

OBSERVATION POINT

Campaigners Ignored People's Problems

By Philip H. Power

This has been an odd campaign.

It has been marked more by advertising techniques than by honest debate, more by concentration on personalities than on programs, more by confusion over means than attention to ends. At a time when the problems of this land were never more pressing, we have been fed messages concerning Spiro Agnew's ineptness or Hubert Humphrey's funny looking face.

It leaves you with a vaguely unsatisfied feeling, as though the pretty girl you were going to go out with had suddenly turned up fat and dumpy.

I do not know who has won, since this is being written before the polls close. But I do know that in important ways the American people have lost.

NOWHERE HAVE they lost more than here in the suburbs.

For if one message comes clearly through the gabble this

fall, it is that our systems of local government are not up to the job. But no message has come through from any of the candidates about what exactly they propose to do about it.

New York City is close to breakdown, but both Humphrey and Nixon seem unaware of it.

The route for I-696 in Oakland County is still unsettled, after years and millions of dollars of waiting, but none of the candidates for state representative have had anything to say about it.

Juvenile crime keeps going up, yet candidates for district judge (except Earl Opperhauser in Farmington and Tom Healy in Plymouth) by and large have not discussed just how to stop it.

Our system for financing education is clearly breaking down, yet neither candidates for state representative nor school board members have produced and pushed carefully thought-out proposals for reform.

Rubbish and junk keeps building up in municipal dumps, yet proposals for an area-wide incinerator are stalled in inter-municipal committees. Trolleys are planted in some area lakes, but no one seems willing to face the fact they'll never live in the polluted water.

Policemen and firemen, expected to do an increasingly dangerous and complicated job, want more money, but no one seems to have much to say about how to get it. Teachers, increasingly organized into bargaining units, threaten to shut down the schools. But the main reaction seems to be an attempt to force the teachers back to work through ineffective court injunctions.

THE PROBLEM obscured by the campaign is that our systems of local government may have been effective to deal with the problems of 50 years ago, but the evidence is becoming increasingly clear that they just aren't up to dealing with the problems of today—let alone those of the future.

In the middle of the "elect me because I'm a good guy" campaign, we keep straining our ears for a few comments on how to revitalize our local government so it can do the job. But what comes is the sound of silence.

If I am convinced of anything, it is that the next revolution in

government effectiveness will take place on the local and state level.

These government units are close to the problems. They are, in theory, responsive to the people.

They are supposed to make the issues understandable in local, personal and concrete terms. They have taxing and administrative powers. But they don't work very well.

The guy who stands up and talks plainly about these problems in the next campaign may be rare, but he'll sure get our vote, regardless of his party or how nice a guy he is.

GO AWAY KID, YOU'RE BOTHERING ME



Emory Daniels Writes...

Garden City's Industrial Park No Real Issue

With the political surge ended, it may be proper to discuss a campaign issue in Garden City without being accused of taking sides or influencing the election's outcome.

The failure of the Garden City Industrial Park to develop became a campaign issue, but a close examination of the situation reveals the problem is not political and will not be solved by promises from either candidates or elected officials.

The park was originally owned by a private individual who declared bankruptcy in 1966. It is now owned by H. F. Campbell Co., formerly Lebo Corp. Campbell will sell the land and all the development will be accomplished by the clients with city government out of the picture.

THE CITY HAS already contributed the basic ingredients—water, sewer and paving. The other wants of industry cannot be provided by the city, and this is where the bottleneck exists.

The industrial park is not attracting clients by the hordes because Garden City is hurt by its geography. By geographical accident, the city is not located near any waterway or express way—the only route industry can use to ship goods to and from Garden City is Ford Road.

This limits industrial clients to those who truck their goods, and firms don't get enthusiastic over the prospect of trucking on Ford with its heavy traffic volume and numerous traffic lights.

The lack of accessibility to the industrial park is the main bottleneck. It is industrial clients who must invest risk capital, and at present it's not worth their risk to locate in Garden City.

Economic planners claim there is probably enough land zone

industrial in Metropolitan Detroit to take care of industry's needs until year 2000. With an abundance of sites to choose from, industry will pick those sites where the most profits can be realized.

PROMISES by local officials or candidates to develop the industrial park are not realistic. The bottleneck is on Ford Road, and that strip belongs to the State Highway Department, not the city.

The industrial park is not dead for all time; Ford Road can be improved; and as industrial sites become scarce, Garden City's competitive position will improve.

An industrial development committee could be activated, but their selling job would be tough because they would have no control over availability of industrial sites elsewhere and very little control over improving accessibility to the park.

The desire to develop the park will remain strong since industry would contribute a good chunk to the tax collections. The desire should be maintained, but homeowners shouldn't get excited over the prospect of industry immediately locating in the community.

