



We see the world
through Black eyes

Buy Black

Last Friday and Saturday Black elected officials from Oregon and Washington met in Portland. Among the topics dealt with in the Saturday workshops was minority business enterprise. Many of the speakers and members of the audience expressed concern about the many difficulties faced by Black business.

While this meeting was taking place at the Benson Hotel, several Black-owned establishments were empty. Couldn't this meeting have been held at the Esquire Club, the Elks, or even in a church basement? Couldn't the \$6.00 luncheon have been catered by a Black group?

Invariably when Black organizations hold their conferences and conventions they fail to utilize Black business. Neither do they consider Black businesses when they do their purchasing and other business.

We look forward to the day when the Black elected officials will not just talk but will use their organizations, as well as their positions, to promote minority business enterprise. It is a little difficult to demand of the white community what we fail to do ourselves.

Choice not fair

The Board of Education has approved the building of all-weather tracks at Lincoln and Wilson High Schools. This is a good idea -- there is a need for the tracks. The only thing wrong with the plan is the source of the money.

The maintenance and renovation levy, passed by the voters, was designed to provide money for repair of dilapidating school buildings -- falling ceilings, leaking pipes, worn out roofs, etc.

Apparently not as much money was needed as was projected because this money is being used for major changes in schools to provide for early childhood education centers and middle schools.

The major problem with the plan though, is the way the money is divided equally among the three administrative areas. Areas II and III still desire major renovation projects but have used their money on essential repairs and on those buildings renovations to accept ECE centers and middle schools. Some of their necessary work will have to wait another year. For example, Gregory Heights, which will become a middle school, needs \$1 million to repair its buildings, but only half of this can be done next year. The rest will have to wait.

On the other hand, Area I, with its three new high school buildings, needed fewer repairs and renovations. They get the same amount of money -- so they decided to build all-weather tracks. Other items Wilson mentioned as being needed were a covered swimming pool and new tennis courts.

Luxuries, you ask? No. Chairman Ridgley replied, after all, they didn't actually ask for a covered swimming pool or the tennis courts, that could have come to half a million dollars.

Now who's delaying?

The decision of the House Appropriations Committee that the new VA hospital should be built on the Emanuel site clearly points out the political struggle involved.

The preliminary study showed that Emanuel was the best site, but under political pressure that committee decided for Marquam Hill.

When Representative Duncan, Commissioner Jordan and others pushed for the Emanuel site, they were accused of playing politics and delaying the hospital.

Then the city planning commission study favored Emanuel. Again the proponents of Emanuel site was accused of playing politics.

Now the House Committee has agreed that the Emanuel site is best. Do Congressmen Les AuCoin and those who want the Marquam Hill site accept the decision. No. Still blaming the other group for the delay, they are talking about taking their cause to the full House with full scale hearings.

If he is really interested in good medical care for veterans, AuCoin should accept the evidence that Emanuel is by far the best site for it and let it be built. He has often said that the fighting over the site could endanger the future of the hospital. So it is time for him to take his own advice and stop fighting.

Want crop pickers?

The Colegio Cesar Chavez is still fighting for its existence. It is a crime that the small school -- one which takes students no other college wants -- has to spend so much time just fighting to survive.

We are taught that hard work and earning money are the American way -- those who are not able to compete and excel are somehow inferior. Yet we do not provide the tools necessary for this economic competition.

The Chicanos who attend Colegio are mostly older students, former migrants, who are striving to make themselves employable in a modern capitalist society. They are seeking the education that will enable them and their communities to "lift themselves out of poverty."

Why has there been no help? Couldn't our two U.S. Senators have approved special legislation to forgive their HUD mortgage? Why couldn't our Senators and Representatives have interceded to obtain grants for this school?

Where was the state? Wouldn't the Governor's expression of concern mean something in Washington? Has he tried to save this school?

It does seem that -- with all the money this country spends on education -- something could have been done.

Maybe there is another answer. Maybe someone wants to keep these people in their place. With a shortage of crop-pickers, who wants Chicanos to learn to run computers or to write poetry? Better keep them in the fields where they belong!

Black, white employment gap grows

WASHINGTON -- Employment gaps between Black and white workers widened between 1975 and 1976, according to findings of new tabulations released by the U.S. Labor Department's Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Based on data of the 29 largest metropolitan areas for which data are available for comparison, improvements in both employment and unemployment for Black workers were apparent in only eleven areas.

In most of the remaining large metropolitan areas for which data are available, the percentage of the Black population with a job decreased, or their unemployment increased, or both. As a result, employment gaps between Black and white workers widened over the year in a majority of the areas, as has been evident for the Nation as a whole.

Of the 29 largest metropolitan areas in the survey, unemployment rates decreased in nineteen areas between 1975 and 1976.

During this same period, in most of these areas the percentage of the population with jobs was increasing, indicating recovery from the 1974-1975 recession.

