



WE SEE THE WORLD THROUGH BLACK EYES



EDITORIAL FOCUS

Albina must organize

The Better Communities Bill being considered by Congress will have a great impact on the Model Cities area if it is passed. This bill will deprive Portland of money it now receives for Model Cities, neighborhood facilities, Urban Renewal, water and space grants, historic preservation, and rehabilitation and public facilities loans. Instead it would receive funds allocated on a formula that includes population, crowding and the number of people below the poverty level.

The National League of Cities estimates that Portland will lose \$3.2 million in the next four years. An even greater hazard is that the funds can be put to any use the city desire and do not have to benefit the poor and minorities, or designated poverty areas. So we could be trading Model Cities for a new stadium or city office building.

The bill, which is sponsored by the Nixon administration, might not pass; but if it does, it will go into effect next July.

The people of Albina need to get together now and decide what we need for our community. If we wait, we will find that the money is here, is spent, and we will be protesting a lost cause.

The only reason Albina got its share of the War on Poverty money is that the people of the community had the foresight to organize and plan ahead so that well-formulated proposals could be submitted at the proper time. Areas of Southeast and North Portland never did get the projects they should have because they were disorganized and started too late.

We will find ourselves in the same position with the new Better Communities Bill if we don't get started immediately.

Black unemployment -- white racism

The latest employment statistics show an unemployment rate for Blacks of about 10.5 percent, as compared to approximately 5.3 percent for whites. The jobless rate for Black veterans was 11 percent for the quarter ending June 30th.

The Labor Bureau statistics do not give a complete picture since they only include persons who are registered for employment or unemployment compensation. They do not include those who do not seek jobs through the state employment office, those who are not eligible or who have used up their unemployment benefits or who have long ago given up looking for a job.

The high unemployment rate among Blacks, and especially among young men, reflects society's rejection of Black workers.

In the Portland area, Black unemployment rates are approximately twice those of whites. Yet construction is going on all around us with all-white crews. Not only are there large federally funded building projects such as the new federal building, the highway construction, federal subsidized housing projects, but right in our midst is federally-funded housing rehabilitation and neighborhood improvement projects.

Few of these projects are using minority workers. The contractors blame the unions, saying they have to hire through the unions or hire union members and that they are restricted by the unions in hiring apprentices. The unions admit only journeymen, but it is the unions that create the journeymen. The apprenticeship system is not working because the unions can still avoid taking minority apprentices and forever restrict the trade to whites.

Federal guidelines require that contractors and unions seek minority employees. However, the guidelines are not specific and if a contractor or union shows "good faith" he is allowed to continue on federally funded projects, even if he hires no minorities.

If there are to be federal guidelines regarding minority employment, they must be enforced. Perhaps a firm quota is not necessary, but when job after job is done with an all-white crew while Black workers remain unemployed, it is obvious that something is wrong.

Contractors are still saying they can't find minority workers or contractors. This excuse is a farce unless they have pursued the obvious avenues: 1) contact the minority contractors professional organization, the Albina Contractors Association; 2) contact the United Minority Workers; 3) advertise in the Black news media.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

PCC discriminates

Gentlemen:

This is to make formal complaint of racial and economic discrimination in the operation of Portland Community College. While not yet filing a civil suit, this is to inform all board members and the President of Portland Community College that the basis of the complaint is the obvious disparity between the courses offered to the inner-city (Cascade) returning veteran with financial difficulties and the Sylvania suburban white student body.

If educational opportunity is related to the economic opportunity and job market of skills (and there is much evidence of this), then the best skills, greatest variety, and quality of staff has been outrageously mismanaged. If not mismanaged, then funds have been deliberately funneled into the largely upper middle class, white, isolated Sylvania Campus denying opportunity to the Black and poor of the inner-city Cascade Campus. Many students must leave the inner-city campus area after work-

ing an eight-hour job (V.A. students include because we don't rate what WW II vets got) and travel the best way they can (the poor most often have transportation problems) to an often racist, if not openly hostile, community to gain an educational opportunity equivalent to the already privileged majority.

You may expect to hear more of this.

Donald M. Fuller

Agrees

Dear Mr. Henderson,

I read your paper regularly and appreciate it very much. You do a good job.

