

Editorials & Comments

Educational Quality Declines

By Hoyle H. Martin, Sr.
Post Executive Editor

In this column last week we noted that some knowledgeable observers believe that the quality of public education has declined considerably, some school boards are ineffective, some teachers and some parents are apathetic and "social promotion" has dampened the motivation of too many youths to learn. A partial result of this, we concluded, is that teachers don't teach and students don't learn.

Part of the evidence that something is not quite right in public education arises from the outcry of employers and parents in the state of Florida who reportedly are complaining that high school graduates haven't learned very much with little discipline and the so-called modern curricula. The Post agrees that there is an element of truth in these charges, however, we believe that there are a number of circumstances that contribute to these problems that have not been adequately noted. For example, last week we said that teacher apathy was in part justified. Part of the justification arises from the fact that too many parents fool themselves into believing that not only can their little Johnny read and write but also that Johnny's the smartest student in the school. Couple that with the strains and tensions of school integration over the past decade, when many teachers and administrators, both black and white, were reluctant to fail students out of a fear of charges of bias and finally, the still questionable value of a single shot comprehensive test, is there any wonder that an increasing number of students are not being promoted?

Public Concern

Furthermore, public concern about students being held back in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools system did not surface until the Florida schools' failure rate problem begun to gain national attention. A local school official said, "data on promotion and retention rates were not released in news release form last year because no one asked for it." Does this mean that as a community, as parents, we too are apathetic about our schools?

While no racial breakdown is available on the 4,489 local youth who were not promoted at the end of the 1976-77 school year, the problem, particularly when related to standardized-comprehensive examination, continues to plague blacks right through four years of college. Recent data released by the State Department of Public Instruction indicated that during the period 1972-77 the graduating seniors at the states five predominately black colleges scored 231 points lower on the National Teachers' Examination

than did white students. On the other hand, 98 percent of the black students at predominately white stated supported colleges and universities did as well as the whites.

What does this five year NTE survey mean? It means that given an equal educational opportunity to that of whites some, and we emphasize some, blacks can do as well as any whites on comprehensive examinations. This was undoubtedly a part of the thinking behind the new U.S. Department of HEW guidelines requiring that the consolidated University system increase the number of white students enrolling in traditionally black state colleges and giving priority to placing more new degree programs in predominately black colleges.

We stressed that "some" blacks can do as well as some whites and better than others on comprehensive examinations because many blacks neither have or desire the white middleclass view point of how the American system works. This difference in view point has been stated in a research paper by two Antioch Law School administrators. They argue that "the bar examination does not test for lawyering competency. At best, it tests for certain limited aspects of a limited number of basic lawyering skills; at worst, it merely tests exam-taking facility." These administrators contend that bar examination competency for minorities requires the adaption of a white middle-class view of how the system works. In more meaningful terms, bar examinations have a built in cultural bias that can be detrimental to blacks even when they get an education equal to that of whites.

What we are trying to convey is that our national, our state and our community's educational quality is and will continue to decline until adults as parents, teachers, school administrators, law makers and taxpayers begin to recognize the need to fully develop all of our human resources if the quality of life we are accustomed to is to be maintained and enhanced. That means in some instances changing our attitudes about higher taxes, in others helping every child to develop to his full potential and in others putting education ahead of personal and political considerations.

Education for our youth is after all, our hope not just for tomorrow, but for today.

King Drive A Challenge

The Rev. James Barnette, chairman of the Martin Luther King Memorial Statue Committee, has said that many white churches and businesses have indicated a sincere willingness to financially support the funding effort. However, these organizations' final degree of support will be based on the extent of black giving.

BLACK BUSINESS IS SUFFERING FROM THE EFFECTS OF CRIME ON AN UNPRECEDENTED SCALE. IT IS STRUGGLING TO MEET THE HIGH COST OF THEFT INSURANCE, VANDALISM, SHOP-LIFTING, ROBBERY AND BAD CHECKS. THE PROBLEM CENTERS AROUND NARCOTICS AND DRUG RELATED CRIMES.

MICHIGAN CHRONICLE



A Challenge To Black Leadership



THE POWER & THE GLORY

By Dr. G.E.A. Toote

Social Benefits For Aliens

When a person applies to an American Embassy or Consulate for permission to come to the United States to live, it is necessary that they provide the name of a responsible American who will give financial assistance if needed after entry.

