

OBSERVATION POINT

Suburban Integration Slowed By Nixon's Decision



By Philip H. Power, Publisher

President Nixon said it bluntly in his press conference last week: "I can assure you that it is not the policy of this government to use the power of the federal government or federal funds... in ways not required by law, for the forced integration of the suburbs. I believe that forced integration of the suburbs is not in the national interest."

So failed the effort by Housing Secretary George Romney to use federally financed programs such as urban renewal as a prod by which to force suburbs to integrate their housing patterns.

The whole issue first came to light here in Michigan in July when it was revealed that some members of Romney's staff wanted to push all-white suburbs such as Warren into racial integration. Howls of rage came from Warren; expressions tightened on faces of most other suburban leaders; and Lendore Romney's campaign for U.S. Senate looked as though it were over before it even got started.

Romney flew to Michigan for an emergency meeting with suburban mayors and leaders in Warren. Inside reports from the meeting have it that Romney was put in a tough position: He tried to argue that integration was a moral requirement, but that his department had no plans to force the suburbs to integrate if they didn't want to. As for his staff's plans, they were just lower level policy drafts and didn't reflect his department's policy.

ROMNEY FLEW back to Washington, having failed to calm the storm in his own

state, only to face a first class fight within the administration.

The issue turned on the phrase "affirmative action," which meant to some in Romney's Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) that the government could actively withhold federal money from suburbs which didn't take adequate action to promote integration under the 1968 Civil Rights Act.

Nixon's press conference remarks appear to indicate that the administration will not require "affirmative action," but will only withhold federal funds if suburbs adopt policies which appear to be discriminatory. Evidence for this conclusion is found in HUD's November suit against a St. Louis suburb for allegedly rezoning land to exclude government-assisted low income housing.

THE SHORT RUN effect of Nixon's announcement on suburbs in this area is likely to be slight.

The law now prohibits the government from providing aid for housing or urban renewal to a community which has a policy of discrimination and which has not taken steps to change it.

Suburbs served by this newspaper do not now have such federal programs in operation, so any attempt to withdraw non-existent federal funds to promote integration is bound to be useless.

However, in the long run it is clear that the Nixon administration has decided for a non-activist policy with respect to suburban integration. This can have no other effect than to slow up integration in the suburbs.

WHETHER OR NOT this is good depends on the individual's point of view.

Personally, I happen to agree with Romney, who feels that race is one of the greatest problems confronting our country today and that it must be solved "if this nation is going to persist."

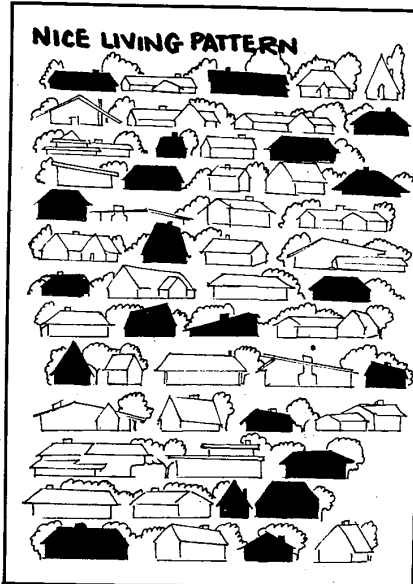
As a practical matter, integration has not happened to any great extent in this area, even though Plymouth and Livonia both have locally-passed ordinances prohibiting discrimination in housing, and the state law on the subject is clear.

Some few black families have moved into Southfield, with a gratifying lack of irresponsible outcry, and a few more are scattered through the northwest suburbs. But in general, black families with enough income to buy expensive houses have not chosen to accept the potential trouble of moving to a white suburb would produce. Further, the goal of racial integration, so much a part of the ideology of a few years ago, has gradually dimmed in attractiveness to blacks.

My guess is that the new federal policy will not change things much in this area, and that it will prevent any new Warren-type incidents for a good while.

Any real chance for meaningful racial integration of the suburbs lies in breaking down high income zoning, which is nearly as effective at keeping black families from moving in as overt discriminatory policies.

And that's going to take a long time.



Dennis Pajot writes

Not Spot For A Thin-Skin

The disappointment in Redford Township Police Chief Edwin Gleza and his cadre is weighing heavily upon me. I've read that he proposed a township ordinance making it a misdemeanor to call police "pigs."

Chief Gleza, proud of his title "a damned good cop," apparently overlooks the romance of the Now generation.

He ignores the possibility that one of his charges may one day hold a similar position and be called "a damned good pig."

Although once abhorred similarly by police, "cop" has come to be generally recognized as a term of affection for the men in blue.

The best dictionary at hand lists "cop" twice. The first time it gives three meanings: policeman, to catch and to steal. The second listing is for a conical mass of thread especially when wound on a spindle; and to the top of a crest, especially of a hill.

POPULAR NOVELS and schoolboy hijinks hearken to the nostalgia of "what's made of copper?"

"He's a good cop" probably once signaled fellow underworld characters that the underpaid, over-endangered poor slob on the corner was making

ends meet by profitably looking in the opposite direction.

Gleza may be at the top of a crest in Wayne County law enforcement, but he's now shown evidence of a conical mass wound on a spindle.

The defiant pigcalls have obviously gotten to him: he's buckled under objective number one: disarm their dispassionate professionalism. Although an apostle of the credo "you have nothing to fear but fear itself," Gleza has panicked.

DESPITE THE fact that the Redford Township board has adopted the ordinance, the damage has been done. Gleza's thin skin has been exposed.

