

EDITORIAL/OPINION

Public needs hearings

John Lobdell, recently appointed Public Utilities Commissioner by Governor Atiyeh, came to Adams High School to promote his plan to grant utility rate increases without formal public hearings.

The performance of Lobdell and his staff made a good case for the need for public hearings. The staff presented charts demonstrating percentage rate increases, which they admitted were somewhat misleading. They presented no specific information to show a need for a rate increase and left the "dollar figures" at the office.

Throughout the meeting, Lobdell attempted to promote the hearings as an either-or situation. Either have these friendly chats with the Commissioner, when facts and philosophies can be shared or accept an impersonal, cold, formal hearing where the public is represented by its attorneys. Either meet with the Commissioner face-to-face, or have him stay in his office and let the administrative law judge make the decisions.

Clearly this was a deceptive ploy designed to influence the public to willingly give up their right to public hearings. PUC hearings are conducted like court hearings. Witnesses testify under oath, are required to present facts and answer questions, and have to defend their point of view. The public hearing process is the only way for the public to obtain facts, to examine the utilities' expenses and expenditures, and to influence the rate structure. That the informal meetings Lobdell tried to sell the public would not serve this purpose was aptly demonstrated by the Commissioner and his staff.

For these decisions to be made behind closed doors is a travesty of justice and will only serve to bring more distrust of the utilities and of the PUC. The real issue is due process.

Support SB 957

Senate Bill 957 would prevent investment of state money in any company that practices or condones discrimination on the basis of race, religion, color, or sex. The purpose is to stop investments in companies that do business with South Africa.

This bill is necessitated by an attorney General's opinion which says that investment of the state's funds must be made according to economic criteria and not political or social considerations. That decision followed the State Board of Higher Education's vote to divest itself of investments in companies doing business in South Africa.

Letters to the Editor

Black council members should resign

To the Editor:

I was sorry to see the Urban League and other Black individuals become part of the City's Inner North-east Industrial Council, which is using CED's money. This is especially bad because several Black

organizations are suing the City about how it is spending the CED's money, it would have been far better if the Urban League and others had waited for the suit to be resolved, they should have shown at least that much respect for the efforts of the

organizations that are suing to ensure that the Black community was not once again played over by the City. I understand that the City handpicked the chairman, Larry Jackson, and also the Urban League and other individuals. It is too bad those people allow themselves to be used like this, Black people did not chose them to represent the Black community. The NAACP is one of the organizations that is suing the City, why has the Urban League become a part of this con game the City is running? It would be better if all the Black people resigned from this sham.

Sincerely,
Charles Myrick

(Editor's Note: Mr. Hicks of the NAACP has informed us that he did not agree to serve on the Committee and that the NAACP is not represented. (See Page 1 Column 1)

Forgot Indira Gandhi

To the Editor:

This letter is in reference to N. Fungai Kumbula's article titled "Britain inches to the right." Kumbula writes, "She (Margaret Thatcher) also becomes Europe's first woman Prime Minister and only the fourth female parliamentary head of a country's government. The other three are Sirimavo Bandernaike who led Sri Lanka (Ceylon) from 1960 to 1965 and again from 1970 through 1974, Isabel Peron of Argentina who

was finally ousted in a military coup and Golda Meir of Israel."

I would like to bring to your attention that Kumbula has neglected to mention Indira Gandhi who was the Prime Minister of India until the last election. Her involvement with the politics in India is long standing. She also was the parliamentary head of her country's government.

I feel that this matter should be brought to Kumbula's attention.

Sincerely,
Sunanda Sen

The Black leaders of South Africa have long called for an economic boycott of that country, claiming that withdrawal of American investments would bring economic chaos and force the country to change its apartheid laws and practices. Although many American corporate heads claim their investments improve the living standards of Blacks, Black South Africans say they are willing to suffer in return for an opportunity for freedom.

Although specifically directed at South Africa, this bill has wider application. It forbids the state to invest in any company that practices or condones discrimination. This could mean any company or organization found guilty of discrimination by the federal government or by state or federal courts. And if the issue were pushed, it would prevent state investment in many of the nation's and the state's major corporations.

This is a good bill and should be supported by all groups who are the targets of discrimination. A public hearing will be held at the capitol on May 28th at 8:30 a.m.

