Portland State University Library
934 S. W. Harrison
Portland, Ore. 97201

PORTLAND STATE UNIVERSITY
AUG 16 1976

PORTLAND
OBSERVER
Vol. 6 No. 39 Thursday, August 12, 1976 10c per copy

State Senator Bill McCoy, recipient of an honorary doctor of laws degree by the Universtiy of Portland, addresses the graduation ceremony. McCoy, who is a graduate of the University, is the state's first Black Representative and the first Black Senator.

McCoy has long been involved in social issues, including those seeking better opportunities for the aged, youth, the poor and minorities.

McCoy is the only local Black person to be so honored by a major Oregon college or university.

BISHOP H. HARTFORD BROOKINS

Medical Center studies anemia

A research study that could help millions of people who suffer from sickle cell anemia, Mediterranean anemia and other deseases of the red blood cells is being conducted at the University of Oregon Health Sciences Center (UOHSC).

Dr. Bernand Pirofsky, head of the division of immunology, allergy and rheumatology and professor of medicine, has received the third year of funding from the National Institute of Arthritis and Metabolism to continue his research on the transplanation of red blood cells. His current award is for $43,996 bringing total research support in three years to $127,491.

Currently this is the only study of its kind being conducted. There have been only two other attempts at red blood cells transplantation in Paris and Holland, both within the last three years.

Diseases that involve the abnormality or inadequacy of the red blood cell population are mostly inherited, according to Dr. Pirofsky. The most commonly known is sickle cell anemia, a crescent-shaped malformation of the cells that plagues 10 per cent of American Negroes, and Mediterranean anemia, a malformation of the cells' enzymes, membranes and hemoglobin affecting 20 per cent of Mediterreans.

"Although many of these diseases aren't in the lethal stage and just leave the person anemic, the diseases can lead to death if fully developed. There is no therapy and the only systemic method of helping the patient is by transfusions. Our goal is to correct this problem through the transplantation of red blood cells," said Dr. Pirofsky.

Dr. Pirofsky is using mice in his research, obtaining immature healthy red blood cells from the liver of fetuses and injecting these cells into mich with an inherited malformation of the red blood cells called hereditary spherocytosis.

He hopes that the healthy cells will eventually overtake the abnormal cells permanently, leaving only a population of healthy red blood cells. If this happens, he said, there are implications for the whole area of transplantations.

For example, what often happens in bone marrow transplantation, he explained, is that body's rejection of the transplanted tissue because there are too many lymphocytes in the tranplanted tissue.

Lymphocytes are the white blood cells that are the primary source for the production of antibodies, which protect the body against foreign objects or substances.

Therefore, it's important to reduce the amount of lymphocytes in the transplanted blood cells to minimize the chances of a rejection happening, he said.

In Pirofsky's current work he will try to obtain the bulk of immature red blood cells which contain a minimal amount of lymphocytes, then devise ways to selectively inhibit their growth through the use of serum and drugs.

During the past two years, Pirofsky has developed three drugs that successfully inhibit the growth of lymphocytes.

Also during his work to date, Pirofsky has discovered the liver of the fetus as the best source of red blood cells, which section of the liver has the most abundant amount of cells and how to best obtain and store the red blood cells.

With this groundwork laid, he predicts he will be able to successfully transplant red blood cells in animals within the next year or two.

AME Bishop demands liberation

H. Hartford Brookins, new Bishop of the Fifth Episcopal District of the African Methodist Church, called upon Black Americans, led by the Black Church, to demand Black liberation at home and abroad.

"Black and white America stands on the Threshhold of a new century. The African Methodist Episcopal Church stands almost on the threshhold of a third century and some of us have taken it lightly, but God has called us to this hour for such a time as this. And if we serve well at this point in our lives -- Black and white and brown and yellow, left and right, Republican and Democratic, shall rise up one day and call us 'blessed' -- but if we fail in this hour, they shall rise up and haunt our future and call us 'cursed.'

"We must rise up and seize the moment and save the hour for generations yet to come."

Earlier in the day, Brookins, who for the last four years has led the district in Central Africa, expressed his concerns on current conflict on that continent and on racial oppression in the United States.

Brookins explained that although the historic backgrounds of Rhodesia and South Africa differ, their social, cultural and apartheid governments are the same so you cannot discuss one without discussing the other. They are really one and the same in principal. The best possible forecast from those who are in charge of the liberation movements in Rhodesia is that they predict that within a minimum of a year and a maximum of three years, that they will have no recourse but to demand majority rule, however that rule comes. "Now you, of course know, that at this point it is headed for bloodshed. I believe that unless the super powers move with all haste to bring the kind of diplomatic and economic factors to bear . . . to topple the Smith regime -- in South Africa it will be an outright blood bath. My prediction is that we will see something worse than Vietnam and I predict that this will then lead through Nbimibia, which is the buffer zone going into South Africa, which then means that those same forces determined to get freedom and justice and having no recourse but to fight, we can then see that the Blacks will ultimately take over the total of South Africa in the very near future."

