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Two Sections

House defeats South Africa divestment bill



Albina Branch Library, one of the Multnomah Library Association system, provides a varied program for children in addition to book circulation. Please see story on page 3. (Photo: Richard Brown)

"The sheep and the cows are out here while the asses are inside," was a comment overheard in the State Capitol Building Monday as a family of sheep and a couple of calves visited the State Legislature, confined to their stall outside the doors of the House of Representatives. Inside, the House members debated divestment.

State Representative Jim Hill, (D-Salem), the only black in the House of Representatives, choked back tears as he implored his peers to vote for House Bill 2772, the South Africa divestment bill. The muttering and shuffling on the House floor came to an instant halt and a dead silence dropped over the members as Rep. Hill rose to his feet:

"I think the outcome of this bill is predestined," he said. "Having grown up in the South where there are clearly two standards of justice, —I should say there were, we're making a great deal of progress—one for blacks and one for whites, it's very difficult to describe what it's like to be told that you are less of a person and somehow less free simply because of the color of your skin.

"Just let me say it's a very painful experience that goes right to the fiber of your being. The greatness of this country is the hope that it gives—not only for the people that live here, but for the world—that there is such a thing as freedom. And I ask, internationally, is there going



REP. JIM HILL

to be a double standard? Are the rights of the people of El Salvador, of Afghanistan, more important than the people of South Africa, or is it just a question of skin color?

"I submit that in this modern world there is nothing closer to slavery than the situation that exists in South Africa and what the bill boils down to is simply a justification. It simply says that before you make investments in South Africa that you justify that you could not make better investments.

"And if you weigh that against the pain and the suffering that is being experienced by these people, in an institutional way, I think you would come down on the side of this bill. It's a rare opportunity. Frank-

ly, one of the reasons I'm here, is to have some say on issues like this. We have an injustice. We can do something about it. And we can do something about it without harming that fund."

Could the obvious sentiment the members felt toward Rep. Hill as he revealed his suffering to them be translated into a positive vote? It was not to be.

The bill had come to the House floor without the majority vote to carry it so, after some debate, the Democrats attempted to send it back to the Human Resource Committee.

Rep. Shirley Gold (D-Portland), chairman of that committee, had already made the motion to refer when Hill rose to speak. The procedures necessary to clear the motion to refer and bring a vote on the bill gave time for the members to put aside sentiment and return to their reality.

The bill in question is one of a pair introduced this session. This bill, sponsored by Rep. Ed Leek (D-Portland) and others, states that no investments are to be made after January 1, 1984, in companies that employ more than 50 people, produce net earnings of \$500,000 or more, or invest \$2 million or more in South Africa. The bill does not include banks and allows the State to make such investments if it can show it has no better or equal options.

Another bill, HB 2028, would re- (Please turn to page 2 column 1)

Strachan dismantles MHRC

Conflict over the city funding of the Metropolitan Human Relations Commission continued after the Tuesday hearing on the budget, but those responsible for those cuts were exposed.

The proposed transfer of three programs operated by MHRC to City agencies were not budget decisions but were recommendations of the Commissioner who serves as liaison with MHRC, Margaret Strachan. The recommendations, Mayor Ivancie emphasized, were not to save dollars but were Commissioner Strachan's recommendations for reorganization.

The MHRC, established in 1969, is an independent commission funded and appointed by the City and Multnomah County. The Commission sets its own policies and hires its executive director who, in turn, hires additional staff.

Commissioner Strachan, who previously had denied her role in recommending that the three programs be transferred and three positions be deleted, said she supported the changes and felt they would strengthen the Commission. Stating that all cuts in social services and civil rights are emotional, she told the audience that she hoped "we can listen in a reasonable fashion."

She explained that MHRC would be strengthened through removing its programs so it can concentrate on advocacy. "We don't want the tail wagging the dog," she said. "We want to concentrate on advocacy."

She defended the proposal to put the Fair Housing position in the Housing Policy Council to strengthen the work of the office. Earlier input in policy would save need for advocacy later, she explained.

Commissioner Jordan disagreed. He argued that the compliance person's function should not be under the director of housing. Compliance should be from the outside so it cannot be influenced by the agency. Commissioner Lindberg suggested that input into policy could still be obtained even if the person were in MHRC.

Reverend Jim Hulett, chairman of the MHRC Housing Committee, said the Committee is made up of volunteers and now is free of political pressure. A side issue, he said, is that half of the position is funded by the County and cannot go to a City bureau.

City Hall regulars say the Office of Budget and Management recommended that the Housing Policy Council, which was established by

Commissioner Strachan's recommendation and which is her bureau, be eliminated since it is a small bureau in charge of coordinating other programs. MHRC commission members wonder if the transfer of their Fair Housing program is an effort to save the Housing Policy Council.

Lob Pike of the City/County Advisory Committee on the Disabled said it is essential that the disability program—which is advocacy—remain independent of the City bureaus. An office in a city bureau would not have the ability to make the City and the County adhere to moral and legal access requirements than an independent commission does. In addition to the proposed transfer to the Bureau of Human Resources, the program was cut from one full-time person to one 3/4-time person.

MHRC Commissioner Vince Degue said the MHRC developed the mediation project four years ago in response to numerous calls from other City Bureaus referring conflict situations. The program was developed to fill a role not filled elsewhere. The program has saved public and court time and money, and resolved disputes with attention to (Please turn to page 5 column 4)

ONA cuts spark citizen protest

by C. Eddie Edmondson

Commissioner Ivancie wants neighborhood associations to be as unregulated as possible; therefore ONA (Office of Neighborhood Associations) should be abolished except possibly for a minimal liaison between the associations and the city.