Health care a right

Health care is a basic human right. No person should have to suffer or die because he cannot afford medical care.

The United States and South Africa are the only industrialized nations in the world that do not have national health care programs — 61 other industrial countries do have well installed plans.

The idea of national health care is not new; it was initiated by the Chinese centuries ago. It was adopted in Germany in 1883, Canada adopted its successful program in 1968.

The need is great. Medicare pays for only 38 percent of the health costs of the elderly. One-third of the poor are excluded from Medicaid. In 1975 47.4 million (22.7 percent) Americans had no private health insurance.

Medicaid costs are increasing rapidly. The average income of doctors (\$63,000) is higher and is raising faster than any other professional group. Health care is now the nation's third largest industry, costing \$730 per person (\$162 billion total). Health costs are doubling every five years.

Health expenditures make up 8.8 percent of the gross national product. Federal expenditures for health care were estimated to be \$8.7 billion in 1978 and will nearly double by 1983.

The only way to provide adequate health care and preventative medicine for the American people is through a universal health insurance plan — operated by the federal government.

America's biggest boost to apartheid yet

by N. Fungai Kumbula

The watchword in our energy hungry world today is OIL. Oil is king. Oil keeps industries running and, consequently, countries afloat. Whoever controls oil just about controls the world. Opponents of the apartheid regime of South Africa had been pressuring oil producing nations to cut off oil supplies to South Africa. Repeated efforts at imposing an oil embargo at the UN were thwarted time and time again by the vetoes of the 'leaders' of the "Free World"; the U.S., Britain and France.

Before the Iranian revolution, South Africa used to get 90% of her oil from Iran. The Shah and the apartheid regime were very close — 'birds of a feather.' The other Arab oil producing nations had shunned South Africa because of her close trade and military ties with Israel. Now that the Shah is gone and the government is now in the hands of the people, Iran has cut off oil sales to South Africa.

Saudi Arabia, always the 'protector' of "Western interests," had offered to take up the slack left by Iran's departure. Whether or not this has come about is hard to determine because South Africa's Official Secrets Act prohibits the release of all oil pertinent information. However, it is known that South Africa, of late, has been forced into "spot buying" which simply means buying her oil from whoever she can around the world generally, at upwards of 70% above the normal market price.

The oil shortage is so serious that a 50 mph speed limit has been imposed and is rigidly enforced, speeders are fined up to \$500, gas stations are closed on weekends, Wednesday afternoons and every evening. Another \$3.9 billion has been added to the so-

called SASOL projects. These involve the conversion of coal to oil and, guess who's supplying the technology? You got it: another U.S. corporation.

Irvine is a small town in Southern California not known for too many things. It is in this small setting that we find our Culprit of the Decade, a corporation called Fluor. Fluor has operations around the world mostly connected with construction. It was Fluor that built a pumping station and oil terminal for the Alaska pipeline, refineries in Belgium, Indonesia, Iran and other similar projects in England, Saudi Arabia and Korea but, it is in South Africa that it has its most sinister operation to date.

As we have already said, oil is South Africa's one most obvious Achilles heel and the regime lives in the constant shadow of an imminent United Nations mandated embargo. Having unsuccessfully searched for oil within her borders, she is now turning more and more of her energies and resources to coal gasification. Fluor built the first such coal to oil conversion plant in 1955 and it provides five to ten percent of South Africa's energy needs.

Currently, Fluor is in the process of building SASOL II in the Transvaal (the first one was called SASOL I) which, when completed will provide up to 50% of the regime's energy needs. This is a \$2.8 billion project. Already in the works are plans for SASOL III and SASOL IV and the total cost will be over \$6.7 billion. With this much money involved, you can bet your last dollar (it's that safe a bet!) that Fluor already has some ready answers for all critics.

Paul Etter, vice president for cor-

porate affairs asked about these Fluor operations which in effect are designed to salvage apartheid in the event of UN imposed oil embargo, had this inane response: "We feel our role is not to pop judgements on people. We feel that our role is to build plants." With this kind of reasoning, Etter would not have seen anything wrong with building a SASOL type plant for Hitler.

John Robert Fluor, president of Fluor is also chairman of the board of trustees of the University of Southern California and also sits on the boards of several conservative organizations.