Brookins predicted that South Africa will be more difficult to defeat because of foreign investments there, "because of the under-the-table attempt on the part of our government and other governments like it to insure that the white dominated regime of South Africa hold out a little longer until certain investments can be protected."

Brookins believes the multi-national corporations that are the economic support for the Rhodesian and South African governments should be used to force submission to majority rule. The question is usually posed whether withdrawal of the corporations would hurt Blacks more than it would help. "There is the question of whether a man wants to die suddenly or to die a little bit every day. They have decided that, since they are dying rapidly every day, they have no recourse but to demand full majority rule now."

Efforts at Black participation in Rhodesia were further frustrated by the statement by Smith that Blacks will not be ready to administer the government of Rhodesia for another one-thousand years.

(Please turn to p. 2 col. 4)

Local emergency housing situation worsens

Within the boundaries of the North East area, and specifically the Albina community, there are a great number of housing problems which beset low income and fixed income persons and, of course, the poor. Housing problems in this area range from an inability to find affordable standard housing on a limited income to finding rats in the bedroom. In this area it is not uncommon to find a family of four living in a one bedroom apartment and sharing a communal bathroom because of limited welfare income and a waiting period of not less than six months and often a year or more for federally subsidized housing. Many people on limited income could afford to pay moderately priced rents but are shut out of this housing market by landlords who refuse to accept welfare clients as tenants or who demand both first and last month's rent and/or exhorbitant cleaning and breakage deposits.

Many people find themselves trapped in homes that are in high crime areas or that are potential death traps due to bad wiring. Recently a welfare client who rented from the Housing Authority had her back door broken down by thieves who robbed her of what meager belongings she had. When she called the Housing Authority to inform them of the damage, after reporting the incident to the police, the Housing Authority told her that the door would be repaired but she would be charged $80. She then called several different agencies, including welfare, in her search for help. None of these agencies could give her assistance due to their various policies and regulations. Eighty dollars was approximately the amount she paid for Food Stamps for her family for one month. Unfortunately, this is not an uncommon situation.

Many people with housing and related problems eventually find themselves directed to the Albina Human Resources Center. At the Albina Human Resources Center many agencies are housed together and coordinated by staff of the Center's Service Unit. Clients can not only obtain many services without having to secure transportation to get to the agencies scattered throughout the city, but they also have persons available to act as advocates for them while they struggle to wade through the often difficult to understand bureaucratic process.

For example, a married couple with a small child was aided by the Albina Human Resources Center; the wife was pregnant and considered as a high risk case because of a drug addiction problem. When the wife discovered she was pregnant, she decided to "kick" her drug habit in order to prevent her baby from being born an addict. After consulting with her doctors, she was admitted to the hospital. Upon her release, she returned to her family in their already crowded one bedroom apartment, which was in an area of high drug traffic and far from the hospital where she had to go frequently for close supervision. She and her husband vainly attempted to secure more suitable housing closer to the hospital and away from drug trafficing. Welfare was unable to advance her a check and the waiting list for low income housing was long. Through the aid of the Service Unit staff of the Albina Human Resource Center, she obtained a medical statement from her doctors, took the statement to the Housing Authority who provided a two bedroom low income apartment for which Welfare advanced the first month's rent. The apartment was near the hospital.

Unfortunately, for many people in the Albina community things do not run so smoothly. There is a dire need for increased coordination between agencies involved with persons in complicated situations who are eligible for services but are unable to overcome the agency barriers without the help of an advocate who can aid them in their struggle. The Service Coordinators of the Albina Human Resources Center are constantly working to provide this coordination.

Behind Soweto: Bleak promise of homelands

by Joe LaTorre

Joe LaTorre is an Africa Specialist teaching at the University of California, Berkeley, who has traveled widely in Africa.

(PNS) SOWETO: The tens of thousands of Black Africans rioting in Johannesburg's teeming Black suburb of Soweto to see themselves caught between an intolerable present and an unacceptable future.

The present is one million Blacks segregated into an urban enclave where they earn bare subsistence by providing services to the wealthy white sectors of Johannesburg. The future is the government's plan to transplant the enclave to rural "homelands" -- far from the white cities -- where Black Africans expect to face even grimmer economic and social conditions.

For 100 years, the South African government has viewed Soweto, like all its Black urban townships, as a cancer threatening the economic pulse of the country.