(Excerpt from an interview with now Portland Mayor Frank Ivancie in Nov., 1975, responding to a League of Women Voters study in Portland on city funding for neighborhood associations.)

Portland Mayor Frank Ivancie's office was pushed to the brink of verbal surrender last Friday, April 15, within days following release of his proposed 1983-84 budget, revisions designed to cover an anticipated \$5 million revenue shortfall in the city's coming fiscal year.

Neighborhood Association leaders and supporters gathered Friday at the Northeast Neighborhood office at King Neighborhood Facility to publicly express the fact they were incensed at Ivancie's proposed 34 percent cut in ONA's operating budget. The effect of the cuts, moreover, would mean a 46 percent reduction in ONA's five neighborhood outreach offices' budgets.

The two staff positions in the Northeast office would have to be reduced to half-time or the staff reduced to one, according to coordinator Edna Robertson. In addition, ONA's crime prevention representatives who work out of these area neighborhood offices, would face budget cuts of 31 percent. Crime prevention representatives work with neighborhood groups and associations in developing ways for people to protect their homes and each other. A recently released study indicates that a 5 per cent reduction in

crime in the city is attributable in part to the cooperative efforts of police, community crime prevention specialists, and the judicial process.

"We've been hearing from folks," Tim Gallagher in the Mayor's office said last Thursday before ONA supporters met the press to criticize the Mayor. Gallagher is an economist and special assistant to Ivancie, responsible for preparation of the mayor's budget.

"I don't want to say how badly we screwed it up," he went on. "What is proposed in the budget will not come out the door."

The visit to the Mayor's office was part of an overall strategy by neighborhood representatives to let City elected officials know that the mayor's revision of ONA's budget would destroy the viability of neighborhood associations as initial community links between city residents and city officials who provide essen- (Please turn to Section II Page 3)

Coleman Young's view: What Chicago did—and did not—do

by Frank Viviano,

DETROIT—Coleman Young is not inclined to believe that a new era for black politics in America has dawned with Harold Washington's victory in Chicago.

Ironically, when Chicagoans went to the polls on April 12, many of them had this city and its mayor on their minds. For fearful white voters, Detroit has long signified a community "taken over" by blacks, a precedent that almost certainly influenced their support for Republican Bernard Epton. For blacks, however, Detroit was an inspiring model—a place where black voters had already acquired the urban political power sought by Washington.

Young has been Detroit's mayor for nine years now, the first black to

gain that post; and despite sizeable economic and political odds, he remains one of the strongest municipal leaders in the United States today. He has his own conclusions about what the Chicago election did—and did not—mean.

What Washington's victory did not amount to, he argues, is a significant change in poll-booth behavior: The black electorate is still on its own.

Says Young: "The nature of white attitudes toward black candidates has been the same for a very long time. There is enough liberal feeling to goad people into salving their consciences by supporting a black for an important post—for commissioner of education, for secretary of state, sometimes for mayor. But not for the top post. That's

why I was one of those who doubted that [Los Angeles mayor] Tom Bradley would be elected governor of California.

"With the exception of Bradley in a city where the mayor is essentially a figurehead, all of the black mayors today—Harold Washington, Andy Young in Atlanta, myself, Richard Hatcher in Gary, you name them—were elected in cities with near-majorities of black voters," he continues. "The fact of the matter is that when black candidates win, it is almost always from a district where there is at least a near-majority of blacks. It is a simple political axiom and it still holds today."

The question all along in Chicago, according to Young, was whether or not the city's 40 percent proportion of black voters would be

enough. And in fact, those voters accounted for an estimated three-fourths of Washington's total, while white ethnics in usually Democratic districts cast their ballots as much as six-to-one in favor of Epton.

Nevertheless, the Detroit mayor is convinced that Chicago's unprecedented black voter turnout did prove an important point: "When the chances are real, as they seemed to be in Chicago, people work for a candidate and show up at the polls. The key for the grassroots is that element of promise. The kind of enthusiasm that we saw among blacks in Chicago will increase and win even bigger battles—but only when the prospects are real. Nobody turns out in great numbers for a phony chance."

What can a black mayor do for

those who put him in office? When Young himself took charge in 1974, Detroit was reeling from racial antagonism and violent crime. Like Chicago, it had also long been a deeply segregated community, with black inhabiting an inner-urban core surrounded by nearly all-white neighborhoods.

Young set out on an ambitious program designed to cool tensions as white flight and the rise of a new black middle class finally put an end to that longstanding segregation. To an extent once unimaginable here, he succeeded. Nine years later, Detroit has emerged as one of the nation's most peacefully and fully integrated cities. Indeed, the improvement is so dramatic that even the Justice Department of the Reagan administration—no supporter of

liberal, former Democratic Party vice-chairman Coleman Young—was forced to admit this year that his crime-fighting program is the nation's most successful.

In Young's view, the key to such achievements is giving more people reason to believe that they have a stake in their city—developing some sense that the prospects for change are real.

"This will be Washington's challenge," says Young, "and he will have to meet it by coming to grips with an ingrained, overwhelmingly white bureaucracy. When you arrive in power in a city that is half black, but where 95 percent of the municipal appointments are held by whites, you have to deal radically with the situation. In the beginning, (Please turn to page 5 column 4)