

By Philip M. Power
Publisher

OBSERVATION POINT

Effect Of New Economic Plan Uncertain For Suburban Families

Here in the suburbs, President Nixon's dramatic announcement of a new set of economic policies for the nation seems to have raised more questions than answers.

Local businessmen, school officials, local government authorities and labor leaders all expressed varying degrees of confusion when asked just what the new package meant for them in specific terms.

Most, however, agreed that the President's proposals for setting the nation's stagflation (stagnant plus inflating) economy aright were in the right direction.

Some local businessmen criticized the President for waiting so long before announcing his program, while others questioned the timing, coming so soon after the President's insistence that the administration's previous economic policies were proper and that the correct course was "steady as you go."

FOR THE AVERAGE family living in the suburbs, the President's proposals seemed to mean this:

- If you were scheduled to get a pay increase within the next 90 days, you probably won't get it. If, however, you have a union contract that contains a cost of living wage adjustment or a previously negotiated wage increase within the next three months, you probably won't get it either.

- If you are renting an apartment or house, you can be pretty sure you won't have your rent raised for three months.

- When you go shopping, you probably won't find the prices you pay higher than you paid for the past month. In theory, the President asked for a voluntary price freeze at the levels of the past month. But food prices, for example, vary widely because of the fluctuations in the cost of the raw food. You may find supermarkets charging the highest prices they charged during the past month.

- If you find that businesses are charging prices higher than they charged in the past month, it simply is not clear what to do about it. Clearly, the massive machinery to police the price freeze (even ignoring its voluntary nature) does not exist now, and it seems unlikely that the government will hire thousands of bureaucrats in the next 90 days to do the strict enforcement of a full price freeze seems to indicate.

- As a taxpayer, you will gain from the President's program, both from a \$100 increase in the personal exemption for income tax and from the \$500 increase in the standard deduction. Local taxes will not be affected directly

by the new program, although school and local government officials are uncertain about what to do about previously negotiated salary increases or cost of living raises which are due to take effect within 90 days.

- If you plan to buy a new car, you should find the domestic makes cheaper by the amount of the to be repealed 7% automotive excise tax - about \$200 - which the President says he will insist be passed on to the buyers. If you had planned to buy an import, better check the prices; the 10% import surcharge probably will make them more expensive than they have been.

- If you're planning to get a mortgage, better wait and watch for a bit. Interest rates were not affected by the wage-price freeze, and probably they will vary widely in the coming weeks.

- If you've got your heart set on a fall vacation abroad, better figure it will cost more than you expected. The dollar will drop in value against foreign currencies, meaning you will spend more dollars to buy a hotel room or that souvenir than you expected.

OBVIOUSLY, the President's move was caused by two factors of overriding importance.

First, it was clear that the previous economic game plan simply wasn't working. Prices were still going up at around 4%

per year, and most economists expected that inflation rate to increase in the last half of this year. But unemployment

remained very high, and was particularly crippling in hard-goods production areas such as southeastern Michigan. Internationally, the dollar was in deep trouble.

Second, the President must have realized that his political future rested on doing something - promptly - about the economic issue. Democrats and even members of the GOP within the administration had been attacking the President for doing nothing, and for the President to have stood pat would have given the election away.

THE NET EFFECT on us in the suburbs will take a while to emerge.

Almost certainly, the drop in auto prices will increase consumer demand and improve employment levels in this general area, although tool and die shops will continue to suffer hard times.

As the suburbs, directly or indirectly, depend heavily on the auto industry, we will probably be better off as a result of the policy change, though how long it will take for the average guy to feel any improvement is anybody's guess.

The housewife probably will see some leveling off of prices, but whether this will be enough to offset other increases in the cost of living and the wage freeze hitting hubby's paycheck is unclear.

As Treasury Secretary John Connally said Monday, any specific answers to specific questions will have to wait.



IT'S A START...

Parents Expecting Too Much Of Agencies?

By DOUG JOHNSON

Local communities are responding with increasing urgency to the youth drug problems with newly founded agencies and paid directors.

But we fear some parents and youths are placing too high a hope on these fledgling organizations. They may not be able to do what we want them to - curb, or end the drug abuse problem.

First, let's look at what's being done.

VIRTUALLY EVERY Observers school district and community is doing something about drug abuse. Here's a sample:

In Livonia two men and a bunch of volunteers man a community problem agency funded by the schools and the

cities of Livonia and Westland.

In Southfield, Operation Headline West, with city sanction and funds, has opened new headquarters.

In Redford, a group known as Redford Information Coordinating Committee on Drugs (RICCOD) runs a rap line.

In Farmington, a group of citizens formed the Farmington Area Advisory Commission.

The list goes on.

THE SCHOOLS HAVE responded with new and expanded information in science, physical education and sociology classes. Teachers have held workshops, and curriculum has been expanded.

The result: plenty of factual information for every student on the danger of drugs.

A Southfield school trustee, Leonard Teicher, sees a danger in the school's factual approach.

Facts don't really reach the young people who need the help. Something more is needed, something that goes beyond facts into counseling, guidance, clinical help perhaps, he says.

All of this is based on the typical American institutional response. One recalls the post-Sputnik panic when great sums of money and energy were dumped into the schools to save the U.S. in the science and technology race. The response was monolithic, stunning. The results: fewer students enter pure science and medicine than are needed.

