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Nation's Priorities Fall by Wayside

IT is a political paradox that while public confidence in government is at an extraordinarily low ebb, Americans are permitting control of their businesses and their lives to slip increasingly into the hands of public officials.

In every session, Congress creates additional federal bureaus and agencies, delegating to them power to make regulations in a manner that our nation's founders feared and detested.

Presumably, the purpose of setting up additional controls is to help solve problems, but the record of success in this direction is as low as the cost is high.

The American colonists broke loose from the kingdom of King George III because they wanted freedom, because they were subject to oppressive government control, and because taxes were too high. They didn't trust the governors the king sent, they hated the intrusion of troops assigned to enforce unjust laws, and they resented being taxed without representation.

Somewhere along the line since then, the American people, the Congress, the executive branch, and the courts have gotten their priorities mixed up. Without question, too many people have demanded too much from government, and they have been encouraged to ask for services and handouts that are not proper functions of national government in a democracy.

Accelerated government spending really got started in the 1930s, when cars were geared to travel 50 miles

an hour. It has kept pace as we have launched space rockets with speeds above 18,000 miles an hour. Our civic responsibility and our tax paying ability are lagging far behind.

Hugh C. Hall, Oklahoma City newsman emeritus, asserts that our country faces as grave a peril in today's economic war as it ever did in military wars, and he may be right. He adds that economic solutions being debated by the President and Congress are comparable to two doctors debating the efficacy of a pill versus a mustard plaster for treating cancer.

In a recent article, W. Allen Wallis wrote: "The more powers the government has, the more ruthless, corrupt and pervasive become the efforts to control those powers, the more numerous and harmful become the failures of the government, and the smaller becomes the respect and confidence that the government re-

ceives or deserves."

Last year, only 45 per cent of the nation's eligible voters went to the polls to help elect public officials. Many said they were uninterested or disliked politics after Watergate.

"The government of the United States has long since passed the point where people have any pride in, or affection for it," wrote Richard S. Wheeler in a book titled "Pagans in the Pulpit," published last year.

A government and a nation may be defeated and brought into servitude in various ways. Often this has been accomplished by military actions, and just about as frequently by rebellion.

The United States has survived those hazards, only to face an even more ominous threat from a combination of subversion, political greed, economic bankruptcy, and citizens who won't vote.