Other findings reflect that the unemployment rates of Black workers in cities, suburbs, and metropolitan areas as a whole were considerably higher than those of white workers in 1976, and -- except among women -- the percentage of

the population with jobs (employment-population ratio) was considerably lower.

In 1976, unemployment rates of Black workers were at least double those of white workers in fourteen of thirty areas, in four of the eleven central cities, and three of the suburban areas for which 1976 data are available. Despite improvements from the 1974-1975 recession low-point, unemployment in most cities is higher than in 1970 -- and a decline of employment-population ratios has taken place with minor fluctuations since 1970.

Black teenagers were less than one-tenth of the Black labor force, but comprised about one-fourth of Black unemployment in 1976. One in every three Black teenagers in the Nation lived in the central cities of the thirty largest metropolitan areas. In seven of the eleven large cities, Black teenage unemployment rates were forty percent or higher -- more than twice the rate for white teenagers in five of the seven cities. (Particular caution should be used in interpreting these rates because of large sampling errors.) Along with high unemployment, Black teenagers had very low employment-population ratios -- fewer than twenty percent of Black youth in these seven cities had jobs.

Unemployment rates of adult Black men (twenty years old and over) were three times as high as those of white men

in nine of the thirty metropolitan areas -- and in three of these areas they were more than ten percentage points higher than rates of white men. Only one of the eleven cities had differences this large; both Black and white men had very high unemployment in most cities. The percent of Black men with jobs was below that for white men in all except four of the thirty metropolitan areas, all but two of the cities, and all but one of the suburban areas.

Unemployment rates of Black women (twenty years old and over) were lower than their national average (11.3 percent) in sixteen of thirty largest metropolitan areas and in eight of the eleven large cities.

Black women in these areas also were more likely to have jobs than Black women in the Nation as a whole. The employment-population ratios of Black women in eighteen of the thirty largest metropolitan areas was higher than the national average of 46.6 percent. But this was true in only five of the eleven cities.

The data area based upon annual averages obtained from the Current Population Survey, the monthly survey of households used to measure national trends in employment and unemployment. The size of the present survey is not sufficient to generate reliable monthly estimates for areas below the national level.

Family income beats inflation

Family income last year increased more than enough to overcome inflation and produce the first real annual gain for American families since 1973, the U.S. Department of Commerce's Bureau of the Census says in a new report.

The report notes that the median income of all U.S. families in 1976 was \$14,960, an increase of nine percent over the 1975 figure. After adjusting for the six percent rise in prices between 1975 and 1976, the 1976 median family income (in terms of constant dollars) increased by \$450 or about three percent.

Another piece of good news in the report: The 1976 poverty population declined 3.5 percent, or about 900,000 below that of 1975. The poverty threshold for a nonfarm family of four in 1976 was \$5,815.

The three percent increase in real median family income marks a sharp reversal from the downward trend that had prevailed since 1973, the report says. Real median family income decreased by four percent between 1973 and 1974 and dropped by three percent between 1974

and 1975. Thus, the 1976 median family income of \$14,960 is still lower -- in terms of 1976 constant dollars -- than the 1973 peak of \$15,440.

Reflecting the improvement of the economy during 1976, the number of persons classified as poor declined by approximately 900,000 between 1975 and 1976, from 25.9 million to 25.0 million. This was in contrast to the preceding two years when the number of poor went up by 2.5 million between 1974 and 1975 and by 1.3 million between 1973 and 1974.

The report is based on a nationwide survey of 65,500 households during March 1977 and also includes the following findings:

- White families had a median income of \$15,540 in 1976 which represented a three percent constant dollar increase over 1975 following a three percent constant dollar decrease from 1974 to 1975. In contrast, the 1976 median income of Black families (\$9,240) showed no statistically significant change in real terms either from the previous year or from 1974 to 1975. In 1976 the median

income of families of Spanish origin (\$10,260) showed in significant statistical change from 1975 in real terms after a decline of eight percent between 1974 and 1975.

- The 1976 median income of families in the South (\$13,420) and the North Central (\$15,940) regions both represented an increase in real terms of four percent. There was some evidence that the 1976 median family income in the West (\$15,480) was two percent higher than in 1975. But the 1976 median income of families in the Northeast (\$15,410) region did not represent a statistically significant change in real terms.

- Of the 56.7 million families in the U.S. in March 1977, 10.1 million (17.8 percent) received incomes of \$25,000 or more in 1976. There were 18.1 million families (32 percent) with incomes between \$15,000 and \$25,000; 11.5 million families (20.2 percent) with incomes between \$10,000 and \$15,000; 11.1 million (19.6 percent) with incomes between \$5,000 and \$10,000; and 5.8 million families (10.3 percent) with incomes below \$5,000.

Letters to the Editor

Prison no place for rehabilitation

To the Editor:

Your editorial about Billy Whitmire raised some important questions. I find it hard to believe that there are judges who profess to believe prison is a positive influence in light of all the Federal studies, dozens of books and television documentaries pointing to the contrary. There exists, it seems, a wide chasm between what actually happens in here and what the public is lead to believe by judges and guards. There are men who come to prison, readjust their lives, and never return; but they do that in spite of the added oppression of the "rehabilitation" sham, not because of it.

