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July 11, 1967



ASB

The Human Relations Commission and
Village Board of Trustees of Skokie
5127 Oakton Street
Skokie, Illinois

Gentlemen:

The Skokie Human Relations Commission has been doing a good educational job.
For instance, Skokians by and large:

- a) Have not tried to "flee."
- b) Have not panicked.
- c) In a relatively short time seem to have generally accepted the fact that a Negro family may actually move next to them.
- d) There have been practical successes. In neighborhoods where problems loomed, the HRC was able to help with the aid of real estate people and others to bring reason and/or calm to the area in several specific instances.

The HRC generally found brokers to be cooperative in those specific cases where the attention of the Commission was called.

The HRC heard of no case where a seller said a broker declined to list or show his home on an open occupancy basis.

Yet despite the efforts of influential Chicagoans from all over the Metropolitan area, as well as those in Skokie, relatively few sellers wished their homes shown on an open occupancy basis. The Commission's own checking confirmed this fact.

Some pertinent questions present themselves regarding the fact that no Negro bought through a broker:

Are the brokers of Skokie to be blamed because those Negroes shown and told about available homes chose not to buy them?

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Are brokers refusing to accept open occupancy listings?

Are brokers refusing to show open occupancy listings to Negroes?

Since the real foot dragging involves the seller and his immediate neighbors, the most efficacious educational program should center around the local neighborhood property owners association. But the Homeowners Council and its leaders have rather obviously not even begun seriously to face this situation let alone grapple with it.

In Skokie this could be particularly effective since the political base for the incumbent Board of Trustees, via the Caucus party, stems from the Homeowners' associations.

Little if any effort appears to have been made to persuade sellers not using brokers to show on a non-discriminatory basis. Should the contemplated legislation be enacted the Commission appears likely to lose a good bit of the cooperation it's been getting from the brokerage industry by default, because many fearful and concerned sellers, based on their performances in this field in connection with the Skokie Plan project, will go "underground" to whatever extent they can be successful.

In this regard it is timely to recall statements of Drs. Bloch and Mundie and Mr. Turton at the time of the implementation of the Skokie Plan, to the effect that if "it won't work voluntarily, then it won't work as a law."

"According to the opinion polls in the major cities of the North, the majority of the whites believe the Negro now has equality; by a heavy majority, the Negro is equally convinced that he does not have it.

It is easy to see what lies behind this paradox. White Americans emphasize equality of opportunity while Negroes stress equality of results." - Edward Marciniak (Annual Report for 1965).

How needlessly tragic, then, that a law may be passed, which generally ineffectual and acknowledgeably unfair, can only exacerbate existing wounds and can but lead to additional more stringent laws covering "results."

In June of this year a Lou Harris national poll showed that opposition by whites to laws in this field has risen sharply during the past year. In 1966 whites divided almost evenly on the question of a federal housing law. Today they are 3 to 2 in opposition to such laws.

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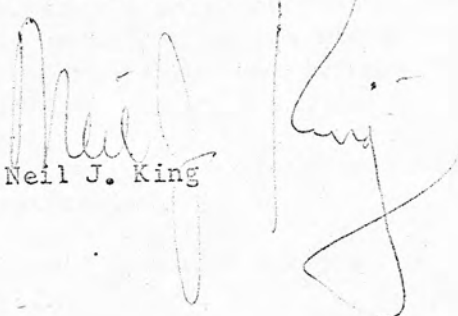
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Such a law doesn't seem to work.

The Wall Street Journal recently featured a 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ column article about the ease with which such laws are avoided where such an overwhelming proportion of the people are in favor of avoidance. The difficulties of proof and lack of real justice because of the intricacy of enforcement and prosecution are cited in detail. The net upshot seems to be that even in such places as Manhattan's North suburbs and Boston's West suburbs where state laws include homeowner-seller as well as broker, very few Negro families have actually made the moves contemplated by the legislation passed about 3 and 4 years ago respectively.

Regarding Weston and the efficacy of legislation, Glenn Seaborg, Chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission, said resignedly on January 25th of this year to the Joint Congressional Committee on Atomic Energy "racial problems existed at all 6 of the finalist sites and that Weston was no worse than any other" - and this remark despite the fact that the other sites are, in fact, covered by legislation in this area:

Very truly yours,


Neil J. King

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