The 1976 Issues

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revitalize the nation's railroads — a $6.4 billion federal program passed by the Congress last year.

As secretary of transportation, I insisted that the Rail Act include a provision establishing a Minority Resource Center to actively bring minority firms into the contract bidding process for work on the Boston-to-Washington Northeast Corridor. Because an estimated 15,000 new jobs will be created in this rail rebuilding project, we persevered in our proposal to Congress and in subsequent negotiations with AMTRAK to ensure that minority workers would be in the mainstream of all Northeast Corridor hiring and contracting.

We have made similar advances within the Department of Transportation toward fuller minority participation in the economic process in aviation, urban mass transit and interstate motor carrier transportation developments.

The point is simply that when large amounts of federal money are spent for any purpose, the federal government has a primary responsibility to see that these dollars have a positive impact on the economically disadvantaged.

I believe more such programs must be developed in the next Administration — double-duty programs designed not to "make work," but to put the millions of unskilled or unemployed persons to work on some of the REAL jobs that need to be done in America today.

PARREN J. MITCHELL

CHARLES B. RANGEL

PARREN J. MITCHELL

America's greatest internal problem is that it initiates policies, programs and actions, operating under the delusion that racism is dead in this nation. Not only is racism not dead, it is an integral part of the present system of government and is deep, and pervasive and systemic.

It is reflected in structural — functional impediments against blacks. Therefore, the most important issue for the next President is to resume the fight to eradicate the twin evils of racism and discrimination in this country.

The two most important pieces of legislation that the 95th Congress must deal with are the Full Employment Bill and the Minority Enterprise Act. Without full employment our urban centers will continue to be devastated by the full array of physical and socio-psychological pathologies which such centers now confront.

Blacks and other minorities in America will never achieve full political or social power until such time as we achieve economic parity. The Minority Enterprise Act (the Mitchell Bill) is the first significant step towards economic parity for blacks and other minorities.

The most grave danger to America is not the Soviet Union nor the Peoples Republic of China. Neither is it inflation or recession. It is the gradual erosion of civil rights and civil liberties. Perversions of law and order, re-emphasis on reverse discrimination; hostile lower court's decisions on civil rights, all of these and other developments reflect a growing shift to conservatism, a prioritizing of institutional concerns and a diminishing sense of the importance of the individual.

Hence, we are witnessing the erosions of civil rights and civil liberties.

Domestic economy seen as most pressing problem for next administration

CHARLES B. RANGEL

The first order of business for the next President of the United States is to restore public trust in government.

Consider these facts. A recent comparative study of the political democracies in the world reveals that in terms of voter participation, the United States ranks 22nd among 24 Democratic states. India ranks 21st on the list but has since become a dictatorship.

The potential for the inspiration of confidence in government is within the grasp of political leaders, if they but have the will. It will require leadership, commitment and compassion. More importantly, it will require specific action.

In this regard, I can think of no more meaningful gesture of the federal government's concern for the public welfare than the adoption of a national policy of full employment. Can we as a people seriously feign surprise at rampant political apathy when the federal government in its budget allocations effectively regulates over seven million potential American workers to the dismal reality of unemployment?

Not surprisingly, a disproportionate share of that dismal reality is borne by black Americans. Unemployment hits blacks and other minority Americans literally twice as hard as white Americans. Yet political leaders fail to realize that unemployment remains America's most important social and economic problem.

MAYOR A. J. COOPER JR.

We have no greater national ill facing us than the joblessness of millions of Americans. The violence of hunger, crime, poor housing, discrimination is made all the worse when poor people **cannot** find work.

The hopes and dreams of thousands upon thousands of black families finally reaching the rim of middle class comfort are being dashed on the rocks of both underemployment and unemployment.

The desire of black, Chicano and poor white young people to seek higher education has been dashed by both the inability of women to find employment and catastrophic failure of this nation to provide jobs for our teenagers. These factors all combine to say to the people of this nation who seek work and not welfare, that our national priorities need immediate and radical reordering.

Our new President must move swiftly to implement both emergency and long range programs to assume full employment. The efforts of the next President must be premised upon a recognition that our national security depends ultimately upon a strong and tranquil domestic population which has faith in our system of government being able to provide life, liberty **and** happiness.

'Charleston'

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"Charleston" — and it says so right on the cover of the sheet music.

That fall of 1923, when the new black musical "Running Wild" opened at the Colonial Theater — a dazzling chorus of bronze beauts zipped through the old "Geechie Dance" to words and music of a tantalizing new tune and how those gals did that crazy thing — like never before — but now it was no longer an orphan — it had a name — the "Charleston."

Pretty soon, it was picked up by big time vaudeville performers— "Charleston" contests were bursting out all over and before you could say Jack Robinson, young folk in Harlem were kicking up their heels doing this thing at the staid stuffy dances while as usual, the older folk sniffed at the vulgar display, although some of them ventured to try it.

Now half a century later, the "Charleston" is enjoying a mild revival and new popularity, thanks of course, to that good old "nostalgia."

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