The American citizen must file financial support consent before the foreign applicant is admitted. Recently the Department of Immigration acknowledged that the commitment of financial assistance is rarely enforced by the federal government. Many aliens soon after arriving apply for and receive welfare assistance.

The Department of Immigration contends that a federal court ruling requires legal action by municipal or state government, with court adjudication of dependency and financial burden upon the tax of support.

Accordingly, states hard pressed to meet the social needs of its citizens, must also assume the welfare costs of its new immigrant resident.

The Department of Immigration further acknowledges that their files contain the names of citizens, many of whom are naturalized, make a profit after sponsoring immigrants, by becoming their landlords and receiving payment from local welfare departments for rent.

Aliens who have lived and worked abroad and never paid American taxes can receive federally provided pensions and free medical care.

The cost of these pensions is in excess of a half billion dollars yearly. Under the Supplementary Security Income Act, one hundred and eighty thousand aliens, who are sixty five years of age or older, disabled or blind, receive pensions and free medical care. Only thirty days United States residency is required.

Maximum benefits for an alien who lives alone is \$260 a month. Aliens who live with relatives can receive \$220.

The federal Supplementary Security Income Act makes no distinction between citizens and aliens. Since 1974, aliens upon application have received benefits.

At a time when the federal government complains that there is inadequate money to fund job programs, it seems that congress has lost sight of American priorities.

There are too many elderly black people trudging to work daily, because in their early years of employment they were not covered by social security. Too proud to seek relief, they are paying their price for dignity.

TO BE EQUAL



Vernon E. Jordan Jr.

Hypocrisy On Social Issues

Increasingly, there is a shocking trend for social issues to be discussed in a hypocritical way, with a huge gap between enunciated principles and reality as it affects poor people.

A good example of this is the latest Supreme Court Blunder - the decision that states and local hospitals can refuse to perform or even to permit elective abortions with federal funds.

In 1973 the Court ruled state prohibition of abortion unconstitutional. How then, can it turn around only four years later and deliver a decision that makes abortion impossible for poor people?

By doing so the Court has supplanted equal protection of the laws as a constitutional standard and replaced it with a new standard - personal affluence. The effect of its ruling is to place abortion beyond the reach of poor women, who cannot afford private doctor's fees and hospital costs.

It also creates a two-tier health system, whereby people who can afford to do so may choose to have abortions while poor people are denied access to the same health choice.

Just a day later, the Senate jumped on to the same hypocritical bandwagon to ban use of Medicaid funds for most abortions. What makes the whole exercise an obscene lesson in hypocrisy is that if the Court and the Congress really believe abortions to be wrong, they should act against it in principle and not deny to poor people what others may freely do.

The issue here isn't abortion, it's the double standard that enforces certain aspects of middle class morality for poor people while exempting the more affluent.

That hypocrisy becomes even more blatant when people endorse cutting off the availability of abortions to the poor while at the same time denying poor families with children the day care centers, the quality schools, and the work and income maintenance they so desperately need to lead independent lives.

It's not enough to impose one's own morality on other people when it comes to the death of a fetus; there's also the moral obligation to accept other people's needs to meaningful, not just biological, life.

A similar hypocrisy is at work in the actions against affirmative action programs, described by code words such as "reverse discrimination" or "quotas." Congress has been adamant about stopping federal pressure on institutions to have affirmative action programs with numerical goals.

But at the same time the Congress has passed a law providing that medical schools receiving federal funds have to reserve classroom spaces for American students who enrolled in foreign medical schools before last fall.

How can it sanction a quota system of sorts for Americans studying abroad while refusing to sanction a similar system for traditionally discriminated-against minorities? If a student has the financial ability to pursue a medical education in another country, what pressing social purpose is served by forcing American medical schools to accommodate him or her at the expense of others trying to gain admission?

... DOWN TO BUSINESS

The Price Of Power

By Berkeley G. Burrell
President, National Business League

President Carter's energy proposals are now under consideration by the Congress. As the nation debates the prospect of extensive government controls on the energy consumption of individuals, business and industry, there is no better time than the present to review what the energy crisis is all about. In future columns we will comment specifically on the President's proposal as it relates to the minority community.