This note is to congratulate you on your excellent editorial "Can We Afford Nixon?". I agree with you 100% and you said it extremely well.

Nixon is a traitor to the best interests of this country.

Sincerely,
Rep. Howard Willits
Democrat

IN REDUCING THE AID TO THE NEEDY, TO APPEASE THE NEW MAJORITY, THE PRESIDENT MAY BE MISREADING THE ELECTION RETURNS.



There are a lot of hungry children, Mr. President.

Revenue Sharing danger to Blacks

Proposals for special revenue sharing programs, as now written, would have the effect of shortchanging poor and Black residents of many towns and cities. Eddie N. Williams, president of the Joint Center for Political Studies, has warned.

Any legislation establishing block grants or special revenue sharing must include safeguards requiring state and local governments to take into account the needs of minorities when they spend their federal money. Williams told the 63rd annual conference of the National Urban League in Washington recently.

"I cannot support a revenue sharing concept which gives unrestricted powers to these levels of government which have historically been the least responsive to our (Blacks) needs," Williams said.

Any such legislation without protection, he said, would put minorities in a "hatchet fight without a hatchet," because of their relative lack of political "clout" in many cities.

He suggested that "any move toward block-type grants must be accompanied by a continuation and a refinement of categorical programs aimed at specific purposes."

Further, he said, "It is essential that block grants or special revenue sharing programs meet four key tests: "One, they must contain explicit national goals which take into account the needs of the poor and of minorities. Where possible they should also provide financial incentives to governments which strive to meet these goals."

"Two, there must be a reasonable application and review process which will ensure that those localities most needing funds actually receive them and that those that receive them actually use them consistent with the national objectives."

"Three, there must be explicit and binding civil rights protections written into the law, which take full account of the continuing need for federal enforcement."

Four, there must be strong provisions for effective community participation in the decision-making process."

The Joint Center for Political Studies, which Williams has headed for one year, is a private non-partisan organization which provides research, information and support services to the nation's Black and other minority group elected officials, and others representing minority group interests.

Williams is a former vice president for public affairs of the University of Chicago -- the first Black to hold such a position at that university -- and former head of the university's Center for Policy

Study.

Of the four "special revenue sharing" programs proposed by the Nixon administration, Williams aimed most of his criticism at the "Better Communities Act". This would replace several existing programs for urban renewal and community development, including the Model Cities program.

The administration's proposed formula for allocating money to various localities includes language which seems to provide for more money to areas with large numbers of poor residents, but actually there would be "a hurt put on the cities, where we are, and a bonanza for the suburbs, where we ain't," Williams said.

He observed that a clause guaranteeing that no locality would receive less under the new bill than under the old programs would expire after five years. Then, he said, "central cities would experience a sharp drop or at best a slight gain from the revenues they presently get under the categorical programs. Urban counties, on the other hand, including many well-to-do suburbs, would receive much greater amounts."

For example, after five years Baltimore City's share would be down 46 percent, but suburban Baltimore County's share would be up 237 percent," Williams noted.

Further, Williams noted, there is no requirement that citizens be allowed to participate in decisions on how revenue sharing money is to be spent.

Under the current general revenue sharing program, which also lacks such a

requirement, citizens in an Alabama town have been denied the right to even attend council meetings at which revenue sharing funds were apportioned; citizens in upstate New York were unable to obtain budget data from several local governments and a city in Indiana decided to use its revenue sharing money to pay for cost overruns on a sports stadium, despite strong citizen opposition, Williams added. "Why should we expect the picture to be different under the Better Communities Act?" he asked.

"The proposed act does not provide machinery to assure that those whose needs are being served by existing categorical grants will continue to have their needs served under special revenue sharing," Williams contended. He said administration spokesmen "ask us to let go of categorical grants -- the little limb of survival that we are hanging onto for dear life. They ask us to have faith in the face of benign neglect. They suggest we seek our salvation from state and local governments, many of which have been contemptuous of our problems in the past or incapable of responding to them."

Williams noted that, although the Joint Center for Political Studies has shown a doubling of the number of Black elected officials in the nation in the last four years, there is still no assurance that Blacks and other minorities have sufficient political clout to have revenue sharing funds allocated on projects that meet their needs.

Walt Johnson Lincoln Mercury

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