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REDUCING SIZE OF GOVERNMENT

- Q. One of the themes of your administration seems to be reduction of the size of the Federal Government. If you had a free hand to do whatever you wanted, how would you go about cutting the size of the Federal Government, and how much would you cut it?
- A. If I had a free hand to do whatever I wanted, I wouldn't necessarily set out to cut the government below the size we have now.

What I would do is stop the ever-faster pace of increasing the size of our government. It's not necessary to have expanded programs or new programs day by day to meet our national needs. We're already taking a bath in red ink. It's time to dry out.

The best thing we could do is to evaluate the present programs -- to make sure they carry out the purpose for which they were set up. For instance: do our nutrition programs actually increase the nutritional level of our people? Or for instance, is there some way we could make the programs simpler, with less red tape, fewer forms and more efficient systems? We're working at that through the Management by Objectives System, through the Regulatory Reform campaign, and through OMB's Evaluation Role.

Another thing we could do is to get across to the public ~~as~~ the need to set priorities: We'll go broke ~~like~~ New York seems to be threatening to do if we keep up our present pace. The public has got to understand this, and if they do, they will work with us in government so that we do the very best things we can, and spin off the projects with lesser priorities.

Finally, the effort to increase local decision-making will help in this effort. The General Revenue Sharing program allows local decisions on local problems -- and that means better decisions based on local needs.