Baltimore Afro-American

OPINION

FOUNDED Aug. 15, 1892 by John H. Murphy Sr., 1848-1922. Published every Tuesday and Saturday by the AFRO - AMERICAN Co., of Baltimore City Inc.

May we let our light so shine that it will illuminate that which is good and beautiful and magnify our Father which is in Heaven.
CARL MURPHY
(1889-1967)
Editor-Publisher
(1922-1967)

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The great Reggie J.

A lot of folk in town, mostly white, can't stand Reggie Jackson's guts.

He's too uppity, as controversial in baseball as Ali is in boxing, and just plain smart in his business dealings with white folks.

Plus his opinion of Baltimore (not our Baltimore but their Baltimore) is widely known.

So Reggie would hardly get the keys to our city (their city.)

But whatever, he's as great an athlete as ever trod the diamond and even those Baltimoreans who felt his attitude about and desertion of our Orioles was a betrayal have to admit to his greatness.

We were never angry with Reggie and if next year he makes a better deal with yet another team, that's all right with us.

To our minds the more monies Reggie makes as an athlete makes it possible for more minority ball-players to get more. In professional sports the name of the game is more pay for great play.

Reggie understands that.

Congratulations on a great Series, Reg. You did it all.

School shortages

It seems like only yesterday Dr. John Crew, superintendent of schools, gave the city a sunshiny report on how much improved is the educational system he heads.

Six weeks later we learn that our public schools are suffering a shortage of teachers, books, supplies and classroom space.

The only thing Baltimore schools aren't short of is kids.

And since our children are the most important part of this process, we won't tolerate having them short-changed.

We hope Mayor Schaefer would pause in his attempt to be the Frank Lloyd Wright of politicians in his mad bid to see how many new buildings can go up in Baltimore and work with his School Board and Dr. Crew to see that the necessary funds are released to remedy this deplorable situation.

We say to the mayor no more bricks for buildings until we have books for kids.

Keeping downtown in focus

Last week we urged a comprehensive revitalization of our downtown shopping area with particular emphasis placed on a strong and parallel program of minority economic development.

We spoke to the deteriorating central downtown area, the need to refurbish this sector and to bring in an exciting mix of businesses large and small.

It seems now that major retailers such as Hutzler's are less interested in rebuilding on the Howard-Lexington Street axis but find the new Inner Harbor area more tempting.

Our concern is that the Inner Habror, while technically "downtown," is by its very architecture remote, and less convenient, less "people-oriented" than old "downtown."

Further, we would regret any moves which shift employment opportunities further away from our community.

So our immediate notion, for all those involved in planning the various options that will end up being the "new" downtown is that any revitalization of the city's shopping area be within boundaries that begin at the State Office Building on the North extending in a corridor ending at Fells Point to the South.

With federal monies necessary to this rebuilding, we are going to vigorously insist that the interests of black businesses, in fact, all small businesses of whatever color in this corridor be scrupulously protected.

We would not want to think that the new interest in the Inner Harbor represents a shift away from the business and job needs of this predominantly black city and a threat to small businesses.

That NAACP poster

We do not quite understand the newest NAACP recruiting poster though we certainly know the local branch's need for increased and more active membership.

Depicted on the poster are a host of freedom fighters, the late Dr. Lillie M. Jackson, Fred Douglass, Malcolm X and CORE's Walter Carter among them.

Glorious people one and all and very important in the struggle for freedom.

Yet we recall that Baltimore's Walter Carter, an extremely courageous man and blessed with a keen sense of humor, would, were he alive, find some amusement in winding up on a NAACP broadside.

We can hear Walter chuckling and wondering "where were they (the NAACP) when I needed them?"

For in the turbulent Sixties Carter's role was that of complete activist, confronting the enemy head-on. The NAACP, freedom fighters will recall, provided legal and financial assistance during that time for assault troops led by Carter, most notably, here in Maryland. Sometimes the NAACP responded too slowly for him.

We would have also wanted Dr. Carl Murphy prominently displayed on this poster, not because he so brilliantly was boss of this newspaper but because as an individual he put up a lot of the cash that kept the Baltimore chapter running as well as raising a lot of the legal fees that brought about many monumental NAACP legal victories.