To cut it away for good, the government is now creating "independent" or semi-autonomous Bantustans (homelands), far from the large white urban centers, for each of the major African ethnic groups -- the Zulu, Xhosa, Sotho and so on.

Under this policy, the vast majority of Africans -- who make up 70 per cent of South Africa's population -- will be resettled on 13 per cent of the land, while the remainder will be allowed to live in or near white urban areas, as foreign workers or sojourners, for as long as they are employed there.

Surrounded on three sides by military camps, Soweto today is really a conglomeration of 26 separate townships -- sprawling bedroom communities for a million Africans who work in Johannesburg and nearby industrial areas, commuting often three hours a day at a cost of 10 per cent of their pay.

Living conditions there range from the relatively expensive homes of South Africa's tiny African elite -- doctors, lawyers and entertainers -- to thousands of mass built, identical houses of two or three rooms, the still less attractive shanties that line mud-filled streets and the dormitories or hostels for unmarried men and women.

Electricity and piped water are available only to a fraction of Soweto residents, and piped gas is unheard of. A leading cause of death is carbon monoxide poisoning from the charcoal fires used for cooking and heating in most homes.

But economic conditions in the Black homelands are more desperate.

A 1974 government survey revealed that the per capita income in the homelands is $8 per month -- a fraction of the $150 per capita income of South African whites. Of the households surveyed, 25 per cent were reported as having no cash income at all.

The creation of industrial employment opportunities in and near the homelands has fallen "far behind" even the modest target for 1975 -- despite the government's efforts to encourage industry to open plants there.

In the four-year period preceding the survey, the Bantu Investment Corp., a semi-official agency, created 13,000 new jobs in borderland and homeland industries.

But during the same period, 80,000 new teenage workers entered the labor force. The survey predicted that, at the present rate of industrialization, only one-sixth of the new entrants to the labor market can expect to find employment in or near the homelands.

The result is that migration to Soweto and other urban areas continues, inspite of the official homeland policy. At last count, 13.9 million South Africans were designated "citizens" of the African homelands, but only 6.9 million of these actually resided in the homelands.

The others live where they can find work, mainly in the urban areas. The most extreme case of labor migration is the homeland of Basotho Qwaqwa, where only 24,000 of the 1.3 million "citizens" actually live in the homeland.

Despite these drastic shortcomings, the South African government is pressing ahead with its program of giving "independence" to the homelands.

It will be a limited form of independence, however -- only partly because such elements of sovereignty as control over foreign relations will remain in the hands of the South African government.

More important is the complete economic dependence of the homelands. A large part of the working adult population will still be forced to commute to work outside of their own "country," or to settle temporarily as sojourners in hostels near the white urban areas separated from their spouses and families.

Even the modest steps towards self-sufficiency taken so far are now being undermined by the government's lack of funds to consolidate the proposed homelands by purchasing the pockets of white-owned lands within their boundaries. Yet massive infusions of capital are needed for homeland industries to be created.

Meanwhile the government continues to weed out and isolate all but essential Black workers in urban areas.

In Alexandra township, for instance, another suburb of Johannesburg, which was extensively redeveloped in 1974 -- new rules were established for living in the rebuilt housing blocks which excluded widows, divorcees, unmarried mothers, Africans from other countries, and persons who either were not born in Alexandra or had not worked continuously for a single employer for the past 10 years.

In Soweto itself, the various townships are being segregated according to ethnic group, so that the Zulu will live in one section, the Xhosa in another, and so on. These stringent regulations are expected to become the prototype for all African urban areas in the years to come.

LONGTIME OPPOSITION

In the past, African resistance to apartheid has been punctuated by such incidents as the shootings at Sharpeville in 1960, where 69 Africans were killed by police while peacefully demonstrating against the laws requiring them to carry passes at all times.

Such brutal measures, however, have not silenced to opposition. Condemnation of the government's homelands policy has come from such diverse sources as the Organization of African Unity, the nationalist Black People's Convention, the South African Students Organization, the Chairman of the Soweto urban council, the Anglican dean of Johannesburg, and even the leaders of some of the homelands themselves.

For these leaders, as for large numbers of Black South Africans, the homelands policy is a step backward rather than forward. They see their identity as Africans -- rather than as Zulu, Xhosa, and so on -- as more relevant for today and the future.

In 1966, 83 per cent of the Soweto's residents opposed the policy of ethnically segregated townships, and in a 1974 survey 75 per cent said they regarded Soweto as their home. These Africans are not likely to quietly accept the reduction of their status to that of sojourners.

As the homelands policy continues, further protests and violence in South Africa seem likely to accompany it.