America imprisons a larger percent of its population than any country in the world. This is not likely to change anytime soon; there are simply too many millions of dollars available for the people running "corrections" to have them voluntarily give it up.

Recently an article appeared in a paper about the fact that the prison population had been reduced by forty men in a period of two months. It was noteworthy. But the same psychology is being used by the "corrections" division as a storeowner who puts a 39c item on his shelf, marks it 69c, draws a line through the 69c, and puts a sign above the shelf -- Special Today 49c. The prison population should never have risen so much in the first place nor kept so high for so long.

The prison population noticeably increases in the months prior to the legislature's appropriation of so much money per head. That's not hard to understand; more prisoners equal more money. But to understand why the prisoner population is maintained at a

high plateau until the next increase, prior to the appropriation is a bit complicated. One of several reasons is the taking of statutory good time by the administration. In effect, the staff sentences a man to additional months or years in prison.

During the last several years men have been sentenced to hundreds of years by the staff. Let's use 200 years as an example. And let's grant that half the time the staff actually felt justified by their reasoning for their actions. That leaves a 100 years of prison time given out by staff with no trial, no investigation, no lawyer, and an appeal based solely on what the staff allows on the record. Here's one example out of hundreds:

A few months ago a man reacted to a guard's harassment and said a "naughty" word in the guard's presence. Six more months in prison!

Let's look at the reasoning process of the "court" that sentenced the man. Prior to appearing before the court he was given a "Notice of Hearing" as hundreds of men for several years have been given such a Notice. On the Notice the staff informed him that he had a "limited right to call witnesses..." with these added stipulations: 1) "No inmates may be called as witnesses..." and; 2) "No staff may be called as witnesses..." So it boils down to this: An accused prisoner has the right to call witness as long as they are not inmates, staff, or other persons. Is this rational? What types of minds could conceive such statements and pass them off as "rules?"

The only thing I have found remotely similar to that type of reasoning is the

description of the Soviet Courts in the 1930's in a book by, Salzhensyn. It would seem logical that a psychiatrist (one who is not working on the same rehab team) would find such "reasoning" processes to be schizophrenic if not hysterical. A prisoner is forced into this type of "reasoning" from sun-up to sun-down, then disciplined for not respecting the staff's intelligence. Taking a man out of civilization in order to civilize him is one thing, taking all responsibilities away to teach him responsibility is another thing. Forcing him to accept less than grade school "reasoning" is going a bit far. Demanding absolute respect while giving absolutely no respect in return is easier to accept.

The staff has at its disposal a plethora of excuses for every conceivable action. But, the same "reasoning" processes are at work as created the "rights" of an accused prisoner. The same staff that gives one man six months in prison for a naughty word gives hundreds of years more time to several men. And wants it known to the world when they reduce the prison population by forty men in two months. The 69c item is now 49c: Special Today.

Someday an advanced civilization is going to dig through the records of O.S.P. and are going to try to understand the reasoning processes of "corrections." It will find that the staff at Salem, Oregon, was indignant, when their actions were questioned, just as a few centuries earlier the people doing all the correcting at Salem, Massachusetts were indignant.

Sincerely,
Donald Danford

PROGRESS

1957 Johnny Jones

PERSONNEL DIVISION DIRECTOR

SORRY SON! WE JUST DON'T HAVE A JOB FOR YOU

1977 Johnny Jones

PERSONNEL DIVISION AFFIRMATIVE ACTION DIRECTOR

SORRY BROTHER! WE JUST DON'T HAVE A JOB FOR YOU!

After twenty years! The result is still the same. Black unemployment is still raising--40% of young Blacks still can't get a job!

\$7.50 in Tri-County Area

\$8.00 Other

Name

City

State

Zip

Observer

Box 3137

97208



ALFRED L. HENDERSON
Editor/Publisher



Portland Observer

Published every Thursday by Exie Publishing Company, 2201 North Killingsworth, Portland, Oregon 97217. Mailing address: P.O. Box 3137, Portland, Oregon 97208. Telephone: 283-2486.

Subscriptions: \$7.50 per year in the Tri-County area, \$8.00 per year outside Portland.

Second Class Postage Paid at Portland, Oregon

The Portland Observer's official position is expressed only in its Publisher's column (We See The World Through Black Eyes). Any other material throughout the paper is the opinion of the individual writer or submitter and does not necessarily reflect the opinion of the Portland Observer.

National Advertising Representative
Amalgamated Publishers, Inc.
New York



1st Place
Community Service
ONPA 1973

1st Place
Best Ad Results
ONPA 1973

5th Place
Best Editorial
NNPA 1973

Honorable Mention
Herrick Editorial Award
NNA 1973

2nd Place
Best Editorial
3rd Place
Community Leadership
ONPA 1975