Brother Malcolm, as with Carter, would be amazed to now find himself an icon in the NAACP's gallery of warriors.

Well a display of unity never hurt any cause and since we know the Baltimore branch is moving ahead, we'll let the new poster stand without further clarification as to who did what and how folks and causes related to each other in the past.

This is a new day!

Here's to the NAACP's future!

AFRO Credo

A newspaper succeeds because its management believes in itself, in God and in the present generation. It must always ask itself—

Whether it has kept faith with the common people;

Whether it has no other goal except to see that their liberties are preserved and their future assured;

Whether it is fighting to get rid of slums, to provide jobs for everybody;

Whether it stays out of politics except to expose corruption and condemn injustice, race prejudice and the cowardice of compromise.

DECEMBER 24, 1920

(From the Papers of John H. Murphy Sr., who founded the AFRO-AMERICAN, Aug. 13, 1892).

Now and then ... by G. James Fleming

Atlanta still points the way

Just passed through Atlanta. Not long enough to write as an "expert" but long enough to feel and see that the Georgia city is still the Number One city of the South, perhaps of the nation, as far as blacks are concerned.

Atlanta has long been known as a center of education and black entrepreneurship. Now it is also the foremost city, politically. Its mayor, Maynard Jackson, has recently been reelected for a second four-year term, and this time with a fellow-black as vice-mayor. The landslide election was marked by a turnout of black voters and white supporters that can only be called notable, phenominal.

The city stands out, also, because for several years, it has also elected a black citizen, the renown educator, Dr. Benjamin Mays, as the president of its school board. Dr. Mays was reelected a few weeks ago.

Atlanta, despite the Talmadges and the Maddoxes, has seemingly forged a bloc of forward-looking leaders and civic workers, of both races, which has given the city liberal, constructive and often winning politics.

While most cities are complaining that blacks will not vote in large numbers, in local elections, losing white politicians in Atlanta are complaining that blacks turn out too well.

One such mayoralty candidate, Milton Farris, veteran member of the Fulton County Commission, said to the "Atlanta Constitution," in reflecting on the mayoralty election:

"There were two possible ways that we would have even of getting in a runoff, and that is that the white people would have to vote at least as heavy or heavier than the black people..."

Mr. Farris also complained, further:

"...Take the 3rd Ward, which is all black and no whites, Mr. Dye (another white candidate) got 104 votes, I got 127, Mr. Jackson got 6,558. Which means, in effect, in the black community they voted solidly and there aren't votes for a white at all. Yet, on the white side (of town) about 30 per cent of the whites vote for a black candidate and no black people vote for a white candidate."

The 70-year-old Mr. Farris, who has been supported by black voters in his campaigns for county commissioner, is of the opinion that the 1977 mayoralty election was "the last chance" for a white mayor in Atlanta, unless there is a change in the racial makeup of the population. Presently, the population is approaching 70 per cent black and 30 per cent white.

The "power structure" of Atlanta, including the leading newspapers, take the position that "the city elected "the best man" for mayor, and they point to the landslide vote which Maynard Jackson received—63.8 per cent, contrasted with the 18 per cent received by Farris, and the lesser showings by two other candidates, including a black woman, Emma Darnell.

Mayor Jackson won despite the fact there was a "scandal" in his police department which was used against him—but it did not catch fire. He won, also, despite the fact that there are still problems in Atlanta, headed by unemployment.

In speaking to a civic group, the newly elected mayor listed the priorities of his second administration (in no particular order) as more jobs, better and more housing, reduction in crime, aggressive economic development and equal opportunity.

He also pledged himself to develop a strong and active interracial community and to serve both whites and blacks.

In the same auditorium where Mayor Jackson spoke, there were handbills and placards proclaiming "Minority Business Awareness Week." The "Atlanta Constitution", at the same time, was carrying a series on "little known but highly successful black businessmen."

Another view of Atlanta was furnished by a ride through the new neighborhoods where many black Atlantans live (mostly in newly-built homes). Such a ride clinched this column's headline that "Atlanta still points the way"—still sets the example.

A little about a lot ... by Madeline W. Murphy

Black unity and solidarity

There are times when nothing goes well. When either you drop dishes, burn the cookies, or undercook the chicken, and the fates seem to have just given you the business.

