

CAN BLACKS SERVE EQUAL RIGHTS IN A REPUBLICAN ADMINISTRATION ?

Secretary of HUD Carla Hills' first official act in her Cabinet post involved the performance receipt of the resignations of eight Assistant Secretaries of the Department who had previously served under Secretary James Lynn. The only resignation accepted was that of Assistant Secretary Gloria Toote who is in charge of fair housing and equal opportunity in housing.

Secretary Hills, having suggested that Toote concluded her activities by April 30, now denies that Dr. Toote's resignation was requested but claims that since rumor indicated that Dr. Toote was seeking a lateral transfer out of HUD, the new Secretary wanted her team abroad, especially an Assistant Secretary for equal opportunity at the earliest date possible.

Since this startling maneuver on March 11, no one at the White House will answer telephone calls for discussion of this summary rejection by the Ford Administration of the services on one of his brightest stars in the restricted constellation of black Republican leadership.

Seriously enough, a succession of black Assistant Secretaries namely: Art Fletcher of Labor, Sam Jackson of HUD, and James Farmer of HEW have been summarily dismissed, accompanied by the abrupt departure of the last two chairmen of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, William Brown and now John Powell.

It has been rumored without successful denial that aggressive blacks who merely aspire to

enforce federal statutes as they relate to ending racism against racial minorities are destined to run into serious trouble. That they face opposition from white majority establishment forces when these are called on to respect the majority of the law by black Assistant Secretaries who dare to reject figurehead, ceremonial status in their respective appointive positions at the Sub-Cabinet level.

Despite the fact that Dr. Toote, at the request of former President Richard Nixon, accepted the equal opportunity in housing post, a full nine months after the vacancy was created by the abrupt departure of Sam Simmons, Dr. Toote, following the high standard of professional conduct for which she has a reputation, began to move aggressively to establish confidence in determination and the ability of HUD to implement the law in efforts to eradicate racial discrimination in the government financed housing sector of the nation.

We are particularly incensed that the Ford Administration is apparently willing to placate reactionary forces who have vilified the nation's fair employment and fair housing statutes, pursuing their own goals of amassing enormous personal wealth from the feast at the federal trough.

Fletcher was the victim of the organized building construction and trades wrath for his attempts to enforce the Philadelphia plan concept in all building contracts subsidized by federal funds. Bill Brown was summarily dismissed

from the EEO Commission when he enforced the law against AT&T and other industrial giants who felt themselves above the law in the area of equal employment opportunities.

Now Gloria Toote joins that increasing line of highly capable, profoundly dedicated black Republican office holders who zealously enforce the law in an effort to demonstrate that the legal arm of the government will serve as a guardial shield against victimization by institutional economic racism.

While the Republican Party continues to apply the nostrum of black capitalism of blacks gaining a piece of the action, the casualty list of black Sub-Cabinet office-holders has literally destroyed the faith of politically wise blacks in the possibilities of blacks ever finding a meaningful decision-making role in the grand ole party of Lincoln.

To an old student of racism in government, this would seem to be a very curious situation, where one woman Secretary, the third ever to be a Cabinet member, would shoot down the highest ranking black woman in government. It reeks of racism and also reverse sexism. How unfortunate for women to allow themselves to be used as instruments of a racist and chauvinist society.

Gloria Toote has served her nation, her party,

and the cause of equal opportunity in housing well. If the Republican Party allows this highly capable woman to depart from an effective role of service in the federal establishment, we would suggest that the GOP will be giving a new meaningful interpretation to Dante's inscription over the gates of hell and sending a message to blacks who seek association with their party: "Abandon hope all ye who enter here!"

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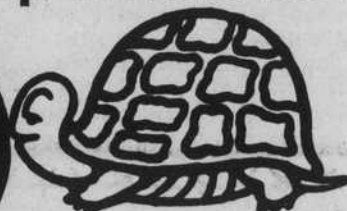
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