

Business would be wise to heed social chief

My, it was quiet the other night over at the o' Botsford Inn as the mostly conservative/Republican crowd sat down to a dinner of chicken Cordon Bleu and a hardy portion of social reform.

While it was innkeeper John Anhut's chef who fixed the first course, the second helping was prepared by none other than Agnes Mansour, Michigan Department of Social Services director.

Rumor has it that a team of experts trained in the Heimlich maneuver were standing by in the wings in case any mossbacks choked on a recipe which they found thoroughly distasteful. But all were reported to have survived. Somehow, they always do.

And while many mumbled disapproval afterwards, they would have been wise to listen a little more closely and heed what the woman had to say.

But oh how Mansour laid it on the line. No horsing around for this lady. Up front, she laid the blame for our present economic woes right on President Ronald Reagan's doorstep. She threw the double whammy by telling the mostly middle-class audience that properly managed social reform was its

responsibility.

Could have heard a pin drop in that room.

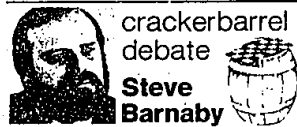
"Those who have more should share it with those who don't. We should work toward understanding the dilemma of the poor and review what we are doing," she told the hushed crowd.

She noted that Michigan suffers an unemployment rate — 9.0, 9.0 — as big as either the population of Delaware or Vermont. And she noted such figures cause unprecedented social problems.

"Poverty represents a crisis of the human spirit which is not quickly or simply reversed," she said. "The Reagan policy changes have caused great delays in addressing social problems."

Finally, she gave the really grim prediction: "The disparity between the poor and the non-poor divides and segregates our society and causes considerable alarm."

Sitting there listening to this obviously very wise person and then turning around to observe many in the audience, one realizes how much that gap is growing everyday.



And despite the crack from one local who announced that businessmen would rather spend their money on something other than the concerns of Mansour, there of us do exist in the business world who do know better and realize of what the former Mercy College president speaks.

The gap is widening and not only is it inhumane to let it do so, it is simply unwise for our economy.

Presently, some industrialists in this country have joined Ronald Reagan in believing that we can rebuild our economy and maintain a 10 to 15 per-

cent unemployment rate. The smaller the trickle, you know, the more that stays at the top.

No matter how you slice a piece of baloney, it's still baloney. It doesn't magically transform into steak or pork chops. And baloney is what we are getting from conservative Washington today.

We have yet to see an economic turnaround in this state.

Instead, what we are seeing is the overwhelming growth of social decay which you and I and anyone else who has a dime to rub together will have to pay for long after Ronald Reagan has ridden off into the sunset.

Mansour graphically outlined the list: child and spouse abuse, teenage pregnancy ("children raising children"), the breaking down of the family structure, divorce, welfare dependence and hunger.

The question the haves must ask themselves is how long will the have-nots put up with it — especially when they are growing in numbers? The consequences could be dangerous to anybody and any business.

Kids are afraid to tell when a man accosts them

A LITTLE GIRL looked up as the woman put ink on the child's hands. "Why do I have to do this?"

The slightly flustered woman responded, "Because if you get lost, we will need your fingerprints."

Left unsaid was that if the little girl were ever abducted and murdered, her fingerprints may be the only means to identify her body.

School districts in suburban Detroit have been fingerprinting children throughout this year. For example, Livonia schools will take part in the project through December.

It's a simple procedure. Parents must sign permission slips before a child is fingerprinted.

After the fingerprinting is completed, the only set of prints is given to the parent or guardian. No copies are made for any governmental agency.

The fingerprinting takes a few minutes and is accomplished with a minimum of inconvenience.



Nick Sharkey

Most attempts were not reported to parents because children feared their parents would restrict their freedom.

INTEREST IN THE abduction of children was heightened last week by a television special "Adam." This show depicted the frustrating attempts by the police and family to find their son, Adam, when he was abducted and murdered in 1981.

Jerry Tobias, the youth officer for Southfield Township, said he has received several inquiries about missing children since the showing of "Adam." Tobias was a member of the Oakland County Homicide Task Force — the official name of the group that investigated the four killings.

Tobias didn't know of any abductions of children in this area during the past year, he said.

"It has not been a problem, lately. But the danger is always there."

Educating children about abduction poses a dilemma for parents. On the one hand, they teach children to be polite and friendly to all persons. At the same time, parents preach, "Don't talk to strangers."

What's Tobias' advice?

"The goal of parents should be not to teach fear, but to educate. Kids understand a lot more than we give them credit for."

"Parents must keep the doors to communication open so they can freely discuss this subject with their children."



Bob Wisler

THE RECENT coverage of Blanchard's efforts to appoint John Hertel as head of the state Department of Agriculture is a story that intrigues political writers. Not because the average resident gives a hoot about who is ag director, but because the story has an aura of political pressures, double-crosses and behind-the-scenes backstabbing.

Blanchard insisted the previous director resign — Dean Priddy did. Blanchard insisted that the Agriculture Commission hire his political buddy, fellow Democrat John Hertel, to head the department. The Republican-dominated commission didn't.

Why go to the wall just to hurry Hertel's departure from the Wayne County Commission? The governor could install Hertel without any flak in January 1984, when he changes the complexion of the Agriculture Commission. Blanchard did nothing to enhance his image as a political leader engaged in the art of government.

