!!Se to the NEWS

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THE FORD-CARTER DEBATE

The television commentators were disappointed in the first Ford Carter debate. In their instant analysis and Monday morning quarter backing, they complained that the debate was a dull show; it lacked excitement and even spontaneity. The candidates didn't say anything new; they merely rehashed what they bad been saying for months on the campaign trail.

I think that is exactly what the debate should have been! A nationally televised debate is no time for creative thinking or trial balloons. The debates should have been a distillation of ideas and programs **that** each candidate had thouught deeply about, studied, and tried out on local audiences until he has had enough feedback to be sure that those ideas are worth presenting to a national audience.

Some television commentators suggested that the debate format could be improved by allowing the candidates to question or interact **with** each other, or by allowing second rebuttals, so that Ford and Carter would both have to address the same issue.

That's a good objective, but it's the wrong approach. As a voter, I am not interested in how President Ford interacts with Governor Carter, but I am intensely interested in how each candidates interacts with and confronts the major issues of the day. A better format for subsequent debates would be to give each candidate three minutes to respond to each of a dozen prepared questions. This would compel both candidates to **speak** to the same issue, and evasions would be obvious.

The principal defect of the first debate was not the format or

what the candidates said, but what they didn't say. They failed to oo e to !rips with tbe question of'how to reduce Federal spendi in order to cut back on either Federal taxes or the inflation-causing deficit, or both.

For example, how about presenting a responsible plan to eliminate the waste, extravagance, and fraud thit exists in so many Federal agencies today? Nearly every nu:mth there is a new er:ample of bureau cratic ripoffs of our tax dollars through wrong payments ancl over payments, caused by reasons that range from fraud to red tape.

The Moss Subcommittee discovered that up_to one-half of the $15 billion spent each year on Medicaid is waste(l th:rough fraud, over charging, treatment for nonexistent ills, tee-splitting, kickbacks, and poor administration.

The General Accounting Office spent a year investigating a:ml studying the operatioas of the Department of Housing and Urban nevelop ment. In a 72-page report last month, the GAO substantiated earlier newspaper charges that 1nm is a $'1 billion scandal.

The GAO repor·t described how U:UD ha.s destroyed property values and wrecked whole neighborhoods by its practice of financing homes that are eyesores and heal th and safety hazards. r.rhese abandoned homes are detrirnerrtal to the ueighborhood because teenagers use them for partying, vagrants hide out in them, and others use them as dumping spots for debris, garbage, and dead dogs.

The list is endless of Federal programs that are plagued with bureaucratic cost overruns, inefficiency and fraud. It includes wel:ftre, student guaranteed loans, food stamps, the nepartnumt of Health, Education and Welfare, and the billions doled out every year in giveaways to a hundred foreign countries.

In the first debate, the presidential candidates talked vaguely about how they might try to savennney years into the future, maybe. I want to heJtr from a candidate who promises to cut spending_ now.

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