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REGULATION was first published in July 1977 "because the extension of regulation is piecemeal, the sources and targets diverse, the language complex and often opaque, and the volume overwhelming." REGULATION is devoted to analyzing the implications of government regulatory policy and its effects on our public and private endeavors.

FOR THE RECORD

Niskanen, Politics, and Comedy

Your "In Memoriam: William A Niskanen" collection of articles in the Spring 2012 issue was very well done indeed, and was a terrific memorial to a great man, a great economist, and a great lover of liberty.

Please allow me to add a footnote.

In her article for the collection, Susan Dudley highlights Bill's 1971 book *Bureaucracy and Representative Government*. This volume caught the eye of Dr. Arthur Seldon CBE in London, where he served with great distinction for many years as the editorial director of the Institute of Economic Affairs, which is often called the grandfather of all free-market think tanks. (I was its director general and chief executive officer from 1993 through 2009.)

Arthur approached Bill about a monograph-length version of this book, and in 1973 the IEA published *Bureaucracy: Servant or Master?* It became an IEA classic, which says a lot given the amount of Friedrich Hayek, Milton Friedman, and James Buchanan we published over the years.

It was also a classic example of the way the IEA acted to bring the best economics being done in the United States to a wider European and British Commonwealth audience, a tradition I kept going. Indeed, the two IEA monographs that did the most to bring public choice out of Virginia were Bill's *Bureaucracy: Servant or Master?* and Gordon Tullock's *The Vote Motive*.

The impact of this wave of public choice thinking spread far and wide, reaching an emerging star at the BBC named Tony Jay—better known today as Sir Antony Jay. Jay and his co-writer Richard Lynn became exposed to these insights and went on to write two BBC comedy series, *Yes, Minister* and *Yes, Prime Minister*, which are astonishingly well-done and were the TV programs Hayek loved to watch the most when visiting

his family in Devon. Esca Hayek has very fond memories of her father-in-law chortling away at the antics of the bureaucrats. I have often heard the prominent Conservative MP, the Right Honorable David Davis, say: "You probably think *Yes, Minister* is a comedy. It is not. Rather, it is a training film!"

That TV series refuses to die and is often repeated on late-night TV. After a recent stage version in London, a new series is being written.

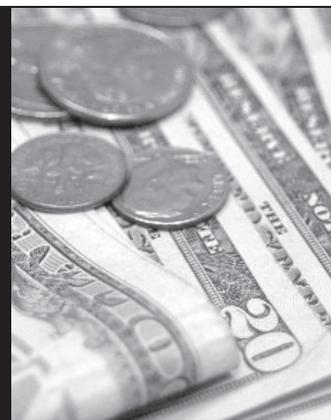
Not long ago it emerged that, as well as being informed by Niskanen and Tullock's work, the series' writers had at least a couple of "Deep Throats" in the socialist government of 1974–1979. So it was not all theory, by any means. If any reader of this journal has not watched *Yes, Minister* and *Yes, Prime Minister*, then I promise you that you are missing a real treat.

Well done, Bill Niskanen.

JOHN BLUNDELL

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The proposals
before Congress
have long-term
effects on
our nation's
budget — and
potentially
yours.



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