

EDITORIAL

Who Said They Can't Take It Away From Us?

God may be in his Heaven but all is not right in the world.

Las Vegas appears to be in the spotlight for very unfavorable publicity as the holiday season approaches.

We have been having a tourist slump, and many local business are hard pressed to survive. What with the Triple Murders, bodies discovered in the surrounding areas, the Howard Hughes affair, and last but by no means least the raising of the Airfare between Las Vegas and Los Angeles to the ridiculous price of \$25.00 each way Coach. This rise in fare cannot help our tourist trade. Within the last few years the fare has been raised from 13.65 to 17.30 to 21.00 to the new rate of twenty-five dollars. We are aware that cost have increased in operation of Airlines. We were promised, when the Government was helping with tax dollars, the designing of jets, that if they would operate with more speed and less cost, Airfares would be cheaper. But now the fares go up and up.

Jets like other carriers cost less to operate over shorter distances, and yet fares to Las Vegas are higher than fares to San Francisco, which is better than a hundred miles farther. Why?

Planes are as crowded, if not more so, coming to Las Vegas than to most other cities.

The Railroads and Bus fares were regulated on the number of miles one traveled.

Why the Airlines have the power to raise their fares almost at will?

It would appear that they are involved in a plot to slow down our tourist trade.

We need to wire our Congressmen and Senators, to try and do something about these high rates.

We are trying to promote Las Vegas not demote our trade.

We have a very serious rise in the number of unemployed.

Welfare Chiselers

by Stephen Clapp Public Information Center.

The welfare chislers are still very much in business, despite legal battles by antipoverty lawyers, federal court decisions favoring welfare recipients, and some startling concessions wrung from the Department of Health Education and Welfare (HEW).

These chislers are not the mythical ladies who drive up in Cadillacs to collect relief checks. Rather they are state and local officials who cheat the law or openly defy it on behalf of a society that thinks money spent on poor people is money down the drain.

In precedent-shattering gesture, HEW last spring admitted that 39 states and the District of Columbia were violating one or more federal legislative, judicial and administrative regulations in the operation of welfare programs. The rules at issue are not technical quibbles, but major laws that put money in poor people's pockets--or take it away. Yet the public officials responsible have displayed the same arrogant disrespect for law that they profess to deplore in hoodlums and hippies.

Take California's Governor Ronald Reagan, Reagan has described a federal judge's threat to cut off federal support to California's welfare system as "absurd and utterly ridiculous."

"The federal court decision we are appealing could conceivably add \$3.1 billion to the tax burden of California citizens," Reagan said, as if reducing taxes justified cheating welfare recipients of money that was lawfully theirs.

The governor added that HEW had given him assurances that California, once it had obeyed the court, could change its regulations so that the state, in Reagan's words, "need not increase the size of its already generous welfare grants.

Governor Reagan differs from other chislers only in his willingness to publicly flout the law. Other governors and state welfare administrators lobby quietly for delays and exceptions. Or they develop elaborate plans

that meet federal approval but have little relation to what the state does in practice.

Illegal state practices would not be greatly affected by the Nixon Administration's ill-starred welfare reform bill, which has been installed in Congress by Senate Republicans. In the unlikely event that the bill is passed, states would still administer supplementary assistance, special grants and work requirements.

As conceived during the Depression, public welfare was supposed to protect people who could not take care of themselves. The typical welfare family was headed by an unemployed blue-collar worker laid off as a result of a factory slump. In recent years, however, public welfare has become the refuge of the hard-core poor: the sick, aged and disabled; displaced agricultural workers; the uneducated and unskilled; families without fathers. Children make up the largest percentage by far of the welfare rolls.

As one generation of welfare recipients succeeded another, the emphasis shifted from help to administration. Government had to develop rules to decide who is qualified for welfare, how much is allotted, how it is spent. A large apparatus developed for checking up, for keeping records, for making and enforcing rules, for punishing infractions. Whatever money was saved was minimized by the costs of maintaining an army of social workers whose principal function is screening and investigating welfare recipients.

Strict administration of welfare law has not been enough to hold down the soaring costs. There are now about 12 million recipients of public assistance in the country, two-thirds of them an Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC). The overall total is up some four million since 1965. The cost of money grants alone during fiscal year 1970 was more than \$7 billion, nearly double the figure in 1965.

Even so, states have managed to exclude an estimated 12 million children and their parents who, under existing law, could qualify for assistance. If they wanted to, the states could double the caseload, thereby helping as many poor people as they are now excluding.

To keep the lid on welfare costs, states and

"YOU GET FED UP WITH IT"...



REFLECTING DOUBTS ABOUT THE ARMIES PROGRAMS, THE BLACK SOLDIERS HAVE BEEN ORGANIZING AMONG THEMSELVES. THE GROUPS POTENTIAL FOR SOCIAL ACTIVISM WAS DRA—MATICALLY ILLUSTRATED LAST JULY 4th WHEN MORE THAN A THOUSAND BLACK SOLDIERS CONVERGED ON HEIDELBERG'S CENTURIES-OLD UNIVERSITY TO PROCLAIM THEIR "CALL FOR JUSTICE"

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PIGMS

localities have resorted to a variety of stratagems to discourage poor people from applying for welfare or to reduce payments to those who are declared eligible. As fast as one device is judged illegal in the courts, welfare administrators come up with others. Or the state legislature votes across-the-board cuts in welfare allotments, thus reducing the size of everyone's check.

The simplest way to keep down costs is simply refusing to allow people to apply for assistance. That way, their names never show up on records in case state or federal investigators show up to ask embarrassing questions. The Sutter County, California, welfare department turned this practice into a fine art. Lawyers for California Rural Legal Assistance (CRLA) have documented Sutter County's devices for keeping potential recipients from applying.

"When an applicant comes to the front desk and asks for help," two CRLA lawyers wrote in a letter to the HEW Secretary, "the usual rejoinder is to ask if he needs food. If the applicant replies that he does need food, he is merely sent to the County General Relief worker, who gives him surplus commodities and/or a grocery order or \$10 or \$15 and sends him away without investigating further any other needs which he may have."

to be Continued week next

LAS VEGAS
Voice

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