You think maybe it's the weather, or your sinuses, and then nothing could be gloomier than the news. But then, you're getting older, and the nagging, creeping thought that you're not immortal makes you begin to sort out the things in life that are necessary and others you can do without.

At middle age, when you look forward to doing some of the things you always wanted to do, and not what you have to do, you come to the realization that the thing you can do most without are organizations where bickering, pointing accusatory fingers at other over trivia spoils the fun and purpose of the group. Real boresville.

Be it PTA, social club, civic organization, fraternal group, you name it, there is always a group or person with some personal need that goes beyond the business of the organization—a deep-seated need spotlighted by stirring up a stink, taking up valuable time, testifying, preventing constructive activity.

Dr. Alvin F. Pouissant and Linda R. McLean way back in 1968, described this phenomenon, in an article called "Black Roadblocks to Black Unity," Negro Digest, as status needs. They explain that such needs for status in blacks may stem from basic feelings of worthlessness and inferiority because they are blacks in a "white" racist society.

Therefore, "a large proportion of time and energy is expended and wasted fighting personal battles and being preoccupied with petty behavior.

"This very often sabotages the programs of organizations, creates personality camps, hardens feelings and causes a breakdown in effective programming and operations."

Maybe this explains what attracts this type to organizations where they raise suspicions, when there's nothing to be suspicious about?

Some go so far as to conduct telephone whispering campaigns with erroneous information—just enough truth to hold the imagination. They poison the once friendly atmosphere by spreading dissension.

Usually they have a proprietary attitude about programs, about pecking order, the "I-knew-it-first" type. And they, like the old Western gun that bullies a whole town, succeed in blocking a unified effort.

No matter what they're called—diversionists, obstructionists, deceivers, double-agents—they're bad news. The purpose of the organization, be it good works, socializing, being companionable, getting together because you like people become secondary.

The primary role of the group becomes that of defensiveness, paranoia, jealousy.

Sub-groups and hidden agendas develop ofttimes to counteract this behavior leaving out a third group, who are usually the quiet hard workers.

It is evident in the black experience that vestiges of slavery remain where the house and field slaves were effectively divided by a shrewd overseer who kept the tales going back and forth, keeping the groups divided, so that they could not identify and deal with the common enemy—ole Massah—who taught self-hate real well.

Not unlike the East and West Baltimore phantom feud, that does not reveal itself on election day, when citywide black candidates run for office. East and West usually vote in a block for the black candidates. But the lie of division still persists in the mouths of black politicians.

Why is it that those who are victimized by this kind of subversion remain prey to it, rather than devise sanctions, exact penalties against these saboteurs who damage our ability to solve problems; to remain true to our noble purposes?

Perhaps it's because, as Poussant and McLean suggest "a group very often defines its problems too broadly, sets out to, solve all of the ills of black people in society and consequently ends up entirely frustrated and discouraged.

"If a group does not isolate a few problems and set limited, as well as long range goals, it becomes difficult to see progress, to experience success and to feel a sense of accomplishment.

"It is important," according to Pouissant and McClean that "black groups define their problems and the purpose of the group clearly, to set out specific short and long range goals and to decide how they will measure success and determine progress."

They conclude that this kind of planning will ease much of the psychological frustration which builds up and becomes a depressive, discouraging and divisive factor in the experiences of an organization.

Hopefully, as we learn to look inward (with some revolutionary self-criticism) we may still become appreciative and nurturing of the desperate need for that illusive goal of black unity and solidarity.

Especially when we realize that our survival depends more and more upon group strength as opposed to those blustering, prating pipsqueaks who most of the time speak for themselves and their self-interest.

Washington report
Unemployment: a challenge to black journalist

Part One

(This week's WASHINGTON REPORT was prepared by Clarence Bishop, senior legislative assistant. He holds a BS and MA from Morgan State University and has been on Congressman Mitchell's Washington staff for three years).

It has been reported that black congressional leaders and the Carter Administration have almost resolved all of the major differences surrounding the Humphrey-Hawkins Full-Employment Legislation and that a compromise plan to address the nation's unemployment ills in a meaningful fashion may be in the very near future.

As I understand it, there are two points left to be settled. First, what will be the overall target for reduction in the unemployment rate within the next three years.

