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THE HEAT IN OUR KITCHEN.

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WITH THEIR PROFESSIONAL EXPERTISE AND POSITIONS OF INFLUENCE, EDUCATIONAL LEADERS AT EVERY LEVEL BEAR A MAJOR RESPONSIBILITY IN ACHIEVING REALISTIC SCHOOL DESEGREGATION THROUGHOUT THE NATION. THE EDUCATOR MUST PROVIDE A COMMON MEETING GROUND FOR THE YOUNG NORTHERN NEGRO WHOSE LIFE IS CIRCUMSCRIBED WITHIN A PREDOMINANTLY BLACK GHETTO AND THE WHITE CHILD WHO HAS INHERITED THE STEREOTYPE OF SEGREGATED EDUCATION. TWO BROAD POLICIES MUST BE FOLLOWED TO SECURE COMPLIANCE WITH SCHOOL DESEGREGATION GUIDELINES IN THE SOUTH AND TO DEFINE WHAT CONSTITUTES RACIAL DISCRIMINATION IN THE NORTH AND WEST WHERE SEGREGATION DEPENDS MORE ON RESIDENCE PATTERNS THAN ON STATED COMMUNITY POLICY--(1) MAINTENANCE OF EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE IN CENTRAL CITY SCHOOLS, THEREBY REDUCING WHITE MIGRATION TO THE SUBURBS, AND (2) INCLUSION WITHIN EACH SCHOOL OF STUDENTS FROM THE WIDEST POSSIBLE RANGE OF SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CROSS-SECTIONS OF THE AREA'S POPULATION. WHILE THERE IS NO PERFECT ANSWER FOR ACHIEVING DESEGREGATION, HELPFUL TOOLS INCLUDE PAIRING PLANS, BUSSING, EDUCATIONAL PARKS, DOUBLE SESSIONS, COMPENSATORY EDUCATION, FULLY INTEGRATED SUMMER PROGRAMS, AND A NUMBER OF SPECIAL FEDERALLY FUNDED PROGRAMS. THIS ADDRESS WAS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY BEFORE THE SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS CONFERENCE SPONSORED BY THE NATIONAL URBAN LEAGUE AND TEACHERS COLLEGE OF COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY (NEW YORK, JUNE 18, 1966). (HM)

THE HEAT IN OUR KITCHEN*

An address by Harold Howe II
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In their letter describing this conference, Mr. Young and Dr. Fischer outlined two topics for discussion: first, the prospects of obtaining public support for integrated, quality education; second, the feasibility of integrated, quality education.

That agenda has a fine ring to it. The word "feasibility" has five syllables, thus assuring everyone that this will be an intellectual affair, carried out on a high plane by gentlemen wearing shirts, ties, suitcoats, and perhaps Phi Beta Kappa keys. I was pleased to receive an invitation to join your company, and sat down soon after receiving it to compose some gentlemanly, five-syllable thoughts.

And then James Meredith was shot down on a road in Mississippi. Paradoxically, I heard of this event just a few minutes after I left a meeting with Secretary John Gardner, Roy Wilkins of the NAACP, and a number of civil rights leaders accompanying Mr. Wilkins. We were discussing our progress in school and hospital desegregation. And I started to wonder whether civil rights was any place for a gentlemanly discussion. I am beginning to suspect that it is not; in any case I have the feeling that those of us who think of ourselves as gentlemen

*Before the School Administrators' Conference sponsored by the National Urban League and Teachers College of Columbia University, at the Roosevelt Hotel, New York City, Saturday, June 18, 12:15pm. 1966

should either stop pretending that we care about racial equality, or we should step down from our air-conditioned podiums and start something definite in the way of a program. Considering the aurhority that we gentlemanly education officials have at our command to correct racial injustice in our schools, I feel that we have accomplished very little so far.

We have, to be sure, gotten a fair amount of newspaper space and published enough committee reports on the inequalities of segregated education to build a paper Tower of Babel. Nothing is safer these days then denouncing bigotry. But I find myself puzzling over which is worse, honest bigotry or well-intentioned timidity.

While we have gone on urging moderation, sweet reason, and bigger and better panel discussions, the schools throughout the Nation remain almost as segregated today as they were in 1954, when the Supreme Court decided that racially segregated education was illegal. The small progress that the South has made toward desegregation has been offset by increasing <u>de facto</u> segregation in the cities of the North. Since 1954, an entire sub-generation of Negro and white youngsters who started first grade in that year has now graduated from high school . . . most without any classroom experience with the other race. The facts today are that a Negro youngster in an American elementary school has on the national average not much more than 15 percent of his classmates from the majority white groups; in the Southern States the figure is nearer to 5 percent; white high school students can expect to have nine out of ten of their classmates

from their own white group. The picture does not inspire calm satisfaction.