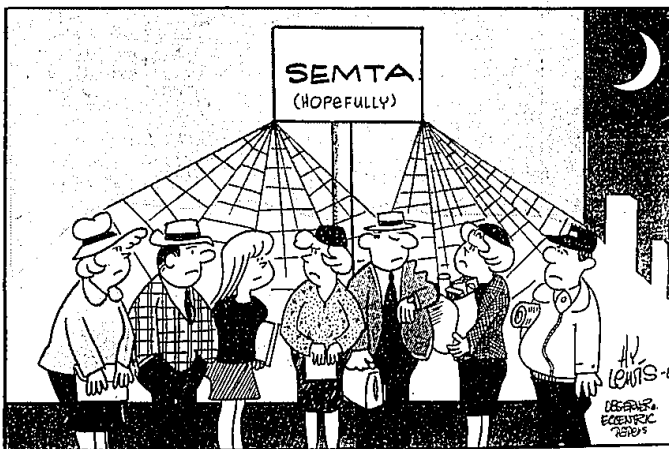
FOLKS BACK HOME can't help but wonder why the governor is wasting so much of his prestige in such a non-essential manner while their pocketbooks are being lightened by \$300 or so a year, the amount an average resident is paying in state tax increases.

Why isn't the governor more concerned with such important matters as getting control of the ballooning costs of social services, for example?

The kind of political infighting that took place over the Hertel appointment, along with the wrangling going on in Lansing over whether to speak against the several recall efforts in the state, leads residents to view their elected leaders more as political operators than representatives of the people, intent on resolving state problems.

This is the kind of image that enables people to sell the idea of expensive and often unfair recall campaigns and elections.

SEMTA: 'We can't spend money we don't have'



Murphy seeks handle Children's home a loose end

DAN MURPHY, the Oakland County executive for nearly 10 years, still has been unable to consolidate all the loose ends of county government under his office, even if the voters did ask for it. But Murphy is moving deftly and subtly to bring Children's Village under his wing. The resistance has been great.

Murphy wants to give Children's Village everything it is asking for in its 1984 budget — the full \$8.2 million. And he isn't proposing any layoffs.

But the executive is asking that eight authorized but unfilled positions be dropped from the budget. That may sound like a mere technicality, but it isn't. Here's the analogy:

You have the keys to a car that you don't use. Yet when you think you have a need, the keys are there, and all you have to do is insert them in the ignition.

But let's say I take back the keys. I tell you you can have the keys if you need them, but you must first come to me and prove your case, then jump through the budgetary hurdles of the County Board of Commissioners.

You are no longer quite as free to operate as you used to be. You need to deal with me. Now you understand how the powers that be at Children's Village view Murphy.

IF YOU ARE emotionally healthy, you won't worry much about proving your need for the car keys.

But the bosses of Children's Village, at least on paper, are the four judges of the Probate Court. The father of one of the judges pioneered the Children's Village operation. It has won national recognition as a model for how county government can deal with the problems of up to 200 abused, neglected or delinquent kids.

The judges are super extremely jealous of the institution. It's so bad that they can't even discuss the matter rationally, a conclusion I reached after receiving a letter from one of them when I suggested such an institution shouldn't be under the jurisdiction of a court.

We have three branches of government — legislative, judicial and executive, right? The legislative branch approves a budget and tax rate and passes ordinances. The judicial branch hears cases arising



Tim Richard

under the laws and ordinances. The executive administers the laws. Right?

Not so in Oakland County, where we have the strange phenomenon of a court administering Children's Village with its approximately 130 current residents and about the same number of staff.

MURPHY IS ENTIRELY correct in suggesting that his office, which didn't exist when Children's Village was begun, should have administrative oversight of the institution.

If you know Murphy, you know he's not on an ego trip. The man's mind simply doesn't work that way, believe it or not. He seeks administrative accountability and clean lines of authority.

He does not attack the administration of Children's Village. He does suggest there could be improvements.

The laws appear to conflict, and so Murphy has gone to Circuit Court in order to win a transfer of authority and set up better lines of accountability.

It's too bad that such a reasonable proposal — that the county executive run what is essentially an administrative operation — should even be in court. The county executive system has been tested for nearly a decade, and there is no longer any mentally healthy reason for the Probate Court to get bent out of shape about a transfer of authority whose time is due.

discover Michigan by Bill Stockwell

DID YOU KNOW that Lake Superior — the deepest, largest, clearest and, many believe, the most beautiful of all the Great Lakes — has been a "trapped" lake? Geological shifting and upheavals caused by early glaciers held it back behind the St. Mary's River rapids at the Soo, and it has remained static, cold and isolated to this day.

Governor's image hurt by inept politics

THE AMERICAN Heritage Dictionary of the English Language defines "politics" (noun) as "1) The art or science of political government; political science."

"Politician" (adjective) is defined as "1) artful; ingenious; shrewd; or 2) using, displaying or proceeding from policy; wise; prudent; judicious. With definitions such as these, you might think that the practitioners of politics would be wise, prudent, ingenious persons engaged in the artful or scientific process of providing responsible government."

Definitions can be deceiving.

Emerging as one of the chief political muddlers in the state is Gov. James Blanchard. In the space of less than one year, he has gone from looking like an artful politician and an ingenious government representative who helped bail out Chrysler Corp. to a political bumbler more interested in petty political matters than in serious public issues.

BLANCHARD'S POLITICAL campaign last year was a well-run, if boring, affair captained by seasoned political pros.

As governor, he took on the state's biggest problem, leading the drive to bring solvency to the government by passing an income tax increase.

With this, he lost a great deal of popularity, but some reasoned there would be time during the next three years to display such leadership that the part of the public disillusioned by the tax increase would forget taxes and remember him for his governmental skill.

The problem is that Blanchard's successes — the temporary summer job program, for one — are tending to be obscured by his political maneuvering over appointments in his administration and other minor governmental matters.