

...DOWN TO BUSINESS



DR. BERKELEY G. BURRELL
President, National Business League

I am afraid that the government is about to call on we poor and Black folks just once too often. Time and again we have to bear the brunt of yet another ill advised plan to solve the economic and social woes of this country.

Black folks have built this country with the sweat and blood which was spilled in slavery and indentured servitude. They have cultivated the land and provided the manpower to help build the industries of the nation. Yet, we as a people have been disenfranchised, disadvantaged, un- and underemployed in greater numbers proportionate to our overall population than any other segment of the American populus -- we have been shafted.

That's right -- Shafted! Pat Paulson, despite being white and a comedian, may have hit it on the head. He was talking about big oil magnates giving the American public the shaft while in fact the analogy might apply more appropriately to majority America getting the wealth from the oil and the derricks and other machinery while the poor and Blacks get the shaft.

From all indications, we are going to be the ones who will pay the price of the failing economy. We are certainly the ones who cannot afford to, but sure enough we are going to be the likely targets. From the sounds of battle which are rising fast from Capitol Hill, road signs are pointing toward inadequate tax rebates, reduction in withholding taxes, less money available for welfare, less money for unemployment and 20,000 fewer public service jobs in the face of a very real possibility of an unemployment rate nationally of 9 per cent. That means another million people in addition to the 7 and one-half million which are already without jobs. You'd better believe that the majority of that added million will be Black folks because of the lack of marketable skills.

The government is preparing to write a check that I hope the people will not cash. I know for a fact that America's Black populus cannot afford to. I hope that for once we will be ready to return to the United States of America a note of overdraft from the people who will say that the funds are insufficient to cover the cost of another unjust plan.

Poor folks cannot afford to pay more for cars, more at the gas pumps and still let the major oil companies sop up record revenues in the name of energy experimentation. Poor folks can't afford to be laid off and pay more at the grocery store and absorb 20 to 50 per cent increases in utilities and not dumb enough to rejoice at the promise of tax rebates to increase their disposable incomes -- when it will probably amount to no more than an average hundred dollars per individual, when they are going to have to pay three or four times that for the things they really need.

NO! I cannot believe that we are going to buy that proposition. Economic crisis or not, we are the ones who can least afford to pay the price and an insensitive government apparently will choose to ignore the fact.

We understand that the problem is severe, but we deserve something better. The President's economic advisors publicly admit that they are as confused and perplexed by the country's deteriorating economic condition, as are most other Americans. Their proposed Fiscal 1976 Budget proves it.

It calls for extremely tight federal spending, at a time when recessionary pressures on the economy have pushed unemployment to its highest level since 1941. If adopted, this budget will reduce basic benefits to the nation's poor and elderly.

CANNON SPONSORS HOMEOWNERS BILL

Sen. Howard Cannon has co-sponsored a bill designed to help unemployed homeowners in Nevada and in the nation save their homes from mortgage foreclosures.

The bill would reactivate the Home Owners' Loan Corp., (HOLC) which was formed in 1933 and continued successfully until 1951. During the time, it saved more than 1,000,000 mortgages, Cannon said. The modern HOLC would take action when the rate of home foreclosures reaches 100,000 homes yearly, the

senator explained. The HOLC would serve a two-fold function. First, it would assist homeowners who have experienced a substantial loss of income as a result of unemployment. The HOLC would meet the unemployed homeowner's mortgage payment for a period of up to 18 months and thus serve as a second mortgage, said the senator. He added that through the issuance of bonds not to exceed \$50,000, it would acquire home mortgages and redeem homes already foreclosed.

EOB GETS WESTSIDE SCHOOL

The Las Vegas City Commission unanimously approved a plan for the distribution of Community Development block grant monies, which included \$37,500 for the EOB. The money will be used to purchase and rehabilitate the old Westside School for use as a neighborhood facility and as headquarters for the EOB.

Of the total amount, \$25,000 will be spent to purchase the school and \$12,500 for rehabilitation. The City would retain ownership of the buildings but the EOB would have a permanent lease.

The Westside School is the area's oldest remaining schoolhouse. It was the original Branch Number 1 of the Las Vegas Grammar School and was built in 1922. Since the school was closed in 1967, it has been allowed to deteriorate.

The school is directly off a freeway exit, making it easily accessible to the major target area as well as the rest of the county. EOB occupancy is expected in about a year.

The eventual move to the Westside School will in no way diminish the services to the total community now served by the EOB. In fact, it is expected that service would be increased as soon as funds now spent in rent are no longer required.

At the same time it does not guarantee that the economy will be stimulated or that inflation will be curbed.

The President has not recommended any new federal programs except for energy. Yet, he has proposed a reduction in federal spending for FY '76 by more than \$17 billion. Unfortunately, most of the spending cuts are concentrated in the area of human resources. Income security payments would be cut by nearly \$5 billion dollars and combined Medicaid would be reduced by \$2 billion. Social service programs would be cut by \$733 million.

Again, those hit hardest by the economic downturn are now being asked to sacrifice more.

While the Budget and the Annual Report from the President's Council of Economic Advisors indicate that the administration will attempt to fight both inflation and recession at the same time, they strongly suggest that neither will improve this year. The speed with which the recession has penetrated the economy is no longer public enemy number one.

President Ford and his colleagues should stand advised that times are not just tight -- they are unbearable. It will certainly take equal opportunity suffering by all to stimulate this economy and the planners had better be quick about getting DOWN TO BUSINESS.



BE READY WITH A REGULAR CHECKUP

"Cancer is a serious threat to men and women of all ages. But many cancers can be cured if found early enough," says Dr. John L.S. Holloman, Jr., President of the Health and Hospitals Corporation of the City of New York. "Call your American Cancer Society for more information about cancer."

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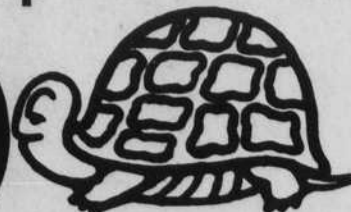
Join Vicenta Montoya and Ray Willis each Saturday for a look at what minorities are doing in Southern Nevada. The weekly special guests and national figures make this program a noteworthy cultural half hour.

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