



By Philip H. Power
Publisher

OBSERVATION POINT

Rep. Griffiths' Study Shows Federal Programs Sap Incentive To Work

What are the richest cities around?

Birmingham? Franklin? Grosse Pointe? Other rich suburbs around the country, like Shaker Heights near Cleveland, Silver Spring near Washington, D.C., or Stamford near New York?

These are rich cities alright. But they're not as rich per family as two communities right here in the suburbs.

Recently released census figures show that Southfield leads all cities in the nation with populations between 50,000 and 100,000 in median (i.e., as many below as above) family income, at \$18,141. Livonia is the richest city in America above 100,000, with a median family income of \$15,216.

Other communities in this area did alright in the economic stakes, too, with income gains in Farmington and Plymouth particularly striking.

NEXT QUESTION. Where does much of this income go? To the government in taxes of course.

And what does the government do with all this money?

It spends it, obviously, but in very curious ways.

For example, perhaps the biggest chunk of the federal government's budget goes into various income maintenance programs, such as Social Security, veterans benefits, food stamps, welfare, unemployment insurance, etc. These programs cost the taxpayers more than \$100 billion per year, which is about \$20 billion more than the very much more publicized Pentagon budget.

Now another number. A recently released government report shows that despite this massive surge of expenditure, the number of persons below the poverty line increased by 139,000 between 1970 and 1971.

In addition, there are now more people than ever on welfare, and most states (including Michigan) which have to pay for welfare are finding that this category is the most rapidly rising part of their budgets.

ALL OF WHICH makes particularly interesting a press release from Congresswoman Martha W. Griffiths that floated into the office before Christmas.

Mrs. Griffiths represents Redford Township, Southfield and Farmington in this area, and to say she steamrollered her opposition in last November's election would be an understatement.

Mrs. Griffiths has two further characteristics. (1) She's a good politician (i.e., tough-minded, responsive to the needs of her

constituents, effective, and smart). (2) She's a member of the House Ways and Means Committee, which is the key group controlling your taxes and mine.

For some years she has been concerned about whether that \$100 billion the feds are spending on public assistance is doing the job, and she can't help but hear what suburban families who work hard and pay their taxes are saying about people who don't work and are quite willing to live off welfare and suchlike.

Mrs. Griffiths is chairman (I'll make it chairwoman or even chairperson if you like, Martha) of a special subcommittee on fiscal policy of the Joint Economic Committee, which is looking into how public income maintenance programs discourage their recipients from wanting to get off the public dole and work for themselves.

THE SUBCOMMITTEE'S study makes fascinating reading.

• In New Jersey an unemployed

man with a wife and two children receiving public assistance and food stamps would add only \$110 to his net monthly income if he took a full-time job paying \$500 a month. In addition, he would lose eligibility for Medicaid, which pays an average of \$52 a month for the medical bills of an AFDC family in New Jersey.

• An aged couple receiving veterans' pensions and a social security check for \$140 per month achieves only a \$30 per month increase in spendable income if one of them earns \$300 per month from a part time job.

• A Tennessee father who is eligible for food stamps and the unemployment insurance maximum gains only \$4 per week by taking a part-time job paying \$75 a week.

• A New Jersey mother of three receiving benefits from Medicaid, aid to dependent children, food

stamps, and public housing would gain only about 20 per cent of the total income derived from taking a full-time job paying as much as \$1,000 per month.

Mrs. Griffiths reports that many government programs base benefits on the recipients' income. So when earnings rise from taking a job, government-provided benefits are reduced. Sometimes this reduction in government benefits is more than the additional income from the job!

What Mrs. Griffiths is showing is that in many cases, government rules themselves discourage recipients of public assistance from wanting to work, thereby continuing their dependence on the government and insuring continued high levels of public assistance spending.

I think her study is a fine one, and I hope she keeps it up.

Maybe some day it will result in cleaning up the welfare mess and reducing all of our taxes.

GOLDEN OF ROTTEN?



Tim Richard writes

Our Expensive Trash Will Be A Gold Mine

No one is happier in his work than an archeologist who has discovered a dump.

I remember the glowing face of the young woman in the string-crocheted pit in the ancient city of Winchester, England, as she proudly dropped a bone on a plate. "Not human," she smiled. "Pig and sheep bones. We've discovered an old Saxon dump," which made it about 1,000 years old.

And the Michigan State University archeologists digging near the statue of Pere Marquette in downtown St. Ignace, seeking the footings of a French trading post.

A dump is valuable because it tells how people lived -- what their technology was like, what games they played, how sophisticated were their art, which other tribes they came in contact with.

IF THAT'S SO, our society shall leave an unusually rich hoard for the archeologists of the third millennium Anno Domini. Our population is still increasing at a tremendous rate, and the rate at which we throw stuff away is increasing faster still.

A Jesuit missionary may leave

behind an empty inkwell or two. An office worker today will discard scores of used ballpoints in his lifetime.