Second, what will be the extent of the Carter Administration's commitment to further reductions after the initial goal has been accomplished.

Hopefully, this is true. I am just not sure.

Moreover, I am even less sure that we are doing an adequate job of convincing all of our leaders in government and unemployment is, in fact, a very real problem.

If recent poll reports are correct that, with all of the examples which we come in contact with every day, more than half of the American population still remains unconvinced that there is an energy crisis. How convinced is the general public or the unemployment crisis?

Structural unemployment is the most serious problem facing black people today — period! It is clearly the starting point of numerous problems which specifically plague the minority community and generally, adversely affect the quality of life of the entire nation.

The mass of statistics documenting the degree of seriousness of black unemployment certainly do not have to be rehearsed. Our community knows that black unemployment continually remains twice that of white unemployment. Our community knows that black youth unemployment runs as high as 40 per cent or 50 per cent in some areas. We have an idea of the costs, long-run and short-run, financial and psychological, of people not being able to work in a land where the so-called "work-ethnic" literally legitimizes one's existence.

Apparently, however, given the level of demonstrable commitment to directly attacking the problem of unemployment, we and a few others may be the only ones who know, understand, and believe that the problem is, in fact, serious. It is in these areas of uncertainty, ignorance, noncommitment and insensitivity that I believe that black journalists must find their finest hour.

The specific role of the black journalists in this particular crisis can be found in the words of Langston Hughes when he wrote: "The things that drive me crazy don't even bother you.
But, I'll keep acting crazy until you're crazy too."

Unemployment is driving black America crazy. White America, seemingly, is not even bothered. How can we tell that white America is not bothered? I submit that the proof lies in the fact that nothing has really been done to significantly reduce unemployment. Because, when white America becomes bothered — really bothered — something meaningful happens.

When America decided that we would be first on the moon, targets were set, timetables were drawn up, adequate funds were allocated, and we were first on the moon. When the U.S. citizenry decided that we no longer should be in Vietnam and the war should end, people took to the streets, lobbied, pressured, sat-in and sat-out, and we pulled out of Vietnam and the war ended.

When white America became bothered, as black America had been all along, by the actions of Richard Nixon as President of the United States, action was taken by the Congress and other responsible agencies of our government and he was removed.

Unemployment, presently, does not bother America and it is up to black journalists to "act crazy" until it does. When it does, unemployment will be reduced significantly.

If the failure of America to move on the unemployment problem is based largely on ignorance and insensitivity, rather than sheer recalcitrance, then what are some of the issues that black journalists must address in an unrelenting fashion in order to educate and sensitize?

Concluded next week

"I am a man of peace; God knows how I love peace. But I hope I shall never be such a coward as to mistake oppression for peace."
Hungarian Freedom Fighter Kossuth

PAGE OPPOSITE

Baltimore Afro-American

A-5 OCTOBER 22, 1977

Quality or quantity?

Dear AFRO:

Let's take a hard look at affirmative action.

In its first step it helps the minority student enter medical school, for example. Let's follow him through the entire medical course, all the way to the time he is ready to hang his shingle, ready to serve the community. Let's assume he has selected a neighborhood of poor people.

What are his qualifications? Was he a good or poor student? Is he a good or bad doctor? Is he a dedicated doctor? What kind of doctoring will he offer his patients?

We helped him, but have we helped his patients if he has turned out to be an incompetent doctor? Are we interested in quantity only? Shouldn't we be interested in quality?

It would be bad enough to pursue affirmative action in say plumbers, carpenters, welders, etc., but in the field of medicine aren't we rather reckless (if not downright stupid!) to jeopardize the health and well-being of potential patients? What kind of crazy numbers game are we playing?

B.J. Small

Advice for Manpower

Dear AFRO:

The success of Manpower programs is vital to the black community because of joblessness and other economic and educational deficiencies that have not been dealt with adequately. For the minority community, it is a matter of survival.

The Mayor's Manpower office is not above criticism. Black leadership has severely criticized the Manpower office.

Any thorough appraisal must acknowledge the strengths as well as the weaknesses of the Manpower office.

A daily newspaper has commended the Mayor's Manpower office for an effective organizational structure. We agree with this.

