

# Letters

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## Cautious Careerists

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Since Shriver established the five-years-and-out principle and assigned many newly returned Volunteers to responsible positions in the Peace Corps, why would Gonzales and Rothchild ["The Shriver Prescription: How the Government Can Find Out What It's Doing," November] perceive evaluations as a governmental technique to keep these same short-term, highly-motivated staffers honest? Were they really such traditional bureaucrats?

The reason one didn't see "everybody stepping back or ducking for cover" in Peace Corps Washington and abroad, I would suggest, was because they *could* take criticism, much of it richly deserved, without worrying about a future career with the agency.

MARSTON D. HODGIN, II  
Wallingford, Conn.

### *The editor replies:*

Mr. Hodgin states a very good reason for the government to seek fewer career employees and more of the "short-term, highly-motivated" people who won't duck for cover.

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## Informing Congress

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I noted with interest your tidbit urging that Congress use the General Accounting Office for more investigations [October].

The GAO is one of the most thorough, respected and efficient investigative bodies

in Washington. Unfortunately, it is its thoroughness, its respectability and its efficiency that are its downfall. A GAO report on a particular subject takes from six months to a year. Even a minor item like a post-award protest takes two to three months.

You could point out that this provides top-quality information that is difficult to refute. However, I have seen federal agency after federal agency (most notably the Pentagon) successfully argue before committees that "while what the GAO says was true a year ago, we have corrected those deficiencies and the situation no longer exists." It would take another GAO investigation to prove them wrong!

What the Congress needs is a fast investigating team that can get to the bottom of a controversy and produce facts untarnished by the politics of committee hearings before the issue is cold. With such information in hand and the willingness to perform, Congress might stand a chance against the bureaucracy.

PETER K. ILCHUK  
Washington, D. C.

### *The editor replies:*

An interesting example of the kind of reporting Mr. Ilchuk mentions was the investigation by Walter Pincus in 1969 for the Senate subcommittee of U. S. security agreements and commitments abroad. His work led to hearings in which senators actually knew what they were talking about, even down to knowing the right follow-up questions.

# TIDBITS and...

## The Bankers Take an Interest in Health

In our continuing study of how our friendly banker takes us all to the cleaners, we have reported how the National Bank of Washington grew rich from the interest-free deposits of the miners' pension fund and how the nation's 50 largest banks earn millions from the interest-free deposits of the federal tax and loan accounts. Recently, Ronald Kessler revealed another heartening example of banking enterprise. The treasurer of the Washington Hospital Center has kept a million dollars of the hospital's funds on interest-free deposit at American Security and Trust, where he also serves his fellowmen as a vice president.

## Drug Trip, Part II

In last month's "Tidbits and Outrages," we ran some statistics from HEW showing that American drug companies generally charge U. S. druggists higher prices than they charge pharmacists in eight other countries. T. Donald Rucker, the HEW employee who prepared the study, has gone on to the reward reserved for courageous government employees—he has, according to Morton Mintz of *The Washington Post*, resigned under pressure from the Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Association.

## A Hot Tip

We are ever eager to assist the Administration in its war against crime. We're confident that Attorney General Kleindienst will want to look into the similarity between the following labels on mail received by Professor Miles Wolpin (1) for over a year from the State Department and (2) in September, 1972, from a Nixon campaign organization.

PL-0

1) St. Francis Xavier University  
Dr. Miles D. Wolpin  
Dept. of Pol. Sci.  
Antigonish, Nova Scotia  
CANADA

PL-0

2) St. Francis Xavier University  
Dr. Miles D. Wolpin  
Dept. of Pol. Sci.  
Antigonish, Nova Scotia  
CANADA

## Bread for the Reds

Canada has just concluded a major wheat deal with China. We hope that our neighbor comes out better than we did on our deal with the Russians. The issue of corruption aside, the American taxpayer took a net loss of \$27,000,000 according to John Fialka of *The Washington Star News*.

### Taxpayer Gains

	(In Millions)
Rise in value of surplus wheat . . . . .	\$183.5
Cut in 1972 farm subsidy . . . . .	\$120.
Cut in 1973 farm subsidy . . . . .	\$189.
Storage and interest savings . . . . .	\$ 73.

Total Gains \$565.5

### Taxpayer Costs

Rise in bread price . . . . .	\$178.5
Rise in flour price . . . . .	\$ 20.
Wheat export subsidy . . . . .	\$300.
Shipping subsidy . . . . .	\$ 40.
Subsidy cost to farmers who sold early . . . .	\$54.

Total Costs \$592.5