

Editorials & Comments

What The Other Editors Are Saying

Ford's Economic Plan....A Disaster

For Low and Middle-Income Folks

.. We hate to seem like constant naysayers, but we can't imagine how President Ford's widely ballyhooed economic plan can be anything but a disaster for low and middle-income people, who Ford insists will be helped most by the plan.

.. The part of Ford's plan that got the most headlines was the tax cut, which the President said would amount to \$16 billion overall. About threequarters of this amount will go to individual taxpayers, the rest going to businessmen and farmers in hopes of promoting plant expansion and creating new jobs. Ford said he hopes that individual taxpayers, having tax rebates to look forward to, will spend more money on consumer goods and thereby provide a much-needed spark to our sagging economy.

.. We cannot possibly imagine how this plan can be successful. In the first place, economic analysts have said that a family of four persons with an income of \$10,000 will receive a rebate of only \$60 to \$120 under this plan-hardly enough to change a family's lifestyle or encourage them to spend more freely.

.. The money received by the average American family could be increased considerably if Ford would impose a heavier tax on the rich, but he (like most of his predecessors) apparently is much more sympathetic to the rich than to the poor. While the \$10,000 family would get a rebate of about \$90 under Ford's plan, a family earning \$1 million a year would get a rebate of \$1,000.

.. If Ford were really sincere about wanting to help the poor and middle-class, he would close all of the tax loopholes enjoyed by those earning over \$100,000-a-year, many of whom pay little or no taxes at all. This would provide an estimated \$25 billion in additional tax revenues and he could then triple the amount of the rebate to be received by ordinary working people under his new plan.

.. (According to a recent study by U.S. News and World Report, Americans earning a mere \$6,000 a year pay 34 per cent in federal, state and local taxes while those earning \$50,000 pay only 24 per cent in taxes. This is the most lopsided tax system in the world, and Ford obviously has no intention of changing it.)

.. Furthermore, even though the tax cut is a lot better than nothing, it will be completely wiped out by the extra amount ordinary people will have to pay for gasoline, home heating oil and other petroleum products. Ford said he will use his emergency powers to raise import fees on foreign oil by \$1 a barrel in February, \$2 in March and \$3 in April. This will result in \$30 billion extra paid by taxpayers for petroleum products. In other words, the average family that gets a \$100 tax rebate will have to pay out \$200 extra

for oil products, so he'll still be farther behind the break-even line than he is now. How will this stimulate the economy is a mystery to us. According to Sen. Henry Jackson (D-Wash.), Ford's plan "is like rearranging the deck chairs on the Titanic."

.. We admit it's easy to criticize any Presidential policies, and any fair-minded person has a right to demand that besides just criticizing we offer an alternative plan. First, as we mentioned earlier, Congress should eliminate tax loopholes like the oil depletion allowance that allows so many millionaires to escape paying taxes entirely.

.. Secondly, Ford should propose an excess profit tax on those industries which have increased their profits to astronomical levels while most Americans have suffered a significant loss in real earnings. For example, in the past year the oil, sugar, steel and supermarket industries have all reported unprecedented profits at the same time 1,023,000 Americans were added to the unemployment rolls. The sugar industry, for example, raised its prices about 400 per cent at a time when consumers could least afford to pay the increases. This disgraceful inequity could be minimized somewhat by an excess profits tax.

.. By the same token, President Ford has asked Congress to approve a military budget that exceeds \$100 billion for the first time in history. Since military spending is the most inflationary of all, it is hard to understand how Ford could ask for these outrageous expenditures at the same time he says he will approve no new spending for human services. Many experts say \$20 billion could be cut out of this bloated amount without hurting our military capability in the least. Since we are supposed to be in a period of "detente" with China and the Soviet Union, who in the world is supposed to be ready to attack us, anyway-Mexico?

.. There are two other segments of Ford's plan we'd like to mention. First, he proposed setting aside air pollution and environmental standards for five years so that gas mileage can be increased in cars with lower standards. If this is done, we may not be around in five years to enjoy the increased gas mileage because of the intolerable levels of air pollution. This is just one more case of siding with the rich, who don't have to breathe the inner-city air that is already causing (along with cigarette smoking) an incidence of respiratory illness, emphysema and lung cancer that is unprecedented in history. A more sensible scheme would have been to place a prohibitive tax on large, gas-guzzling cars and a more mild tax on sub-compact cars without relaxing air quality standards.

The Philadelphia Tribune

LAWYERS ARTISTS
DOCTORS ARCHITECTS
DENTISTS BUSINESS
ENGINEERS SOCIAL WORKERS
TEACHERS ACCOUNTANTS

..After years of hard work and study-now returning to build better black communities.



Walking Tall Together

REPORT FROM Washington

Facing Economic Difficulties

JIM MARTIN
...U. S. Congressman

..The economic difficulties we've been facing, with unprecedented simultaneous inflation and recession, have been the subject of various proposals from published economists. Their solutions for dealing with the economy range from one end of the spectrum to the other. Some would ride out the storm and let the economy correct itself, while others would rather nationalize all industry. (we can look at other countries' worse economic problems and see where the latter proposal would lead us). The most frequent proposal is a tax cut to quickly stimulate the economy, but none of these ideas for countering the recession are claimed as answers.

..A tax cut might not put more money in your pocket all at once, but just a little at a time, with a little less withholding from each pay check. I can't see where that will have much impact, and certainly won't help the unemployed. If it's to be a bonus rebate on your 1974 tax return, as President Ford is recommending most will get half of it sometime in May, and the rest in September. So the desired stimulus of more consumer spending won't happen until then. If the economy is forecast to recover in the 3rd Quarter of 1975 anyway, then this tax rebate will just advance that recovery a few weeks at best. It would, however, get all the popular credit for bringing about a recovery that is supposed to occur even with-

out any such policy changes.