However, a Manpower program requires more than the capability of an organizational structure. For, example, the ability of a component to meet the needs of a client because that person lives outside a defined geographical area. One of the primary criticisms is that blacks are under - represented in the higher level positions.

The program structure of Opportunities Industrialization Center (OIC) is proven as one of the most effective Manpower programs in the country. It was founded by a black minister, the Reverend Leon Sullivan of Philadelphia. A visit and survey of the psychotype program in Philadelphia will clearly demonstrate that OIC possesses the components essential for any successful Manpower Program which are skill training and motivational changes for job suitability.

The Baltimore OIC has been stripped of these vital functions while there still is an overwhelming need for these among Manpower clients.

Baltimore OIC is a program which is indigenous to the black community which blacks and their leadership must support with continuity of input and leadership. There must be a functioning OIC Board which is responsibly involved. If we neglect OIC which encourages self-help to exist and render an invaluable service, we place the credibility of our Manpower criticism upon shaky ground. The black community cannot escape its responsibility for the present status of Baltimore OIC.

I still retain an undiminished endorsement of the concepts and programs of the prototype OIC in Philadelphia. The minority and majority community ought to provide financial and leadership resources for Baltimore OIC.

I urge the local Manpower office to restore the training and motivational functions of OIC and increase its funding. The nation and Baltimore City need OIC.

SIDNEY DANIELS
Minister, Emmanuel Christian Community Church

Rectify past injustice

Dear AFRO:

The recent out-cry of "reverse discrimination" by Mr. Allan Bakke has become a familiar phrase.

Mr. Bakke, a 37-year-old research engineer, contends that he has been discriminated against because of his race. He has filed a suit against the University of California Medical School of Davis because of its usage of the quota system.

"The quota system is the reserving of 16 of each 100 openings for blacks and other minorities, which led to denial of his entrance to the school.

He also states that in the attempt to redress past discriminatory practices against blacks and other minorities that society is in fact discriminating against the white majority.

Let us take a moment to reflect on the past discriminatory practices against blacks and other minorities, when they were totally discriminated against without redress. Where was the quest for racial equality then?

It appears that problems such as the Bakke case tends to arouse the interest of the majority in racial equality. It is sad that a quota system will cause denial to a few. However, it is still not the total majority that suffers the pain of racial discrimination as did the blacks and other minorities.

While it is true that the quota system will possibly cause denial to a few of the majority, it is imperative that society begin to try to rectify some of the racial injustices of the past.

CHARLES J. WILSON

Armlock on Carter

Dear AFRO:

I do believe it is President Jimmy Carter's intention to engage himself with America's social and domestic problems. We all know by now how they ganged up on Franklin Delano Roosevelt and any plans he had for democratic justice.

Senator Bilbo and the group of senators known as the "wool hat boys" kept Roosevelt from any meaningful civil rights legislation and would not even support his anti-lynch bill.

I cannot mean that there is a conspiracy to stranglehold our new president but one thing is certain: our domestic problems are at a peculiar standstill.

If the senate can stall long enough Senator Howard Baker will move into the White House, with a conservative Republican platform.

The energy mess, a homeland for the Palestinians, the Panama Canal and our huge trade deficit are keeping the President from addressing himself to the vexing problem of our domestic distress.

Our senators know that our social problems cannot be postponed; yet, most of them have been vocal in their distaste for welfare and school busing.

President Carter, like Harry S. Truman, knows and understands their feelings and their motives so he should be able to fight back.

The point that I have failed to make is the black man has not been accidentally overlooked in America; it has been intentioned and deliberate. While more and more politicians are being hustled off to jail, it becomes very apparent that we are not dealing with literate, honorable men but men with criminal instincts.

If President Carter really has good intentions he must move vigorously as did Harry S. Truman and bowl over the foot-draggers.

For the young men without employment will come stress, and frustration, and anger and then hopelessness—and then brother watch out.

We must attend the needs of all men who wish to live in peace and tranquility and good citizenship.

If the national rabble keep Jimmy Carter dancing to their music, then he might forget who supported his candidacy and who elected him to the presidency.

PAUL D. MALLERSON

Open letter to Neil Solomon

Dr. Neil Solomon is secretary of the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

During recent months I have become aware of a problem which gives me great concern, and about which, I think, your department may be able to provide leadership in achieving resolution.