A few broken brandy jugs mark the officers' quarters at an old fort. An American picnic leaves a half-dozen beer cans (aluminum doesn't deteriorate rapidly) and non-biodegradable plastic forks, knives and plates, and the homeowner contributes a non-biodegradable plastic milk container, "throwaway" bottles, and foil wrappings from the TV dinners.

A SURVEY of what local governments are doing about trash has just been completed by the Observer Newspapers, and several frightening ideas emerge.

• The amount per person is increasing.

• It takes longer to rot, and some hardly rot at all.

• We don't want it around us, so we truck it off to rural areas. But there are fewer and fewer sites in those rural areas, and the folks who live there don't want our stuff dumped near them.

• A man driving a dump truck can haul half as many loads when

he must drive twice as far to a dump site.

• We're all going to have to discard less waste material. A law forcing us to recycle beer and pop bottles has been discussed though not passed, yet its passage is inevitable. We may have to do the same with catsup and liquor bottles, too.

• Those good ol' grass roots governments aren't going to be able to do the job. Garden City and Westland are already in a mid-Wayne County disposal authority with incinerators. Lathrup Village is in a similar Oakland County authority. But even such good-sized cities as Southfield and Livonia are still using largely 19th century methods.

EVEN COUNTY-WIDE authorities to incinerate and crush trash aren't the whole solution. That five to 10 per cent residue must still be dumped somewhere -- perhaps outside the county of origin.

Denounce "regional government" if you will, but that's exactly the direction we're headed.

Snob Zoning Case: It Could Have Happened Here

The stories are originating out of Walled Lake, an unfriendly little city of 4,000 in Oakland County, lying north and west of Overland suburbs.

But it could have happened here. And maybe it should have.

For years, Dr. Gordon Yudashkin, then superintendent of Northville State Hospital and now director of the State Dept. of Mental Health, and his successor at NSH, Dr. Richard Budd, have told of the personnel problems they have at the hospital on Seven Mile Rd. in Northville Township.

Public transportation is nonexistent. The bulk of the 900 employees are non-professional and far from highly paid. Many are black. They either couldn't afford or couldn't get adequate housing close to the hospital, where they help care for our mentally ill.

SO THE EMPLOYEES got together and formed a non-profit housing corporation and with some state housing funds paid \$350,000 for 30 acres of land in Walled Lake, only a half-dozen miles north of the hospital.

The people in Walled Lake are little different from those in Overland. Racially, they don't like blacks; economically, they want to practice snob zoning.

When they learned of the housing group's plans, they suddenly and wondrously became very concerned about proper zoning procedures. The land had been re-zoned for multiples in 1967, but suddenly the folks in Walled Lake decided too little public notice had been given.

They went before Oakland Circuit Judge Farrell Roberts, who agreed with them and upheld Walled Lake's refusal to issue a building permit.

The employees housing group won a reversal of Judge Roberts' ruling recently before the State Court of Appeals.

NATURALLY, the Walled Lake folks aren't direct enough to admit they don't want low income blacks living there. Nopp, they looked around for a "legal" way out.

They hired Robert Lord, known locally as counsel for the Tri-County Citizens group, fighting the inter-district school busing order. Lord is a cut above Brooks Patterson, former National Action Group attorney. Lord was successful at intervening in the school busing case where Patterson failed.

Anyway, Lord's tactic will be to go to the State Supreme Court and claim that one of the appeals judges, Victor Targonski, was improperly appointed.

Lord may be successful; Targonski has been one of the most unpopular Democratic politicians ever to hold office in Michigan and was one of the few circuit judges ever voted out of office in Wayne County.

Lawyers and judges operate in a fictional Never-Never Land of rules and procedures, and so they will probably try the case on its legal merits.

But the truth of the matter is that this case is all about bigotry and snob zoning. It happened in Walled Lake. It could have happened here -- and maybe it should have.

—Tim Richard

Editorial & Opinion

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Side Issue Eats Up Valuable Time

County Commissioner Richard E. Manning's (D-Redford Township) recent move to withhold part of Recorder's Judge Justin C. Ravitz's salary was uncalled for.

The particular issue of Ravitz's refusal to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance, Manning's reaction was inappropriate.

MANNING was slow to come to a public conclusion on the county issues during his recent campaign for re-election (e.g. the need for a new jail). But he seems quick to jump onto politically expedient peripheral

'matters such as opposing busing, which is hardly a matter for county government.

Manning's resolution said Ravitz is "a man who espouses Marxism, which is just another name for communism." This is like saying all capitalists are Democrats.

Ravitz made no bones about his radical beliefs when he was running for office, he kept no secrets about them, and the people elected him knowing his political stand.

Manning, who pussy-footed around the county issues, has no room to criticize Ravitz.

—W. Edward Wendover

Sense And Nonsense

Detroit's homicide rate isn't as bad as it seems. It's worse. You see, the murder rate is rising at the same time the population is falling.