OBSERVATION POINT

Legislature's Inaction Lies At Heart Of Bussing Issue

Yesterday the State Legislature reconvened for the fall session. That means that Lansing will be filled with exhalations of hot air and the clanking sounds of political deals being cut until around Dec. 15 - minus, of course, the week everybody fakes

off for deer season. This year, the deer may be safer than the hides of some legislators, who have struggled through the past 10 months in what most observers judge to be an unproductive and frustrating

Remaining on the lawmak-ers' agenda is a whole slew of unresolved issues. Heading the list is the matter

of school bussing. Last week Rep. Alex Pilch (D-Dearborn) said he would introduce a resolution urging the State Board of Education to appeal Federal Judge Stephen J. Roth's integration decision, and House Speaker William Ryan (D-Detroit) thinks the bussing issue alone could consume three to five weeks.

ALSO ON THE docket of interest to the suburbs are:

 Tax measures (including a possible tax on motels and hotels in Detroit and Oakland County) to finance a new stadium, either in Detroit or near Pontiac -- or possibly both.

possibly both.

• Mass transit between Detroit and the suburbs is needed, but it's up in the air what the legislature will do with Gov. William Milliken's proposed 1.3 cent gasoline tax hike to pay the bill.

• There are 270,000 snowmo-bilers in the state, many of them living in this area. The Legislature has to pass some kind of registration, noise, safety and operations rules.

 Most pressing is some kind of resolution of how education in Michigan is to be financed. Proposals to cut the property tax and replace it with an increased, possibly graduated, income tax are stalled; until this matter is settled, no school district in this area has much of a chance to pass any millages.

PART OF THE reason the legislative backlog is so stagger-ing is that the mechanisms of getting agreement in Lansing are pretty clumsy and outmoded.

Lt. Gov. James Brickley was in Farmington over the weekend and spoke to that point. "The legislative branch was designed to be clumsy," he observed, "but it has more power than the government of the country of the nor and the court put together.'

"Sluggishness is built into ystem," Brickley added, "So the system. many legislators, working through committees, each with a political career to protect -- the process is intended to be slow

Brickley came up with two ideas to improve the Legislature's performance: Keep the two house Legislature, perhaps with a reduced number of seats, to expedite legislation: restrict the time in which the Legislature could act, to force prompt consid-eration of problems.

CLEARLY, Brickley wasn't ready with specific proposals on the problem of how to reform the institution of the Legislature to make it more responsive to the people's needs. But at least he was aware that a problem exists.

To show just how legislative inaction.can lead to real prob-lems, consider the school bussing crisis.

The Legislature has known for years that the property tax is an unfair and outmoded means of financing education. Further, it has recognized that it treats education unequally across various school districts, leading to unequal education for kids

But the Legislature shillyshallied all this year on how to clean up the problem.

Then Judge Roth dropped his bombshell, saying in effect that education was unequal for kids in the state and that one way to make it equal was to bus kids across districts.

I'm not sure if the Legisla-ture had cleared up the problem of school financing that Judge Roth wouldn't have ruled the way he did. But the Legislature's failure to act certainly added to the pressure for Roth to make the ruling he did.

I'M INCLINED to believe that one of the big political issues of the next 20 years will be how to retain our democratic system of government but simultaneous-ly make it more effective in solving problems, more respon-sive to the real needs of the people, and more prompt in facing hard choices and making needed decisions.

Perhaps the Legislature ought to put the reform of its own procedures on top of its agenda for this year. The matter's impor-tant, as anyone concerned about bussing recognizes, and if the Legislature started thinking about the problem right now we might even get some kind of action within the decade.

Some Liberals Cry 'Bigot' From Their White Sanctuarie's

By MARTHA MAHAN

Because I've got a twisted sense of humor, it's funny. I just don't like the word "hypocrisy." Anyway, the other night I

got involved over coffee with a bunch of self-viewed liberals and

we got to talking bussing.

I 'lowed that I objected to I 'lowed that I objected to having my 15-year-old daughter bussed from her present school to one in Detroit's inner city where admittedly her physical safety would be in danger. Whereupon, one and all at the table assured me I am a bigot.

It was explained to me that the property of th

It was explained to me that racial disharmony is the greatest peril to continuance of our nation and that integration through bussing children to bi-racial schools is the country's only salvation. And here I was objecting

I not only was a higot but teetering on the edge of treason. They were willing to sacrifice their children. Why wasn't I?

NOW HERE'S the twist.

I live in Detroit. My daughter goes to an integrated school, Redford High. All the way through her elementary and high school years, she has had Negro teachers as well as white. No problem.

But I am unwilling (adamantly so) to have her bussed to where part of her education would involve learning to de-

The people who call me bigot have their children enrolled in all-white schools with all white teachers. The children have no contact with blacks of any kind in

HOW, I ASKED myself later, would they answer this paradox? But I knew. They'd say "quality education."

