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## Proliferation of Bureaucracy

Federally operated programs providing assistance to the American public number more than 1000 and cost more than \$20 billion annually. In the field of education alone, there are at least 490 programs sponsored by 20 agencies. Representative Roth (R-Delaware) has listed 211 programs for college or graduate students; he states that no one knows precisely how many government assistance programs exist. In keeping with the increase in number of programs during the 1960's, there has necessarily been a growth of bureaucracy in Washington. What is worse, there has been a corresponding proliferation of bureaucratic activity in thousands of institutions and local government units.

This proliferation has occurred for three reasons. First, the local unit must have the means of becoming aware of federal programs. Second, there is a massive amount of paper work involved in applying for grants. Finally, there is the problem of accountability.

Numerically, the most extensive bureaucratization is in local government, where nearly 100,000 units compete for federal funds. However, the colleges and universities have also been affected. The smaller colleges and universities find it particularly difficult to compete for funds. At the large universities problems are not so great. These institutions can afford to support the needed staffs. Moreover, many of their faculty members serve on various federal panels and are a valuable source of information for their universities. Some universities operate what might be called an intelligence network. Faculty members returning from Washington prepare written reports on information they have gleaned. Because of their superior connections, the large "have" universities are in an excellent position to exploit changing opportunities. The amount of staff effort need not be large relative to the funds obtained. In contrast, the smaller institutions having poor contacts with Washington find it difficult to operate there very well, and must devote a disproportionately large effort to the study of federal programs.

To those not well versed in preparing grant requests, the great variety of requirements is irritating and frustrating. The man who becomes accustomed to furnishing information to one agency finds that another has totally different forms. Even within some agencies different programs have different requirements.

Other sources of irritation are the variable practices with respect to accountability and to changes in plans for procuring equipment. There are differences in the definition of what constitutes equipment and in rules concerning its ownership. The rules of the various agencies as to what is allowable as an expense are at times inconsistent. Indeed, auditors from the same agency have at times been inconsistent.

The bureaucracy that has been forced on universities is costly in three major ways. There is, of course, the cost in money to support it, which ultimately must be paid by Washington. A second cost is a deterioration in the intellectual atmosphere of the university. A third cost is the fact that university irritation at the time-wasting inefficiency of some aspects of the grants system destroys respect for the federal government.

Few scientists feel that a single Federal Department of Science is the answer to these problems, but most agree that greater uniformity of procedures among agencies is highly desirable and would save a great deal of money and friction. A thorough review leading to consolidation of some programs and an effort to produce more uniform regulations should be given a high priority by the new administration.

—PHILIP H. ABELSON