

To Be Equal

JOBS FOR ALL

By John E. Jacob

Unemployment can no longer be passed off as a temporary problem that will be solved when the economy rights itself. A major bar to an expanding economy is precisely the large number of workers whose skills are fast becoming outmoded as robots replace them on assembly lines and advanced electronics eliminates unskilled and semi-skilled work.

It is useless for our leaders to tell the unemployed to look at all the want ads in the newspapers — most of those are for computer programmers and other jobs for which there is a

shortage of people with the required skills.

The permanent unemployment settling in to our economy and affecting a large portion of the jobless violates the most precious of human rights — the right to a job.

That combination of violated human rights to productive employment and the manpower needs of the economy strongly suggest that this is the time to institute a Universal Employment and Training system that guarantees jobs and skills training to allow people to compete for the jobs that exist today.

There's plenty to do. The nation's infrastructure is decaying rapidly.

Roads and bridges need to be repaired and rebuilt; rails and ports to be revitalized, homes, sewer lines and water systems need to be built.

Such a program of national renewal would



John E. Jacob get our industries producing again. It would put people to work, paying taxes and buying

consumer goods.

The immediate objection is that it would cost too much. That won't hold water. Unemployment costs too much — the burden on the U.S. Treasury is about \$30 billion for every extra point of unemployment.

So if you peg full employment as being a

about.

And while there is so much concern about the cost of a program that would get our country moving again, there is not the same concern about the tax cuts and loopholes passed last year, or about an overblown defense buildup costing one and a half trillion over the next

say are either unnecessary or of dubious battle-worthiness.

Any nation that can indulge in such wastefulness cannot only afford to invest in its human capital and in its economic future — it cannot afford not to.

A Universal Employment and Training system would also end the permanent Depression in minority communities. With our economy changing so swiftly, growing numbers of blacks are in danger of becoming locked into permanent unemployment.

It is no longer enough just to have a strong back and a willing spirit. Today's jobs

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situation in which the jobless rate is four percent, today's extra unemployment costs the government almost \$180 billion a year, or almost double that federal budget deficit everyone is worried

four years.

Congress is considering a token job training program that will cost about a tenth of what the Pentagon plans to spend this year just on those weapons systems many experts

JIM CHANEY SEEKS RESIGNATION OF RICHARD BLUE, EOB CHAIRMAN

Jim Chaney, director of the Las Vegas job training program of Opportunities Industrialization Centers has called for the resignation of Richard Blue as director, Department of Funds Coordination, City of Las Vegas.

Blue is also chairman of the board for the Economic Opportunity Board. Chaney claims an alleged conflict of interest prevails; that his program competes with EOB for federal, state and local funds.

Chaney charges Blue, elected chairman about three weeks ago, is in a conflict because he also is director of the funds and coordination department of the city.

Deputy City Manager Ashley Hall said Blue had requested a legal opinion in July from the city attorney's office on whether accepting the position with EOB would place him in a position of conflict of

The Las Vegas Sentinel has learned of later developments surrounding the controversy over whether Richard Blue serving as chairman of EOB would be a "conflict of interest."

Blue resigned Tuesday as chairman of that post to "avoid any appearance of a possible conflict of interest."

As head of the city's funds coordination department, Blue ultimately is responsible for approving grant requests from various community action agencies, like EOB.

"He was in no conflict in the sense he might profit from his job," said acting City Attorney Jan Stewart, whose office advised Blue to resign. "But there was an appearance of conflict that might result in the public's mind."

interest.

The verbal opinion issued at that time was that it was not a problem for Blue to accept the chairmanship, Hall said.

The SENTINEL learn-

John Jacob's TO BE EQUAL column will take a two-week summer break starting next week.

The next TO BE EQUAL column will be published Sept. 2.

ed, at press time, that Chaney had planned to meet this past Tuesday with City Commissioner Roy Woolter to ask that the city force

Blue's resignation.

The City Attorney took another look at the matter and was to issue a written opinion on Tuesday.

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