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YWCA OF NEW YORK CITY

OCTOBER 8, 1975

YOU MAY BE PLEASED TO KNOW THAT I'M NOT GOING TO TALK ABOUT THE "STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE OF WOMEN" IN A MAN'S WORLD.

I SUSPECT THAT WOULD BE AS POINTLESS AS TRYING TO CONVERT CHRISTIANS TO CHRISTIANITY.

THE PLACE FOR THAT SPEECH MIGHT BE THE ANNUAL CONVENTION OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL ON DORMANT RESOURCES -- AND, IF ASKED, I'D BE DELIGHTED TO MAKE IT.

BUT, IT IS NOT MUCH USE EITHER TO WOMEN OR TO THE NATION THAT WE, HERE, EXCHANGE STATISTICS ON THE "WOMAN'S PLACE" (AND I PUT THAT IN QUOTES) IN THE HIGHER ESCHELONS OF PRIVATE INDUSTRY AND PUBLIC OFFICE.

THE FIGURES VARY. IN SPITE OF INNUMERABLE SUCCESS STORIES OVER THE PAST HALF DECADE, STATISTICIANS TELL ME THERE ARE FEWER THAN 15 PERCENT WOMEN EXECUTIVES IN INDUSTRY AND 14 PERCENT IN GOVERNMENT.



IT IS OBVIOUS THAT A GREAT MANY PEOPLE WHO NEED TO KNOW THESE FACTS -- INCLUDING A VERY LARGE NUMBER OF WOMEN THEMSELVES -- COULD CARE LESS.

WE DON'T HAVE TO LOOK FAR FOR STATISTICS TO SUPPORT THAT STATEMENT -- JUST TO THE 17 STATES WHICH SO FAR HAVE FAILED TO RATIFY THE EQUAL RIGHTS AMENDMENT.

WOMEN ENJOY A MAJORITY IN EVERY ONE OF THE 17 EXCEPT NEVADA -- AND IN THAT SILVER STATE THEY MISS IT BY 7/10'S OF ONE PERCENT.

MORE THAN THAT, PAT LINDH -- PRESIDENT FORD'S ASSISTANT FOR WOMEN'S AFFAIRS -- TOLD ME THAT MOST OF THE ANTI-EQUAL RIGHTS AMENDMENT LETTERS RECEIVED BY THE WHITE HOUSE COME FROM WOMEN.

IT IS LITTLE WONDER THAT SOME OF OUR GOOD FRIENDS IN THE VANGUARD OF THE ERA MOVEMENT MIGHT OCCASIONALLY LIKEN THEIR MISSION TO THE JOB OF SELLING A "YW" MEMBERSHIP TO BURT REYNOLDS.



I ALSO QUESTION, SOMETIMES, WHETHER WOMEN WHO "HAVE IT MADE" -- AS THEY SAY -- REALLY TAKE THE TIME THEY SHOULD TO THINK ABOUT THE PROBLEMS OF ALL WOMEN.

YES -- PEOPLE THINK ABOUT THE INEQUITIES AND THE OUT-RIGHT DISCRIMINATION AS THEY GO ALONG -- BUT, THEY TEND TO THINK IN TERMS OF THEIR OWN EXPERIENCE.

THE LATE JACKIE ROBINSON ONCE REMARKED THAT HE WAS SO ENGROSSED WITH MAKING IT AS A BALL PLAYER -- THAT HE DIDN'T HAVE ALL THAT MUCH TIME TO THINK ABOUT WHAT HIS OWN STRUGGLE WAS DOING FOR "BLACKS" IN GENERAL.

EACH OF US SHOULD FIND A GREAT DEAL OF SOLACE IN WHAT MR. ROBINSON ACTUALLY ACCOMPLISHED FOR BLACKS -- NOT BY BEING BLACK, BUT BY BEING ONE OF THE BEST BASEBALL PLAYERS THE GAME HAS PRODUCED.