As you know, many of our citizens have hospital coverage through the Blue-Cross-Blue Shield program. The program is an excellent one, and I think the non-profit company which administers it deserves great praise.

But there are numerous persons — many disadvantaged black and white; others by choice or circumstances — who are not covered by Blue-Cross-Blue Shield, but do have hospitalization insurance underwritten by other, less well-known companies. It is to the area hospital-imposed situation in which the latter category of hospitalization policy holder finds him and herself that I want to direct your attention.

The fact is that when a Maryland resident seeks admission or out-patient treatment at most of our hospitals, if he or she must present the name of a company other than Blue-Cross-Blue-Shield as his or her carrier, he is greeted usually with skepticism and often with downright hostility.

I have known of cases in which not only was the holder of such coverage refused service temporarily, but even required to return after the hospital had had an opportunity to verify the validity of the policy and the company.

I thinks this should not happen. As one who is in the business of selling very fine hospitalization insurance plans (none of which are underwritten by Blue-Cross-Blue-Shield) I think hospital personnel should be instructed to accept all card-holders of companies licensed to do business in the state with equal speed and faith.

If there is something irregular about the coverage, it should be a matter handled through the office of the insurance commissioner or your office rather than at the intake desk of the hospital while the suffering patient is seeking service.

Not because Blue-Cross-Blue-Shield is any better, but simply because hospital personnel are not as knowledgeable as they should be same kind of traumatic experience would seldom develop with one, holding a Blue-Cross-Blue-Shield card — no matter how irregular or insufficient the coverage may be at the time.

People whom I know, especially some black people whom I serve, refer to this troublesome phenomenon as the "Blue-Cross Blues." They say you can have Gold-Cross, but at the hospital desk you are the wrong color & 'tis Blue.

Do you see the legitimacy of the issue I identify? Will you, from your high office, help me to address and correct it?

FRANK M. CONAWAY
Chairman of the Board,
Ashburton Insurance Ltd.

Report to the people

Blue Cross prexy: saving citizens money

Blue Cross President Thomas H. Sherlock recently called for a freeze on expansion of hospital facilities and services to allow Maryland's health planning agencies to head off an excess hospital bed problem which, in less than three years, could cost Marylanders $30 to $53 million annually

Speaking before the Rotary Club of Baltimore, Mr. Sherlock stated that, if a generally accepted standard of four beds for each 1,000 people is used, the central Maryland area will have 800 more beds then it actually needs by 1980.

Based on estimates of the cost of excess beds by the Health Services Cost Review Commission, this means "we will be spending — wasting, if you like — nearly $30 million a year on excess hospital beds in Baltimore and the surrounding area.

"But, if we accept the present ratio of 2.7 beds per thousand people as being adequate then we will be facing an excess of nearly 1,500 hospital beds in this area by 1980, at a cost of over $53 million a year," he added.

These figures, Mr. Sherlock pointed out, do not take into consideration additional costs which would result if hospitals in the area were to activate 700 licensed and approved beds which are not currently being used.

"Our most pressing task is to move promptly to strengthen our planning agencies and the planning process," the Blue Cross president said, "in this regard, I believe all of our planning agencies must, with all possible speed, develop realistic and acceptable plans which will assure the rational growth and distribution of hospital and other health services throughout the state in the years ahead."

Mr. Sherlock also called upon the State Comprehensive Health Planning Agency to place a temporary freeze on all new applications for all capital expansions of health facilities in Maryland until acceptable health system plans have been developed and approved. He added that the only exceptions to this freeze should be projects which are required to meet life safety codes, or whose costs will be offset by reductions of cost in other areas, or which represent an upgrading of existing beds without an increase in bed complements.

A third recommendation would require the State Comprehensive Health Planning Agency to review all recently approved, but not-yet-implemented capital expansion programs to reaffirm their need.

"Fourth, in its review the state agency should concern itself particularly with the apparent heavy duplication of obstetric, pediatric and new-born facilities in Maryland," Mr. Sherlock said. "Obstetrics beds are presently only 65 per cent utilized, pediatrics only 56 per cent and new-born only 43 per cent."

The fifth point in the Blue Cross recommendations would provide for adjustments in hospital's charges — as approved by the Health Services Cost Review Commission — if it is determined that a number of beds or services should be eliminated after planning agencies have developed acceptable plans for meeting community health care needs.

