

'We Built Country; Now Want Returns'

By LEONARD POGER

American political history during the 20th century can be easily separated into civil rights movements for various segments of the nation's population.

Early in the century, there were pushes for more rights and privileges for unions, women, Negroes, consumers, youngsters through new federal education programs, and—finally—senior citizens.

The elder residents of America first received some attention—in the form of money—in the middle of the Depression when the nation's first social security program was enacted.

Not much else was done until the mid-1960s when medicare legislation was adopted to help pay most of doctor and hospital bills for senior citizens.

Although many thought that was the end of the great push for older Americans' benefits from the government, the senior citizens themselves feel that more can and should be done—mostly in the area of expanded medical benefits to match rising costs.

THIS WAS MADE clear last week at one of a series of forums held across Michigan. The forums are scheduled to lead up to a state conference on problems for the aged. The state conference, to be held next May, will precede a White House conference on the aged to be held in November, 1971.

The forums' aim was to gain information and comments on the background and most pressing problems facing senior citizens.

Hopefully, senior citizens



MRS. HELEN GROSS' badge tells the story. She works at the senior citizens' Twin Towers home in Inkster. (Observer photo)

are looking for new legislation to meet their needs following the White House conference.

AT THE WESTERN Wayne County forum held in Inkster's Twin Towers, a 10-story housing development for senior citizens, an estimated 150 persons crowded into the towers' activ-

ities room to voice their concerns about a variety of problems—particularly rising medical and hospital costs.

In addition, the seniors expressed concern about government red tape which often prevents persons from getting help from programs specifically designed to help them.

Rev. Frederick Williams, Episcopal minister from Inkster, moderated the forum and asked what the seniors present considered their most pressing problems.

A show of hands made it obvious that virtually all felt that medical and drug costs, in addition to the need for expansion of social security benefits, were the most serious problems.

Surprisingly, only a few persons present felt that the need for additional income from part-time jobs and housing were serious problems.

Food and nutrition problems were also indicated as a pressing problem by a small majority of those at the forum for suburban seniors.

Although most of those present were from the Twin Towers, the Westland Happy Hour Club sent five members and will distribute questionnaires to the remaining 107 club members. The organization is sponsored by the Westland Parks and Recreation Department.

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IN A ROUND-ROBIN series of complaints aired by senior citizens at the forum, the need for increased social security benefits, simplified procedures and less government red tape for medicare-medicaid programs, and related financial problems were listed most often.

"We want a better chance to live on earth," one senior said. "We're not going to the moon. We want to make a better life for us. We built the country, and we want more now in return for that."

His comments were echoed earlier in the program by the Rev. Williams, who said that the top question leading to the state and national conferences for the aging is the quality of life of an older American can live in the United States.

He pointed out that 10% of the nation's population, or 20 million persons, are 65 years old or older. And there are another 42 million persons who are between 45 and 65 years and are looking toward retirement in the future.

"We want a better society and a better America," said the 30-year-old Inkster clergyman.

FOLLOWING ARE some of the points mentioned most frequently by residents at the forum:

• Because of a doctors' shortage, the government should support those students who want to become doctors.

• Medicare, a federal program which pays most of medical and hospital costs for seniors, should be expanded to cover all of the costs said a woman who reported her drug bills alone were \$25 a month.

• Expansion of the medicare program to include costs of foot care, dentists, and eyeglasses.

• Simplified medicare procedures were urged by a widow who can't collect her late husband's social security benefits but isn't old enough to collect her own benefits.

• Simplified procedures at food stamp centers.

• Expansion of the medicare program to pay full costs of nursing home care, "which can eat up your savings in no time," said one gray-haired man.

• Provision of a cost-of-living escalator clause in the present social security program.

• Special exemptions for assessments for local public improvements and local property taxes.



NEW, MAN-MADE LAKE — Oakland County's newest lake is this oxidation lagoon near Ford Motor Co.'s Wixom Assembly Plant. It covers 16 acres and was created as the third stage in the plant's waste-water-treatment system. It's designed to further purify

treated waste water (sewage) through natural biological processes. It's Ford's first such lake in the U.S. It contains 17.5 million gallons of water and covers an area the size of 14.5 football fields. Note the I-96 freeway at back, upper right.

Rah Squad Selected

Junior high cheerleaders have been selected at Claranceville. Eighth grade leaders are: Alison Dummer, Cindy Fisher, Arlene Schrieblman, Linda Greenberg, Kathy Mills and Bonnie Lewkowitz.

On the seventh grade squad are: Tracy Bowles, Debbie Cappola, Jeanine Haddad, Carol Harris, Maria Scharren-

berg and Jean Socolovitch. Alternates are Kim Couch and Lori LaRowe. Sponsor is Miss Sandra Kaweck.

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Park Authority Tax Vote Eyed

The proposal to increase the revenue of the Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority through an increase in the property tax millage so that the authority can become responsible for the management and future development of Belle Isle Park will not be on the ballot in the Nov. 3 election.

This was announced by David O. Laidlaw, director of the Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority, a regional park agency serving the counties of Livingston, Macomb, Oakland, Washtenaw and Wayne.

The residents of the city of Detroit gave permission for the authority to lease Belle Isle Park in the primary of Aug. 4 by a 55 per cent of the total vote.

Laidlaw pointed out that the next step is for the Legislature to amend the authority's "Enabling Act" permitting an additional 1/4 mill and call for a referendum within the five counties comprising the HCMA metropolitan park district.

HE STATED that this vote probably would not occur until the next general election. Laidlaw stated that the proposal to increase the tax revenues of the authority is necessary not only for the management and future development of Belle Isle, but also to develop several other new regional parks which are needed throughout the five-county district. The authority's long-range program for new developments will be presented to the people of the district prior to a millage referendum.

The authority has used its present 1/4 mill revenues to develop a system of nine regional parks covering 11,825 acres in the five-county area

and is presently acquiring and developing two future sites.

The HCMA parks include Metropolitan Beach near Mt. Clemens (550 acres); Stony Creek Metropolitan Park near Utica (3,500 acres); Marshbank Metropolitan Park southwest of Pontiac (115 acres); Kensington Metropolitan Park near Milford (4,300 acres); Delhi (45 acres); Dexter-Huron (115 acres) and Hudson Mills Metropolitan Park (700 acres), each located northwest of Ann Arbor; Lower Huron Metropolitan Park near Belleville (1,000 acres); and Willow Metropolitan Park between New Hudson and Flat Rock (1,500 acres). Willow Park only offers limited use since expansion of its facilities will continue in 1971-72.

NBD Shifts Farmington Personnel

Two Observerland men are among a three-member management personnel realignment in Farmington by National Bank of Detroit.

William H. Patterson, of 30945 Pipers Lane, Farmington, has been promoted to administrative manager for the Farmington area group.

His post at the Farmington office has been filled by Richard M. Press, of Wayne, formerly manager of the Grand River-Lakeway office.

James S. Schoening, of 2555 Beatrice, Livonia, senior assistant manager at the Farmington office, has been reassigned to the Grand River-Lakeway office as senior assistant manager in charge, replacing Press.

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