessmen are aware that government has been closing in on management areas for decades. No longer may an employer question applicants in ways that might reveal whether they are thieves, drug addicts, drunks or trouble makers.

Employment decisions, working conditions, minimum wages, prod-

uct quality standards, pricing and guarantees are subject to review by government agencies and courts. Numerous decisions once made by business management are now made by government directives.

If you suppose that this is a temporary or recent development all you need to do is to refer to newspapers or other records of 40 or 50 years ago and you will find out differently.

Many speakers and writers of the "New Deal Era" warned that we are being headed toward a centralized government. Of course, the Socialist movement antedated Roosevelt. It showed up strongly in parts of Oklahoma about the time of statehood.

It was the New Deal that put government into the saddle with spending programs intended to make everybody beholden to Washington through some type of subsidy or benefit. The New Deal name has passed out of usage but its principles are still with us.

Citizens should control government, rather than government control citizens — even if they depend upon it for income!