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UNITED STATES GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20548

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LOGISTICS AND COMMUNICATIONS DIVISION

RELEASED

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MAY 25 1974

The Honorable Thomas F. Eagleton
United States Senate

Dear Senator Eagleton:

By letter of March 22, 1974, you requested this office to inquire into the complaint of Mr. W. P. Scott of Springfield, Missouri, about the Federal Register. Mr. Scott said that he previously received only those parts of the Register that pertained to his line of business but that he was now receiving bales of paper pertaining to every line of business, at a time when the Nation faces a paper shortage. Mr. Scott suggested that, in the interest of Government efficiency, proper adjustments be made.

The Office of the Federal Register, National Archives and Record Service, General Services Administration, publishes the Federal Register; the Government Printing Office (GPO) prints it, and GPO's Public Documents Division distributes it. The Register provides a uniform system for making available to the general public the regulations and legal notices Federal agencies issue. It is published Monday through Friday and varies from a few to several hundred pages.

On April 8 we advised a representative of your office that the Superintendent of Documents never distributed parts of the Federal Register but distributed only the entire Register; this practice has not changed in the last 10 years. After corresponding with Mr. Scott, your representative requested that we inquire further into this matter.

We learned that before February 1973 the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) reprinted certain parts of the Federal Register pertaining to specific lines of business and sent these reprints to subscribers free of charge. We found that Mr. Scott had been a subscriber to this service through February 1973. When FDA stopped the service in February 1973, it sent an advisory letter to all subscribers with an order blank for those who wished to subscribe to the Register directly from the Superintendent

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of Documents. Mr. Scott's name first appeared on the Superintendent of Documents' subscription list in March 1973. Apparently, Mr. Scott switched from FDA's reprint service to a subscription from the Superintendent of Documents. This explains the increase in the volume of paper Mr. Scott received. Mr. Scott apparently believed he was subscribing to the same service he had received from FDA.

We also learned that FDA had stopped its free reprint service as a result of an employee suggestion. An FDA official said that the annual savings exceeded \$340,000.

If we can be of any further help, please contact us.

Sincerely yours,



Fred J. Shafer
Director