WE HAD HIGH hopes for what education could do.

We seem to be holding the

same high optimism for the rap lines and expanded school curriculums dealing with drug abuse.

There is a danger in all of this.

The formation of rap centers and curriculums help ease our anxiety and our guilt over what we see the young people doing with drugs.

But our faith in both the schools and the rap center should at best be guarded. Drug abuse will not lead itself to such an easy solution, any more than traffic deaths have been significantly cut by the state's efficient driver education program.

A look at why people abuse drugs points to why we must be careful in placing high hopes in drug programs.

Drug abuse is symptomatic of other, more universal problems relating to youth, and their place in society. These new programs should not be shut down, just viewed in their proper perspective.

To do otherwise would be to assume these school and community drug programs are the best, only or final answer.

But we are going to have to look further, deeper. In the meantime, the drug programs are a beginning - but just that, no more.

Time To Iron Out Problems

By DAN McCOSH

It is nice to see members of the Southfield City Council taking

an interest in the city's drug and youth - problem center "Headline."

But the kind of interest being shown is not likely to do either the fledgling program or the city any good.

NOT THAT the directors of Headline are free from errors in judgment.

It is becoming clear that in setting up the telephone center and a "drop-in" center in the old Water Board building on Berg Rd. and 10½ Mile, the directors were needlessly uncommunicative with the city council.

And after the building opened, youthful exuberance ran over the bounds of good taste when the center was decorated.

But now it appears that some council members are using these mistakes to take cheap shots at a program which, while not perfect, is the only one Southfield has.

IF HALF the energy now going into criticism of the "Headline" program were directed at the problems that were the original incentive for the program the

city would be a lot better off.

It would be worthwhile to remember that local youths have died from drugs this year.

More specifically, if the "Headline" and Parent-Youth Guidance people on the one hand, and city officials on the other, insist on staying on opposite sides of the fence, the current attempt to secure a full time social services director is likely to go right down the drain.

NO COMPETENT director is likely to respond to a community that seems like it is likely to give him only half-hearted support.

At this point, it seems crucial that PYG and the Headline Commission meet with the city council and (a) get the present misunderstandings ironed out and leave room for communication in the future; and (b) cooperate with the search for the best man to fill the post of social services director.

Anything less would indicate all parties concerned are more interested in the sound of their voices than in solving the problems at hand.

Hats Off To Two Champs

By R. T. THOMPSON

Hats off to Redford Township as the baseball capital of Observersland and perhaps the entire state of Michigan.

A team in the Bronco world series in California is one of four representing the United States, and other club is seeking a national championship in the All American Amateur tourney in Johnstown, Pa.

The Bronco squad is comprised of youngsters in the 11 to 12-year-old group and the team in Pennsylvania is made up of players in the class D range of 16 to 20.

The Broncos, better known as the Redford Township Fisher American Broncos, have advanced farther than any other team in the area in recent years.

It has been a rough, tough competitive route that found the Broncos winning a tournament in Redford Township in which they were hosts.

Then off to Chicago for a tournament that found the team winning five games in a span of three days to qualify for the northern U.S. finals.

THAT TOURNAMENT was held last weekend in Oak Park, Ill., a suburb of Chicago, and once again the Broncos had to win four straight . . . and that earned a trip to California to compete against Mexico, Guatemala, Philippines, Canada and three other representatives from the United States.

The luck of the draw pits Redford against Mexico, defending champion, in the opening round Thursday night. And the best wishes of every resident of the community will be with the youngsters all the way.

What a boost for Redford Township, Observersland and Metropolitan Detroit if they come back with the title.

Just imagine the thrills for youngsters of that age competing against teams from all parts of the world and with a world's championship stake to the winner.

The tournament is being played near Oxnard, Calif. on the site of an old Air Force Base which has been renovated and has a completely lighted diamond with a seating capacity of more than 10,000.

We hope the pressure of playing before such a large audience won't affect the Broncos but after all that's the test of a true champion, winning under any conditions.

THE STORY is a bit different for the Redford outfit competing in Johnstown, Pa.

Redford teams have competed there before and have come back with the championship. Still, there are the same pressures and to win a team has to be a true champion.

Redford has a group of players hailed as perhaps the best ever to represent this area. It has everything required of a champion - good pitching, tremendous hitting and fielding second to none in the state.

Good luck, boys, we're with you, win or lose. You have gone a long ways already.

Still Seek Secret Witness

Is a Secret Witness fund the answer to the question "Who ran down and killed Chris Beattie in early June in Livonia and then sped away...a hit-and-run fatality?"

The bereaved family has offered \$1,000 in a Secret Witness fund for the information leading to the arrest and conviction of the guilty party or parties.

Do you have information you haven't told? Could you provide the tip necessary to solve the case?

You wouldn't be involved in the case in any manner. Just

drop a letter to Secret Witness, Box 333, Observer Newspapers, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia, Mich.

Do not sign it, do not have a return address, have nothing in the letter that would implicate you. Just write five numbers in one corner of the letter, write the same five numbers just below it and tear off your portion. That is the only identification needed.

If your tip solves the case and your corner of the letter matches perfectly the corner ripped off the communication, you will be paid in cash, no questions asked.

Editorial & Opinion

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