For now, we must understand that only with a knowledge of the facts behind the crisis, can we grasp the implications for minority enterprise of both the energy problem and the energy policy proposed to deal with it.

President Carter and his experts contend that there is a critical shortage of natural gas and particularly petroleum, from which we make gasoline, heating oil, and generate much of our electricity. In addition, the manufacture of such items as records, tires, batteries, and carpeting depends on oil based chemicals. According to government estimates, the principle oil

exporting countries will not be able to satisfy all the increases in demand for oil expected to occur in the U.S. and other industrialized nations throughout the 1980's. At an oil consumption rate of 5 percent, the world's present recoverable oil reserves would be exhausted by 2010. According to the President, this fundamental fact is clear: within about four generations, the bulk of the world's oil supply will have been substantially consumed.

And the administration's projections for natural gas are not heartening. By 1985, gas from existing reservoirs will be able to satisfy only 55 percent of demand. Supplies for the residential and commercial sector will have to be obtained by diverting gas from electric utilities.

However, other "qualified" experts disagree about an actual physical shortage of natural gas and petroleum. They believe that given the right incentives - higher prices - the oil companies will go out to those remote, dangerous, expensive-to-drill-in places like the North Sea and find more oil. Perhaps enough oil to meet our needs for some years beyond the mid 80's deadline



DR. BURRELL

projected by the administration as the likely beginning of real belt tightening.

Obtaining correct, credible information concerning how much oil we have, and how much we can expect to obtain in the future, is one of the President's first objectives. So it will be some time before we know with certainty what all of us are really talking about.

But for business and the consumers upon which business depends, one fact is clear. Whether through actual physical shortages of petroleum and natural gas or because of higher costs in drilling and bringing to market new gas and oil, prices will be going up and up. And that means not only paying more to drive your car and heat your home,

it means paying extra for all those products whose manufacture depends on petroleum based chemicals, the records, batteries, plastics, carpeting, fabrics and paints, etc., to which I alluded previously.

Increased costs for these products and raw energy itself will make the cost of doing business much greater. The minority operator will have to increase his prices accordingly. Minority consumers, currently willing to pay a little extra for the convenience of using neighborhood retailers, may be forced to deal with majority outlets whose volume purchasing - even given stiffer energy induced operating costs - might keep price increases lower than those of minority businesses.

But what about energy substitutes for increasingly expensive oil and natural gas? Can substitutes help keep down the cost of doing business and consequently the price to consumers? There is no substitute for oil when making many of today's plastics and chemicals, nor as yet a practical alternative to gasoline for propelling your cars.

But electricity can be produced by nuclear power, though not at a rate "too cheap to meter," as propo-

nants of nuclear power believed in the 60's. Today 63 very expensive nuclear plants provide about 10 percent of our electrical power at rates similar to those of utilities using oil. By 1985 an additional 75 nuclear facilities planned or already under construction could be in operation, contributing to as much as 20 percent of our electrical supply. But the prospect for additional electricity generated by atomic energy is dim.

Nuclear power brings fear of accidental explosion and contamination by radioactivity, the possibility of deliberate sabotage or the diversion of nuclear material for use by terrorist groups. How best to store nuclear waste is still being debated and the long lead time needed to build U.S. nuclear reactors has not been reduced by shortening the licensing process.

Coal is the only form of energy definitely known to be in large supply, enough to produce the electricity atomic power cannot. But coal-burning electrical generating plants will present costly air pollution problems and the extensive strip mining of surface coal deposits will require expensive land restoration efforts.

Most prohibiting to the use of coal as a cheap source of electricity is that electrical generating plants have only recently completed a year long conversion from burning coal to burning oil. Now they must reconver back to coal burning operation. The process isn't cheaply done, so electricity made from burning coal will be no bargain. Solar, wind and other forms of energy are not yet completely dependable nor economical.

Clearly there is no inexpensive, readily-at-hand substitute to the high cost energies of oil and natural gas, no single reliable source upon which we can depend to sustain continued economic growth.

Reliance upon the combined usage of various energy resources and conservation efforts on the part of individuals and industry must be considered as well as the possibility of rebates and subsidies to small businesses that may be put at an unfair advantage. Above all, in evaluating President Carter's proposals, the Congress must remember that increasingly high energy costs must not become a burden upon any single group, especially minorities who are getting down to business.

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