But that's a copout.

If the nation's only salvation is integration, and the liberals believed it in their souls, they'd ioin me in Detroit and send their join me in Detroit and send their children to integrated schools. Detroit's school population now is 65 per cent black, 35 per cent white. They need more white students for balance but where are my liberal suburban friends?

They should be willing to sacrifice their children's "quality education" as gladly as they are willing to sacrifice my child's physical safety.

physical safety.

BUT THERE'S another

They sorrowfully predicted that Nixon would appoint to the Supreme Court men who would outlaw forced bussing. Thus my friends would be denied their

cherished hope of sending their children to integrated schools. They also, incidentally, will be able to proclaim in the future how they yearned to send their children to integrated schools but that so and so Nixon prevented

And so they engage in titillating discussions of liberal theory, secure in the belief that they'll never have to face the reality of their child being flogged with a chain by a classmate.

The State Highway Depart ment may be doing a great job of improving traffic flow in the future with the Schoolcraft Road freeway which will probably be completed by the spring of 1973.

But it isn't doing a thing to improve traffic conditions at the present time. It appears there is a total lack of communication between those in charge of work on the freeway, which is quite a mess at the present time, and the motoring public.

IN THE FIRST place, there is the closing of Stark Road to cars from Schoolcraft. Nowhere along Schoolcraft is there a sign indicat-ing that Stark is closed. Thus, hundreds of drivers turn west on Schoolcraft from Farmington Road to go down Stark, turn left at the crossover and then are greeted with a huge barrier.

In fact, there are signs along

and Stark stating that this is the route for the Farmington detour. To our knowledge, Farmington Road has been open to north and southbound traffic for the past three or four weeks

Let The Drivers Know

R.T. Thompson writes

IT'S ENOUGH TO MAKE YOU "STARK" RAVING MAD!

Those entering Stark from Plymouth Road are warned that the street is closed, but they can enter and then drive all the way to Schoolcraft before running into the barrier.

It appears to us that the Highway Department could give newspapers in the area notifica-tion of the changes and the detours so that the motoring public may be made aware of detours, closed streets, etc.

NOW THERE IS a new. dangerous bottleneck at School-craft and Inkster Roads. After swinging around the newest route changes going east, the highway widens to three lanes at Inkster.

highway narrows to two lanes once one gets across Inkster. This has caused many near-accidents in late evening when cars are leaving the Detroit Race Course and when workers head home from the large industrial plants in

Livonia.

Night after night recently. there have been near-accidents as cars in the outside or third lane suddenly find the way blocked after they have started forward

after mey have started forward.

There isn't a sign anywhere indicating that the road narrows from three to two lanes. Probably one will be erected after three or four accidents.

It's about time the Highway Department awakens to the fact that nutting in a new highway.

that putting in a new highway isn't just a matter of construc-tion...it's high time it gives motorists some idea of what the plans are so that they'll have ome notice of changes

Tim Richard writes

A Few Cool Heads Get Credit

It's fashionable to panic in suburbia over the prospect that a federal court will order crossdistrict bussing with Detroit to

achieve racial balance.

And so it is a pleasure to note that some suburban officials are keeping cool heads, and they should be given public credit for

THE FARMINGTON City Council quietly placed on file a wild-eyed anti-bussing resolution sent by the Farmington Township Board, which passed it the week

Councilman John Allen seemed to speak for that city when he said: "I-am not in favor of bussing but think that this subject is far too big to be made a political factor."

He is right. City government has no business jumping into a school issue like that. The

Farmington City Council showed mature restraint.

IN GARDEN CITY, the , school board has a tough situation because that community – a little older, more settled and smaller than most Observerland suburbs - had one of the strongest reac-

tions against Judge Roth's deci-sion in the Detroit case. The board and superintendent in Garden City, however, didn't wait for frightened people and glory seekers to organize public meetings on the bussing

They showed some initiative and organized their own meetings first. The hysteria in Garden City might have been far worse if school officials hadn't made such an effort to talk to the people and calm them down.

It's too bad that more cities and townships didn't show the

restraint of the Farmington City Council and more school leaders didn't organize their own meet-ings before NAG chapters got

started.
IT ALSO APPEARS that the boycott of schools, which some groups had been calling for Oct. 25, was a dismal flop.

Not all the figures are in at this writing, but it appears that only rarely were absenteeism rates up by more than a few percentage points. And it's possi-ble that even these figures are misleading because Monday and the three prior days have been so dismal that more kids than usual

have colds.

Whatever decision is finally reached on bussing, it's quite clear that it will be made in the courtrooms and the halls of Congress and the Legislatures. It won't be made by boycotts and flamboyant resolutions









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