Moderation has a great deal to be said for it, of course, especially by the moderates. I am reminded of the prayer that St. Augustine addressed to heaven when he was a young man. "Oh Lord," he said, "make me chaste. But not yet".

Our words have urged the Nation to desegregate its schools. But our reluctance to act has said even louder, "not yet." Somehow we seem to have been lulled into a blind faith in gradualism, a mindless confidence that some morning, some year, a suddenly transformed electorate will spontaneously and joyously decide that this is the day to integrate America.

Well, it's not going to happen. For a variety of reasons -- one or two of them arguable, the rest pure rationalization-- the majority of American whites display no likelihood of becoming enthusiastic about school desegregation and the changes it demands in the immediate future. The law of this land nevertheless beckons every one of us, calling on us to recognize that desegregating the schools is our legal responsibility, that it will not be easy work, and that it is futile to expect the years to erode those passions that today make the processes of desegregation unpopular. Gradualism -- no matter what we call it --- has failed, and I think it is fair to say that those who continue to espouse it are fooling themselves and in many ways, failing our Nation.

It seems to me time for school officials to form a third front for racial equality in the United States.

At one end of the civil rights movement today we have the gradualists, both white and Negro, a polite and sometimes sluggish team, deeply respectful of the public and sometimes given to assuring each other that it is possible to make an omelette without breaking eggs. At the other end are the activists, both the non-violent demonstrators and those weary and desperate Americans who have come to feel that violence is the only way to get anything done.

The failure of the gradualists would seem at bottom to be fear . . . fear of rocking a boat which, no matter how leaky, appears at least to be floating somewhere. The failure of the activists is that while they know in general terms what they want to achieve and are willing to pay a heavy price to obtain it, they have neither the position in society nor the professional's knowledge of the means and importance of advancing racial equality within the framework of law.

School officials have both position and knowledge. Those of us professionally engaged in education are charged with setting educational policy within our respective jurisdictions, and we are familiar with a variety of methods that can be used to advance school desgregation. What we have often lacked is a productive commitment.

I say <u>productive</u> because for all our recognition of the importance of school desegregation to our society, the fact remains that we have not achieved much of it. I say <u>commitment</u> because achieving desegregation does not require fury or breast-beating; it does require something much more important: the

recognition that school desegregation must be accomplished, and the determination to do it.

Our task obviously requires an activity more sophisticated than the gritting of our corporate teeth. School officials occupy a curious position somewhere between that of the educational leader and the political leader. But it is apparent that for many administrators, a necessary sensitivity to public opinion has tended so to dilute their sense of responsibility for educational leadership that they have exercised it only after the public parade has already decided which way it wants to go.

This may sound to many educators as an unfair and overdrawn indictment. The record clearly shows that school officials today are making remarkable strides toward improving American education. They are coming up with new ideas and accepting the risk inherent in all experimentation.

But to win public support for such advances as team teaching, modern curriculm, language laboratories, ungraded classrooms, closed-curcuit television, and computerized instruction is not enough. We must at the same time desegregate the schools. To do otherwise is to accept the shadow of educational leadership in place of its substance. School desegregation is the single point on which we who call ourselves educational leaders prove that we really are so...or demonstrate that we are merely trying to keep things quiet until we receive our gold watches for a lifetime devoted to the status quo.

The fact is that no matter how hard we try, we will not be able to keep things quiet. A revolution is brewing under our feet, and it is largely up to the schools to determine whether the energies of that revolution can be converted into a new and vigorous source of American progress, or whether their explosion will rip this Nation into two societies. We simply cannot wait until dramatic action becomes safe, for at this point it is much less dangerous to make a mistake than to do nothing.

Feeding that revolution is a major shift in American folkways. Today approximately two of every three adult Negroes living in the North was born and raised in the South. This move has necessarily had a major impact -- often a bewildering impact -- on the individual. In some ways, the life he left in the South was less segregated than it is in the North. The Negro child born in the South was, to be sure, raised on the notion that he would always occupy a subservient position ... but it was nevertheless a subservient position within a white society.

The young northern Negro of today's city lives in a black society. He has few points of contact with whites, and those few -- when you reflect on them -- are revealing. He is likely to encounter a white teacher, a white policeman, and a white merchant. He can pass his entire adolescence without having to deal with the white world outside the ghetto, and his ideas of that world are based on three types: the teacher, often a symbol of boredom and irrelevance; the policeman, a symbol of authority, if not of repression; and the merchant, often a symbol of white cunning.

And so the young Negro setting forth from the ghetto to confront this white world expects it is going to misunderstand him and oppress him, and too often he finds evidence to justify his fears. It is no wonder that, if he has any spunk and imagination, he rejects the fatalism of his father and decides that it is the part of a man to change this sorry mess he inherited. And if it takes violence to change it . . . well, that's what it takes.