AND, ALTHOUGH YOU MAY BE AGHAST -- AS I CERTAINLY AM -- AT THE THOUGHT OF BEING A "ROLE MODEL" FOR SOME OF THE OTHER 35 MILLION WORKING WOMEN IN AMERICA, ONE OF THE BEST THINGS YOU CAN DO TO HELP THE "WOMEN'S CAUSE" IS TO KEEP PROVING
LITY BY ACHIEVING.

SUCCESS BREEDS SUCCESS. THE PILING UP OF ONE SUCCESSFUL EXAMPLE AFTER ANOTHER IS INDISPENSIBLE "TRENCH WORK".

IT MAY NOT BE AS DRAMATIC AS BILLIE JEAN KING'S HOLDING-OUT FOR EQUAL WIN-PURSES FOR WOMEN TENNIS CHAMPS -- BUT, THEN, BILLIE JEAN MIGHT NOT HAVE ACCOMPLISHED HER GOAL WITHOUT THE SPECTACULAR PERFORMANCES OF THE HELEN WILLS, THE PAULINE BETZS, AND THE MAUREEN CONOLLYS, WHO WENT BEFORE.

THE NEW YORK YWCA ATTESTS TO THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS IDEA BY THE VERY EXISTENCE OF TODAY'S SALUTE TO THOSE WHO HAVE ACHIEVED IN THE BUSINESS WORLD. THE CAUSE TO WHICH TODAY'S PROCEEDS WILL GO, WILL HELP AN INCREASING NUMBER OF YOUNGER WOMEN TO FOLLOW IN YOUR FOOTSTEPS TO FUTURE LEADERSHIP.

EACH OF US HAS AN OBLIGATION -- NOT JUST TO THESE YOUNGER WOMEN, BUT TO ALL PEOPLE -- TO HELP MAKE SURE THAT THEY HAVE EVERY OPPORTUNITY TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE FULL EXTENT OF THEIR COMPETENCE.

IT IS IN THIS CONTEXT THAT THE EQUAL RIGHTS AMENDMENT IS SO IMPORTANT TO THIS NATION.



IT IS NOT A QUESTION OF COMPASSION OR CONSTITUTIONAL QUIRKINESS. IT'S A MATTER OF UNMITIGATED WASTE IN A COUNTRY WHOSE PRODIGALITY HAS ALREADY BROUGHT OUR RESOURCES TO THE BRINK.

IT WASTES NOT ONLY A GREAT WELL OF UNDER-UTILIZED BRAIN POWER -- BUT PRECIOUS TIME AWAY FROM THE AWESOME PROBLEMS OF HUMANITY AS WE ASSAIL THESE SENSELESS POCKETS OF DISCRIMINATION -- ONE BY ONE.

FOR EXAMPLE, CONGRESS FINALLY PASSED THE EQUAL CREDIT OPPORTUNITIES ACT, WHICH WILL GO INTO EFFECT WITHIN THE NEXT FEW WEEKS. IT TOOK MONTHS TO PUSH THROUGH THIS PATENTLY OBVIOUS PIECE OF LEGISLATION -- SQUANDERING TIME THAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN BETTER EMPLOYED ON OTHER SERIOUS PROBLEMS.

RATIFICATION OF THE EQUAL RIGHTS AMENDMENT WOULD PUT AN END TO THE NEED FOR ALL THESE SMALLER BATTLES -- AND VICTORIES -- AND LET US ALL GET ON WITH THE VITAL ISSUES.

DETRACTORS OF ERA WOULD LIKE TO HAVE AMERICANS BELIEVE THAT THE THRUST IS DESIGNED TO PRESSURE WOMEN OUT OF THEIR HOMES AND INTO THE WORK FORCE. I'M REASONABLY SURE THAT THEY, THEMSELVES, REALLY DO KNOW BETTER.

THE CLEAR POINT IS SIMPLY TO MAKE IT POSSIBLE FOR WOMEN, WHO ARE SO INCLINED, TO COMPETE ON AN EQUAL BASIS.

WOMEN IN BUSINESS, PERHAPS MORE THAN OTHERS, HAVE MANY OPPORTUNITIES TO SPEAK OUT ON THAT SCORE.