While police units from coast to coast are making positive "points" with just the opposite tack: football games between "pigs" and "goats," (with real mascots in Wash-tenaw County, by the way). Gleza rings up the red flag before the bull.

(Now, there's a term that was once used to denote a policeman, too. Wonder whatever became of it?)

And sorry it is that we witness the concession. Wonder how long it'll be before the apple garnish is applied.

EMORY DANIELS WRITES:

Put Up, Shut Up!!

During the political campaign now concluded, "law and order" was a key issue. Now it seems appropriate that those words be backed up with action.

There are many Americans, this writer included, who are less impressed with empty rhetoric and more convinced of motives when action is seen. A big issue was made about

the rock-throwing incident at San Jose State. Now that the election is over, it is time to act.

Reports circulated on that incident indicate the rock-throwing was deliberately provoked. Our nation has a Federal Riot Act to punish persons who choose to incite riots.

Congress should, without delay, conduct a bi-partisan

investigation into the San Jose incident and determine who incited the disturbance and what the motives were. Then, let the axe fall.

Let the axe fall regardless of who the guilty party is. Inciting a riot is criminal behavior regardless of motive. It is even criminal behavior if the motive happens to be political.

DISSENT

View points expressed in DISSENT do not necessarily reflect those of Observer Newspapers Inc., but are presented in the belief that publication of all segments of thought on a public issue is a prerequisite to understanding and progress.

By JOE LUITINK, Livonia

In a recent letter (Nov. 25, 1970) you made many assumptions and implications which merit serious challenge.

Teachers, alone, did not pass Proposal C nor did they fear compulsion, work or poverty. The many I know voted to keep church and state separate.

Money (salaries) is not related to Proposal C but you mentioned it. Teachers do not start at \$100 per month; maximum is reached in 10-11 years. Doctors, lawyers, dentists, supervisory personnel, many tradesmen and more earn comparable wages and sooner. School year length is not set by teachers nor can they change it.

DO NOT BE SO certain private schools would not exist if public schools did their job. Military and preparatory schools exist for special purposes.

Religious schools provide a desired setting for education. Seventh-Day-Adventists, for one, readily admit this is so. It is a worthy purpose (if privately financed).

The issue most disturbing is discipline. Do you really believe teacher organizations can pressure the legislature and courts into providing discipline?

Centuries of human experience indicate that human behavior is not a matter of decree except under totalitarianism which I'm certain you did not have in mind.

Discipline has always been achieved best by cooperative efforts between schools, parents and students. Schools have students only about 35 hours per week which hardly leaves teachers solely responsible for student discipline. Additionally, public schools receive undesirable students discharged by non-public schools (we have no choice).

SCHOOL SYSTEMS and buildings within a system vary in discipline matters. Generalizing the matter is easy but inaccurate. If you know of a school where discipline is out of hand it is your duty as a taxpayer and parent to make your voice heard by the principal, P.T.A. and Board of Education.

"Let's (your words) start improving public schools." Do something.

I am a junior high school teacher in Redford Union schools. I am a father of three. I am not an expert on education or parenthood but experience with both makes me doubt most of your ideas about effecting discipline.

I am pleased that your letter was printed. It is important that others know what you think about school matters.

R.T. Thompson writes

A Propensity For Misdoing

It appears as if the Schoolcraft College Board of Trustees will never learn that there is a right and a wrong way to do things.

Judging from recent happenings, it seems: the board always manages to act in the reverse of what one expects of a group that is handling the affairs of one of Michigan's fastest growing community colleges.

After watching the actions of the trustees since 1962, one wonders just how the college has been able to make so much progress with an apparent mill-

stone around the collective necks of the administration.

FOR INSTANCE, just a month ago the matter of an appointment of an academic dean was before the board. It was apparent from the discussion at the opening meeting that the matter had been discussed and a decision reached.

Then with the appointment on the agenda, Trustee Dr. George Martin asked for an "executive" session to discuss the proposed appointment. He expressed the belief that this was a personnel matter and

thus an executive or closed session affair.

"I have some feelings towards the proposed appointment," he said. "I don't think they should be aired in an open meeting."

Others on the board felt differently, but the closed session was called, the trustees closed the conference room, and within a reasonable time the appointment was announced as previously agreed upon.

It is our thought that if Dr. Martin had objections or second thoughts on the person involved, he should have made them in the open session. After all, he indicated he had some reservations, so why not air them?

THEN THERE WAS the matter of naming the new president who will succeed Dr. Eric Bradner at the end of June.

First, let us point out that the college has an excellent public relations person, one who is capable of handling any matters decided by the Trustees.

In this instance, Board Chairman Jane Moehle personally wrote the news release, personally delivered pictures of the appointee and never even had the courtesy to notify the public relations director of the decision.

We are unable to find any reason for such action. After all the PR man is paid to handle releases, and the least that could have been done was to tell him of the appointment so that he wouldn't be caught cold as he was.

Editorial & Opinion

OBSERVER NEWSPAPERS, INC.

Philip H. Power, Publisher

The Livonia Observer • The Redford Observer • The Westland Observer • The Garden City Observer • The Plymouth Mail & Observer • The Southfield News & Observer • The Farmington Enterprise & Observer



Published by Observer Newspapers, Inc.

271 S. Main Street, P.O. Box 200, Plymouth, Mich. 48170

Serving the communities of: Livonia, Plymouth, Plymouth Township, Canton Township, Farmington Farmington Township, Redford Township, Garden City, Westland, Southfield, Lathrup Village, Franklin, Bingham Farms, Village of Beverly Hills