It was a poor campaign issue because voters were misled into believing city government was capable of filling the industrial park and needed new leadership to do so.

The issue was completely irrelevant to the election, because no matter who heads city government, the park will remain undeveloped until forces outside the community change existing conditions.

Bob Selwa Writes

What's Up? Crime Data!

Is crime really on the rise? The crime statistics would indicate so—or is what is on the rise the crime data?

That in part is the case, And those who realize it include the police chief and public safety director of Livonia.

When given the latest FBI uniform crime reports showing a decrease in reported crimes of violence in Livonia and an increase in reported crimes of property, Police Chief James N. Jordan was cautious about the statistics, and rightly so. For statistics are fallible and are

only as good as the person interpreting them.

IN THE MATTER of crime, the statistics steadily show more reported violations of laws. But, as Prof. Elmer H. Johnson of the University of North Carolina points out, the factors involved in this increase of reported violations of laws include the following:

First, the apparent rise in criminal behavior is often only a reflection of a decline in the tolerance of a given form of behavior. In the old days, it was

just a youthful prank for a kid to steal a watermelon; today it is reported to police as a crime incident.

Second, the higher crime rate partially reflects better police work. The police are better trained today in the detection of crimes. But when they do detect a crime, it shows up in the statistics where it did not before.

Third, latent tendencies toward crime are enhanced by the sociocultural environment. That is, criminal laws are shaped by the character and interests of those groups most influential in shaping legislation. During Prohibition, the latent tendency of some people toward drinking too much was enhanced by the environment that made it a challenge to drink—an unlawful challenge. And increasingly there are more criminal laws of all kinds put on the books.

Fourth, and most important, with the growth of large cities, the method of social control has changed. In the small rural society, the family and the neighborhood controlled behavior. Today people turn to the police.

A boy who took an item from a country store was known by the storeowner who then told the father about it—and the father knew how to take strong disciplinary action.

AS A RESULT, the police play an increasing role in social control. In the professionalization of their efforts, they detect crimes better and record them better.

The improved police work and the transformation from the rural society's close-knit bonds to the urban society's reliance on the police, are what the rise in crime statistics is really about.

Tim Richard Writes

This Year We Note Real 'Armistice Day'

It used to be "Armistice Day," but we had no many wars in this century that it's now "Veterans Day."

It's the day we pay tribute, either by a parade or just a prayer, to the men and women who have done uniforms in the service of the United States of America.

But this year's Veterans Day—next Monday—has a special significance. It marks the 50th anniversary of the cease-fire of World War I.

The armistice took effect at the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month of 1918. Their ranks are thinner each year, but we still have three bar-

racks of the VVWV—Veterans of World War I—in Observerland. One is in Redford Township, one in Farmington and one in Plymouth.

It's good that the observance of Armistice Day has been extended to cover all veterans of all wars, because although we promise never to forget their sacrifices, the truth is that we do forget.

If you doubt that, ask some of the young folks—and some of the oldtimers, too—who fought in World War I. (Answer: Germany and the Austro-Hungarian Empire were on one side; Russia, France, Great Britain and Italy were on the other; the U.S. joined the British-French side 2½ years after the war started.)

You know a lot of veterans, probably many in your own neighborhood—the wispy-haired man in his 80s who fought in the Spanish-American War to the still pink-cheeked lad with the old eyes who just got back from Vietnam. You honor them every day. Others are deserving of special attention on Veterans Day because they won't come back. They died on a battlefield; they succumbed at premature ages because they had been weakened by the war; others are in hospital, temporarily or permanently.

Whatever each man or woman's fate, we'll remember them all Nov. 11, and take special note that it was a half-century ago this year that the end of World War I started this solemn observance.

An Invisible Transfer Of Power

EDITOR'S NOTE: Yesterday America voted. To some, including Theodore H. White, author of "The Making of the President—1960," it is an emotional time, full of meaning. In the opening pages of his book, White wrote a description of his reactions to election day which has now become a classic. We're pleased to bring it to you.

"It was invisible, as always... 'On election day America is Republican until five or six in the evening. It is in the last few hours of the day that working people and their families vote, on their way home from work or after supper; it is then, at evening, that America goes Democratic if it goes Democratic at all.

"All of this is invisible, for it is the essence of the act that as it happens it is a mystery in which millions of people each fit one fragment of a total secret together, none of them knowing the shape of the whole.

"What results from the fitting together of these secrets is, of course, the most awesome transfer of power in the world—the power to marshal and mobilize, the power to send men to kill or be killed, the power to tax and destroy, the power to create and the responsibility to do so, the power to guide and the power to heal—all committed into the hands of one man.

"Heroes and philosophers, brave men and vile, have since Rome and Athens tried to make this particular manner of transfer of power work effectively; no people has succeeded at it better, over a longer period of time, than the Americans."

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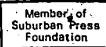
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