IF THE NATION SEEMS TO BE IMPLORING ALL OF US FOR HELP, IT ISN'T BECAUSE WE'RE SUDDENLY ALLOWED TO SIT AT THE BAR IN McSORLEY'S SALOON.

IT'S BECAUSE THE NATION REALLY DOES NEED HELP -- THE HELP OF EVERY SOUND-THINKING MIND AND VIGOROUS ACHIEVER, MEN AND WOMEN OF EVERY COLOR, SHAPE AND SIZE.

THE PROBLEMS OF HUMANITY ARE CROWDING IN ON US WITH SUCH INEXORABLE ACCELERATION, THERE'S LITTLE LEISURE LEFT TO ARGUE THE FINE POINTS OF SUPERIORITY BASED ON THE BIOLOGICAL DISTRIBUTION OF GENES.

OUR RESPONSIBILITY IS TO HUMANITY. THE OLD ORDER THAT MADE IT NECESSARY FOR YOU TO BE TWICE AS GOOD AND TWICE AS EDUCATED TO COMPETE -- NOW MAKES YOU TWICE AS VALUABLE TO THE NATION WHICH FACES SOME VERY TOUGH CHALLENGES IN THE YEARS AHEAD.

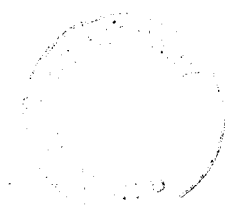
LET'S LOOK AT SOME OF THE PROBLEMS THAT CHALLENGE OUR LEADERSHIP.

LIKE DISCRIMINATION, THEY ARE RELATED TO A COMMON CAUSE --- WASTE.

NEWSPAPERS AND ORATORS HAVE MADE US ONLY TOO WELL AWARE OF NEW YORK CITY'S DESPERATE FINANCIAL SITUATION. THERE'S LITTLE GAIN IN ARGUING ABOUT WHO IS TO BLAME.

WE KNOW WHO'S TO BLAME.

WE ALL ARE.



NEW YORK CITY IS BUT A MICROCOSM OF URBAN AMERICANA. TODAY, THE SMALLEST CITY IN THE CONTINENTAL UNITED STATES MAY LOOK AT NEW YORK AND SAY: "YES, IT COULD HAPPEN HERE."

EVEN IF THE TAXPAYERS COULD AFFORD IT, A TEMPORARY MONETARY INFUSION TO ANY MAJOR METROPOLIS BY THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT WOULD DO NOTHING TO CLOSE THE GAPING WOUND.

WE CERTAINLY CAN AGREE THAT THE "ROOT" PROBLEM OF ALL CITIES -- LARGE AND SMALL -- IS MONEY.

BUT, IT IS NOT THE MONEY WE HAVEN'T GOT TO PAY TODAY'S STAGGERING BILLS.

IT'S THE MONEY AMERICA HAS SQUANDERED OVER THE YEARS IN THE PILLAGE OF HER OWN RESOURCES.

IT'S MONEY COUNTED BY THE BILLIONS IN DESECRATED LANDS AS AMERICAN FINANCED THE NEWEST RING IN THE SUBURBAN SPRAWL.

IT'S MONEY SPENT IN RE-CREATING ALL THE AMENITIES AND CONVENIENCES OUR OUTWARDLY-MOBILE SOCIETY LEFT BEHIND.

OUR NATIONAL PRODIGALITY IS NOT MERELY MEASURED IN DOLLARS -- BUT IN THE HUMANITIES AS WELL.

FOR NEW YORK CITY, 35,000 UNITS OF HOUSING, A YEAR, ARE ABANDONED. EXPERTS PREDICT THE RATE WILL RISE TO 50,000 NEXT YEAR.

AN ABANDONED HOUSE IS NOT JUST AN OLD DERELICT DOWN BY THE RAILROAD IN AN EDWARD HOPPER LANDSCAPE.

ABANDONED WITH IT ARE A PART OF ALL THE THINGS THAT MADE IT LIVE.

MUNDANE THINGS -- LIKE WATER AND SEWAGE LINES, ROADS AND TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS AND UTILITIES.