Sixth, in order to assure that the financial implications of proposed capital expansions are clearly understood by the health planners, Blue Cross recommended that the Health Services Cost Review Commission be represented on the State Comprehensive Health Planning Agency and routinely report to local and state planning agences on the financial effects of pending expansion proposals.

"Finally, there should be created a state-level task force," Mr. Sherlock said, "for the purpose of monitoring the development of new and high-cost medical technology, determining its effectiveness, and developing appropriate guidelines for its use. The CAT scanner experience warns us that we could soon be seriously oversupplied with these and other even more costly devices. We must develop a better means of evaluating their effectiveness and encouraging their sharing among hospitals to the greatest extent possible."

Mr. Sherlock noted that in 1950 the total national expenditure for health care was about $10 billion. He said that by 1972 it had increased to $70 billion and this year will be double that amount — over $140 billion. As a result, health care expenditures have grown from 6 per cent of the Gross National Product (CNP) in 1966 to over 8.5 per cent of the GNP last year.

"Hospital costs alone now are escalating at a rate of $9 billion per year — an amount almost as great as our entire national health care bill back in 1950," Mr. Sherlock explained. "Here in Maryland we spent a billion dollars last year on hospital care, and today it costs Blue Cross an average of more than $200 for each day of hospital care we purchase for our members, and over $1,500 for each inpatient case."

The Blue Cross cheif executive officer added that the cost-spiral will continue, rising from $140 billion this year to a predicted $225 billion in 1980 — triple the cost of just five years ago. He said that health care expenditures as a per cent of the Gross National Product are expected to increase from 8.5 per cent last year to 10 per cent by 1981.

health care resources, just as all other resources, are not limitless, and they must be conserved, Mr. Sherlock said. He added that our expenditures for health must be balanced against other national priorities — food, housing, energy, environment, education — and that the public cannot continue to assume that every health care problem can be dealt with simply by pouring more and more money into the health care system. In Maryland alone, decisions have been made within the past five years which will result in $540 million in capital investments, most of it going into hospitals, Mr. Sherlock stated.

He noted that a great deal of this capital investment has gone into necessary upgrading of hospitals and other facilities. However, he said that there is a growing concern that these capital investments also have contributed to serious and costly overbedding situations, both here and in other parts of the nation.

"There is no question but that as the pace of medical technology and its accompanying cost accelerates, we are going to have to do a far better job of pooling and sharing expensive health services within the community. The times simply won't permit us to continue a system under which hospitals in the same community frequently are providing duplicate specialized services on a limited scale, at uneconomic cost.

"Organized statewide health facility planning is the essential key in assuring we have adequate, but not excessive, health care facilities and services within the community," Mr. Sherlock said. But, he emphasized, "not one of our planning agencies has yet been able to develop an approved short- or long-range plan which can be used as a community blueprint in guiding the development of future health facilities.

"We desperately need hard, area-wide research and planning that will tell us how many beds will be located in a given area, how far people should have to travel to get the care they need, how highly sophisticated and specialized services should be distributed and what the optimum utilization level of health services should be."

Although at present the area has a backlog in terms of licensed and approved beds — 8,700 beds have been licensed, but only 8,000 are being used — the planning process has approved an additional 900 beds to be constructed in Baltimore and the surrounding counties by 1980 — less than three years from now.

As a result, while the population of Baltimore City is expected to drop by 7.5 per cent from 1975 through 1980, there will be an increase in hospital beds in the city by over 300 during the same period.

Mr. Sherlock added that adoption of the seven Blue Cross suggestions "is essential if we are to head off further major and unnecessary increases in health care costs in Maryland resulting from an oversupply of hospital beds and certain other services."

Funding of community development

By M. J. Brodie

(Mr. Brodie is commissioner of the Department of Housing And Neighborhood Development, Baltimore City).

The impression has been given that Baltimore has recently received a substantial addition to the amount of its entitlement under the federal government's Community Development Block Grant.

Unfortunately, the fact is that we are not receiving more. What has happened is that we have avoided taking a drastic cut in the amount available for our community development program.