Fluor's operations in South Africa have hurt the Africans in another more immediately direct way. The SASOL projects require a lot of coal which is mined mostly by Africans making less than \$80 a month. In addition to being grossly underpaid, the miners have no rights whatsoever, they live in bare barracks, working on 12 to 18 month "contracts" and 60 hour work weeks. They are thus effectively separated from their wives and children. They make \$80 a month while Fluor takes in \$6.7 billion and yet Etter still has the nerve to say: "We feel we cannot make judgements . . ." This Fluor coal gasification process is also suspected of being carcinogenic.

According to John Conroy, a freelance writer, with this SASOL project, Fluor has managed to do more to stabilize apartheid than any other single U.S. effort. He goes on to add that this work proceeds without a squeak of protest from President Carter's human rights policy formulators.

I guess I am slowly but finally beginning to accept the fact that dollars and human rights do not mix.

LUTHER



By Brumsic Brandon, Jr.

Lobdell proposes rate hike, no hearings

(Continued from page 1 col. 3)

keep us ignorant of the facts and figures? We need hearings because the companies are required to provide proof." She said the public needs to know why the rates are spread the way they are between homes, business and industry; why a rebate of money collected after Measure 9 has not been made; how great an investment the company has in nuclear power, which drives costs higher. The 1978 hearings brought out the fact that PP&L is spending huge amounts on political advertising -- against public power measures, against anti-nuclear bills, for the Jackson Bill, etc. "What cover-up necessitates such a dangerous precedent."

Russ Farrell of the Consumer Power League, said PP&L charges its Washington and Montana

customers 24 percent less than its Oregon customers. Portland consumers pay 140 percent more than public power customers in Vancouver. "The only issue is why the PUC would add 11 percent or 7 percent to the 140 percent. It's nothing but robbery. . . We need a public utility district."

Ralph Frohwerk of the Grey Panthers said the people "pay through the nose to a private investor-owned monopoly. We are already paying the highest rates in the Columbia Basin . . . If PP&L can spend \$240 million to buy a telephone company in Alaska, how could they be going broke?"

Lobdell said his responsibility is to insure that there is an adequate power supply and that the utilities receive a fair profit. "We are not talking about increase or no increase,

but what is the best possible buy. I cannot permit a no increase situation."

Saying that this meeting was very, very helpful to him, Lobdell repeatedly attempted to get the audience to give up the public hearing process in favor of the more informal meeting. He asked if the audience really wanted to eliminate this forum in favor of a formal, traditional hearing process where the public cannot speak but must be represented by attorneys. "How can I best represent you? Is the best way to see that the traditional process goes, and that I sit behind my desk and let an administrative law judge do it? He was reminded that the public is entitled to both -- informal meetings with the Commissioner and the formal hearings.

Delay threatens PP&L future

(Continued from Page 1 Column 6)

would be "probably appropriate", but HB 2750 is "not compatible with Oregon's interest."

Although this is not the time to proceed with Pebble Springs, it also is not the time to close the company's future options, he said.

Frisbee explained that new power supplies are essential to meet the company's obligation to provide adequate electricity in its service area. For fifty years, each new plant cost less than the one before. Now, because of new technology and inflation, each plant costs more. Power from new plants costs more than the company is able to charge for it, therefore, according to Frisbee, PP&L is making no money building new plants. The company would be better off to stop growth, but its obligation is to serve the people. The only alternative is to struggle to keep the rates up. "We struggle as best we can" to get the Public Utility Commissioner to

"struggle as best as he can" against adversaries.

Frisbee considers waste storage to be a serious problem. Having been told repeatedly by government agencies that storage will be available, then having those dates pushed far into the future, Frisbee said he is "terribly discouraged" about the prospects of storage. He sees safe storage as "a major issue to the people of the world."

Asked whether safe storage is of

legitimate interest to the Oregon Legislature, Frisbee said that body should study the issue with qualified technicians, but that the final decision should rest with the national government. Although Oregon can make some decisions, it should not "cut yourself off from the rest of the world."

Asked if PP&L had the option to recover its investment in Pebble Springs, it would withdraw from the project, Frisbee said it is too early to make that decision.

Death penalty

(Continued from page 1 col. 4)

testimony. The chart showed that the states with the highest homicide rates were those with the death penalty and the states with the lowest homicide rates were those without the death penalty.

The bill is sponsored by Senators Ed Fadeley and Ted Hallock.

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