VITAL THINGS -- LIKE THEATERS, SCHOOLS AND CHURCHES.

AND PRECIOUS PIECES OF THE HISTORY AND CULTURE THAT GIVE THE CITY MAJESTY.

AN E. A. ROBINSON ELEGY ENDS WITH THE WORDS:

"THERE IS DARKNESS AND DECAY IN THE
HOUSE ON THE HILL . . .

"THEY HAVE ALL GONE AWAY."

"THERE IS NOTHING LEFT TO SAY."


DO WE, AS EDUCATED AND THINKING BUSINESS LEADERS --
REALLY HAVE NOTHING TO SAY?

IN THE FORWARD RUSH OF UN-HEEDED TIME THE NATION HAS
RAPIDLY RUN OUT OF EXPEDIENT SOLUTIONS AND READY EXCUSES.

WE HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO HELP WITH THE RE-ORDERING OF
OUR PRIORITIES.

A WELL-KNOWN WASHINGTON MATRON ONCE REMARKED: "IT
TAKES NO TIME AT ALL TO GET USED TO A LIMOSINE."

WELL, THE FUEL SHORTAGE HAS SHOWN US IT TAKES NO TIME
TO GET USED TO A MINI-CAR EITHER. IT HAS ALSO TAUGHT US
THAT THERE'S REAL COMFORT IN AN OLD-FASHIONED SWEATER WHEN
WE HAVE TO TURN DOWN THE THERMOSTAT.



TODAY, IT'S FASHIONABLY "IN" TO USE RECYCLED NEWSPAPERS AND BOYCOTT NON-RETURNABLE CONTAINERS. THAT'S FINE. BUT THERE'S MORE TO THE JOB THAN RECYCLING THE DEBRIS THAT LITTERS OUR HIGHWAYS.

THE REAL CHALLENGE IS TO RECYCLE WHOLE CITIES THAT NOW LITTER THE VERY LIVES OF 16 MILLION AMERICANS WHO ARE OFFICIALLY DESIGNATED AS "THE HOUSING POOR" -- WHICH IS A BUREAUCRATIC CLICHE FOR PEOPLE WHO LIVE IN SLUMS.

THERE'S FAR MORE INVOLVED HERE THAN WEARING A PROTEST BUTTON AND WAVING THE FLAG.

IT TAKES PERSONAL, DRIVING ACTIVE PARTICIPATION AT EVERY LEVEL OF PRIVATE ENTERPRISE AND PUBLIC OFFICE WHERE THE PLANS ARE MADE.

IT TAKES PERSONAL WILLINGNESS TO STAND UP AND BE COUNTED AMONG THE FORESIGHTED.



THAT BOTTLE-STREWN, GARBAGE HEAP OF A VACANT LOT --
NO MATTER WHERE IT'S LOCATED -- ISN'T SOMEBODY ELSE'S PROBLEM.
IT'S OURS.

WE CAN'T KID OURSELVES THAT IT'S JUST A "WEST SIDE STORY".
AND, UNLESS WE DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT, IT WILL BE EVERYBODY'S
TRADEGY.

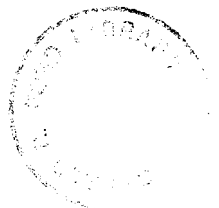
A CITY ISN'T A MASSED CONCENTRATION OF CAPITAL ASSETS.

IT'S PEOPLE.

A HEALTHY CITY IS MADE UP OF PEOPLE OF EVERY ETHNIC AND
ECONOMIC DESCRIPTION -- WHOSE COMBINED ENERGIES AND TAXABLE
INCOMES KEEP THE CITY IN BUSINESS.

DESTROY THAT BALANCE AND YOU DESTROY THE CITY.

IN THE CURRENT "BUSINESS WEEK" MAGAZINE WHICH LANDED
ON MY DESK YESTERDAY MORNING, THERE'S AN EXTENSIVE ARTICLE
ON NEW YORK CITY'S REAL ESTATE WOES.