Also in recent months, a one-time requirement for money used up most of the available city bond funds. This came about because of the federal government's mandate to "close out" past urban renewal projects. In Baltimore's case, there were 16 such projects. This didn't mean that all the activities in those areas were finished. It did mean, however, that the temporary loans which paid for project activities had to be paid off — all at once.

City bond bond monies were used for this purpose. Therefore some activites in projects throughout the city that were to be funded by bonds will now have to be funded by the block grant.

The situation is sufficiently serious that the Department of Housing and Community Development is now preparing a request to the federal government for special funding as an Urgent Need. We seek $55 million over the next three years. This Urgent Needs money can only be used to complete activities in the closed-out projects, but clearly it will free money from future block grants for other activities.

There is no question that we expect to carry out the commitments the city has made to communities for physical improvements. But we are determined to continue spending our funds responsibly, only when we have the necessary money at hand. Therefore it may take longer to accomplish some of the things we intend to do.

An explanation of the block grant situation is in order, for there is no question that Baltimore does benefit by the recent action of Congress.

When the block grant was established four years ago, a formula was adopted which provided for Baltimore to receive funding initially in an amount near what it had been receiving earlier, over $32 million. But each year this sum would decline until eventually we would be receiving only $18.3 million. So in the first three years of the block grant we received $32.7 million, $30.9 million and $29 million. In the next three years we would have dropped to $23.9 million, $20.3 million, and $18.3 million — a total of $62.5 million for three years.

This year Congress, wisely recognizing the problems this was causing for older cities like Baltimore, adopted a new formula. We have not been officially notified of our entitlement, but our understanding is that we will be entitled to about $29 million in the year starting March 1, $20.8 the following year, and $32.5 million — a total for the three years of $92.3 million.

Thus Baltimore has gained substantially over the old formula which would have cut our program deeply. The difference is about $30 million. But eliminating cuts is different from providing additional funds.

We still are not receiving as much as we have in the past.

We will be receiving about the same amount next year that we have been receiving this year.

We are more than three and a half million dollars below the level of three and four years ago.

Meanwhile, the cost of our activities (rehabilitation, streets, alleys, playgrounds, utility work, site preparation) has gone up, and more and more neighborhoods are requesting such activities.

So to put it frankly, Baltimore is feeling the pinch in its community development programs, and its neighborhoods must be aware of this. We hope that our Urgent Needs application may help solve some of these problems.

We expect to continue our efforts to make each dollar as effective as it possibly can be.

And two points bear repeating:

1. Although we anticipate some of our plans may suffer delays, we expect to carry out all of our commitments.

2. We plan to spend very carefully, and to spend only what we know we have.

People are reading

From the Pratt Library's Edmondson Avenue Branch, 4330 Edmondson Ave., here are selected readings on house plants recommended by Floyd C. Owens Jr., of the library staff. If a title is not available at the Pratt agency nearest you, ask the librarian to request the title for you from another branch.

HOW TO IDENTIFY AND CARE FOR HOUSE PLANTS, Jack Kramer. An excellent reference for anyone with an unknown plant who wants to know what it is and how to care for it.

ALL ABOUT HOUSE PLANTS, William Davidson. This book tells you how to grow your pick of house plants and how to use them to best advantage.

THE BEST OF HOUSE PLANTS, Susane Mitchell. A guided tour of the best kinds of plants for a range of conditions.

HOUSE PLANTS, Dorothy Hoobler. The book for those who think they do not have a green thumb.

HOUSE PLANTS, Better Homes and Gardens. How to care for plants and use them for decoration.

Praise for Madeline

Dear AFRO:

I want to say how much I enjoy, Madeline Murphy's weekly column that is published in the Baltimore AFRO-AMERICAN.

I like her direct, hardhitting and, ofttimes amusing style of writing. She projects the hard, cold facts in a most entertaining manner. Keep up the good work.

O. ANGELA ARMSTRONG

Smile

One day while the neighborhood dogs were romping together, Smokey happened along.

"Heavens, Smokey, what's wrong with you?" asked Nikki. "You look awful."

"I feel awful. I'm nervous, I can't sleep and I can't eat."

"Why don't you see a vet?"

"I have but he says nothing is wrong."

"Perhaps you need to see a psychiatrist."

"Oh, I can't do that. You see, I am not allowed on the couch."