..Any governmental action - or inaction - will have its supporters and its detractors, and also economists, politicians, historians, and probably

theologians to support opposing conclusions. After all, the debate is still going on whether the New Deal or World War II ended our Great Depression. The House Committee on Ways and Means has voted to cut off President Ford's authority to increase the import fees paid on oil brought into this country from foreign oil producing countries. I dislike any artificial price increase or tax hike, but in this case supported the President in his efforts to cut our dependence on foreign oil imports. He took the action because there is no other authorized plan to reduce our reliance on foreign oil. The Democrat majority on the Ways and Means Committee voted to cut his authority, but offered no other plan in return. They specifically rejected a rationing alternative (which would probably be worse than the import tax), but proposed nothing to help reduce our dependency on oil imports. So, by thwarting any action, they leave us still vulnerable to foreign policy extortion by the Arab oil countries, as in 1973.

..We should allow the President's plan to proceed until Congress comes up with a superior plan of its own, which could take six months to a year. The President's action at least began a program designed to cause conservation of energy. It also gave the Congress incentive to move quickly on formulating its own plan.

TO BE EQUAL



VERNON E. JORDAN JR.

Ford Follows Through

..President Ford had a whirlwind week recently highlighted by a special economic message and the State of the Union address. Although his economic proposals leave a lot to be desired and he failed to include a strong civil rights message to the nation, as he had been urged to do, he did follow through on two recommendations made by black leaders in our meeting with him last fall.

..The first was that he appoint a black to a Cabinet position; the second, that he endorse extension of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, up for renewal this summer.

..His nomination of an outstanding black lawyer, William T. Coleman, Jr., as Secretary of Transportation not only puts the first black person in seven years into the Cabinet, but it marks a major upgrading of that body.

..Mr. Coleman is an outstanding lawyer, an honors graduate from Harvard Law School and former law clerk to Justice Felix Frankfurter, who has built an enviable reputation as one of the nation's top legal minds. He has also been a civil rights activist who worked on the school desegregation case that led to the Brown decision of 1954, among other noteworthy civil rights cases he has been involved with, and is president of the N.A.A.C.P. Legal Defense Fund.

..He will take over a federal Department of special interest to city dwellers. At a time when it is essential to revitalize urban mass transit, this excellent appointment signals a more positive role in national transportation policy.

..Mr. Ford followed through on the recommendation that he back extension of the Voting Rights Act, and in the long run that may be even more significant. Along with the Civil Rights Act of 1964, this legislation forms the core of black gains in the Second Reconstruction. At a time when those gains are being sniped at and, one by one, stripped away, it is good to see the President drawing a line around the most significant ones and saying they will stand.

..The Voting Rights Act, by extending federal protection of the right to vote in sections of the country that had denied that right to black citizens, has helped to change the face of the South. Black people are voting today in places that used to react with violence when a black person attempted to register.

..As a result, there are black mayors, black sheriffs and county supervisors, and other black elected officials representing black people and their white neighbors all over the South. This is one law that has not only worked, but has revived the democratic process in places in this country that had been governed like dictatorships.

..The law, which runs for five years, was renewed in 1970 and President Ford's endorsement of renewal will help assure its passage this summer. There are plenty of people in Washington who would like the law to expire quietly, and if that happened we would be sure to see a host of measures in some states whose effect would be to deny blacks the opportunity to participate in the democratic process.

..I doubt that the old "grandfather clause" and other unconstitutional methods would be adopted. But today's sophisticated legal engineers could easily come up with plans for multi-member districting, literacy tests, and gerrymandered districts that individually might pass the test of constitutionality but collectively would slash black registration figures.

as i see it

On Reconfirmation Of Judges

By Gerald Johnson

..The House of Representatives will soon be voting on a bill that calls for a reconfirmation of judges on an eight year basis. This bill if passed would have a profound effect on justice.

..It is no secret that the Supreme Court judges get their powers from the fact that once a president appoints them to office death is the only means of getting them unseated unless a judge removes himself. This method makes Supreme Court judges liable to no one.

..Evidence to this point is Supreme Court judge Justice Lewis Powell who was appointed by Richard Milhous Nixon. Judge Powell voted against several decisions brought

before the Supreme Court by Mr. Nixon's Administration. Judge Powell's decisions were passed on his unbiased opinion and not on political overtones. Why? Because once Nixon appointed him to the Supreme Court there was nothing he



could threaten him with.

..Imagine such decisions made by the Supreme Court such as nationwide school integration. The country would be hard pressed to find a man to make such decisions if that man knew in a few years he would be coming up for reconfirmation.

..This power entrusted to the men of the Supreme Court is the only means of checks and balances we have of other governmental agencies. It is the least corrupt of the three governmental branches.

..The bill was obviously designed

for a shift of power to the Executive branch of government. The men of the Senate and the men of the house, along with the president and his administration would be able to blunder this country further down the drain with no overseers. The Nixon Caper would be an everyday occurrence rather than a once in a century mishap.

..An every eight year reconfirmation of judges is just another avenue to breed corruption in government. Urge your congressman to vote not to let this bill get through the House.

Royal Bums Plans First Meeting

..The Royal Bums Baseball Team will hold a meeting Saturday, Feb. 1 at the Greenville Center. The meeting will

begin at 5 p.m. All members of the team are asked to please be present and any persons wishing to join the

team this season are also asked to be present. The team is coached by Johnny Foster.

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