LET ME QUOTE ONE PERTINENT PARAGRAPH.

"THE PRESENT DETERIORATION, IF UNCHECKED, COULD MEAN THE VIRTUAL COLLAPSE OF THE HOUSING INVENTORY OF NEW YORK CITY AND A MASSIVE EROSION OF THE PROPERTY TAX BASE, WHICH WOULD HAVE A DEVASTATING EFFECT ON THE CITY'S REVENUE-RAISING ABILITIES."

BUT, THE SHOCK WAVES OF INNER-CITY DESTRUCTION AND DECAY DON'T JUST STOP AT THE CITY LIMITS. THEY MOVE OUT TO TOPPLE AN EVER-WIDENING CIRCLE OF SUBURBAN DOMINOES.

THE ECONOMIC LIFE FORCES THAT BUILT THE BIG CITY, RECUR AGAIN AND AGAIN, AS EACH NEW TOWN GROWS AND EXPANDS.

THUS, ANY COMMUNITY -- URBAN OR SUBURBAN -- THAT ENJOYS, OR HOPES TO ATTRACT, THE ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF PRIVATE INDUSTRY MUST EXPECT TO SHARE THE ECONOMIC BURDENS. ONE OF THOSE BURDENS IS PROVIDING SUITABLE HOUSING FOR THE LOWEST PAID WORKERS IN THOSE PLANTS.



YET, IT IS A FACT OF URBAN LIFE THAT IS TOO OFTEN CONVENIENTLY OVERLOOKED IN THE PLANNING SESSIONS OF OUR COUNCILS.

THE INEVITABLE ALTERNATE IS ANOTHER GROWING SLUM, AND ANOTHER CYCLE OF UNCHECKED WASTE -- OF RESOURCES AND OF HUMANITY.

SO, WHEN WE TALK ABOUT THESE PROBLEMS OF NEW YORK -- OR CHICAGO, OR DETROIT, OR ST. LOUIS -- WE'RE REALLY TALKING THE PROBLEMS OF THE NATION.

IN TRUTH, OUR MODERN-DAY CITY PROBLEMS ARE SURMOUNTABLE -- IF WE ARE WILLING TO MAKE SOME OF THE EARLY-DAY SACRIFICES OF THE PIONEERS WHO BUILT AMERICA.

BY EVERY YARDSTICK -- ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL SANITY, AND ECONOMIC NECESSITY -- WE HAVE FINALLY CONCLUDED, STATISTICALLY, WHAT WE SHOULD HAVE CONCLUDED, INTELLIGENTLY, MORE THAN A DECADE AGO:

THAT IT IS FAR LESS COSTLY TO RECYCLE A CITY THAN IT IS TO BUILD ANOTHER SUBURB.



IN FACT, IT COSTS ABOUT 50 PERCENT LESS ALL AROUND --
IN LAND, ENERGY, CAPITAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT.

DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGES IN RECENT YEARS MAKE THAT PROPOSITION
EVEN MORE SALIENT.

THERE HAS BEEN A REMARKABLE INCREASE IN ADULT-ORIENTED
HOUSEHOLDS -- PUSHING THE DEMAND FOR LOW AND MODERATE COST
HOUSING, ACCESSIBLE TO JOBS AND JOB OPPORTUNITIES, AND THE
DESIRE FOR NEARBY URBANITIES AND AMENITIES.

BETWEEN 1970 AND 1973 -- SINGLES, YOUNG MARRIEDS, THE
CHILDLESS AND THE ELDERLY, ACCOUNTED FOR 82 PERCENT OF THE
NATION'S NET POPULATION GAIN.

AMERICA CAN MEET THESE NEEDS, AND, IN THE PROCESS
BREATHE NEW LIFE INTO OUR CITIES.

WE HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO CHECK WASTE.

AND THE JOB ISN'T GOING TO GET DONE IF THE NATION WASTES
A GOLDMINE OF BRAIN POWER, INGENUITY AND INVENTIVENESS OR IF
IT WASTES TIME DEBATING ABOUT WHO SHOULD BE RUNNING THE STORE.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