It is this young Negro who must be convinced that the United States is his home, not his prison, and that it is a country worth fighting for, not a cage to be fought out of. It may already be too late to change his mind. But it is not too late to provide his younger brothers and sisters with a healthier belief . . . nor too late to protect white children from the destructive stereotypes that most white adults inherited from their own segregated education.

What tools have we to demolish the wall which separates our youngest citizens? How can we prevent them from fearing each other before they have even met?

You are as familiar as I with some of the ideas that have been proposed to desegregate the schools: pairing plans that provide faculty and student exchanges between predominantly white and Negro schools; bussing to alter the racial compositions of schools in different parts of a community; educational parks that might have as many as 20,000 students drawn from every racial, economic, and geographic sector of a city; supplemen-

tary centers for the special enrichment of education which bring together young people from different sides of the tracks for a common denominator of learning.

In addition, there are a number of Federally-sponsored programs that offer significant help. Under Title IV of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, for example, the U.S. Office of Education provides financial assistance to school personnel and authorities to deal with the special problems resulting from desegregation.

Grants are given to school boards for training teachers and other school personnel, and for the employment of specialists. Training institutes are supported to improve the ability of teachers, supervisors, counselors and other school personnel to handle desegregation problems.

Since the beginning of the Title IV program in January of 1965, applications have been received for funds totaling more than $35,000,000 against available funds amounting to $12,275,000. The Office of Education has been able to support 59 grants amounting to $4,900,000. We have supported 115 institutes in the amount of $6,500,000. More than 7,500 teachers, supervisors, counselors, and principals have benefited from the institute training alone.

Title III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 also authorizes Federal aid to school districts to help them plan and carry out new ideas for school desegregation. President Johnson added a special $5 million fund for this purpose in his message on education this year.

Title I of that same Act has the overall effect of easing the harmful educational results of school segregation, because its entire $959 million is aimed at benefiting those children who have suffered most because of the poverty that usually accompanies racial inequities. These are the estimated 5½ million children from families whose annual income is less than $2,000 a year. Here too, after-school and summer school projects are providing the opportunity to integrate staff and students in ways that aren't possible in the regular school program.

Each of these Acts, together with the 70-odd other programs administered by the U.S. Office of Education, has been given a special thrust by the Civil Rights Act of 1965. Title VI of that Act, as you know, prohibits Federal aid to any program of activity that discriminates among its recipients on the basis of race, color, or national origin.

Thus the Civil Rights Act makes of every Federal program, whether it be for education, urban development, or water pollution control, a powerful financial tool in the drive against racial inequity. The rationale behind this Act is simple: no desegregation, no Federal money.

But though the rationale may be simple, its operation is both frustrating and complex. The Nation sees that frustration in the Office of Education's attempts to secure compliance with our school desegregation guidelines in the South. We in the Office see this frustration in an even more acute form in our attempts to define what constitutes racial discrimination in

the cities of the North and West, where segregation depends less on stated community policy than upon patterns of residence.

To say this is by no means to say that the Office of Education is caving in on de facto segregation -- on segregation Northern-style. It is to say that the issues are complicated and subtle, that establishing a clear-cut legal basis on which to take action -- and be confident of withstanding any challenge -- has required far more investigation and study than we would have preferred. We are not satisfied with our pace. But that dissatisfaction adds up not to retreat but to determination to redouble our enforcement efforts where they are pertinent.

The broad position we must all assume on this matter comprises two parallel and equally important policies. One cannot work without the other. The first is to make the schools of the central city such good schools that they attract people rather than repel them. The second is to use every possible device to include within each school a cross section of the social and economic backgrounds of the metropolis. A student should meet America in his school -- not a segregated segment of it. The concept of racial balance may be impractical except as an ideal in a city with more Negroes than whites and a continuing white exodus. But keeping our eyes on that ideal can help us to do practical things now to slow the exodus and provide equal educational opportunity.

Some very practical things are now underway at the instigation of State and local officials acting on their own to make equal educational opportunity a reality . . . sometimes in the face of community opposition, but sometimes hand-in-hand with community determination to eradicate a century-old injustice.

The Denver school board, for example, has authorized double sessions at one of its high schools in order to cut class size and reduce pupil-teacher ratios to a point where teachers can use new instructional techniques to best advantage. A special pilot program of compensatory education was provided for and the administrative staff was instructed to draft plans to bus enough Negro student-volunteers to other schools to achieve better racial balance at a school that was in danger of becoming all-Negro.

Summer programs in Little Rock are fully integrated as to staff and students and are being conducted in formerly all white schools. Portland, Oregon's program of saturation services for inner city schools aims at producing an education program so good that it will reverse the flight of middle class whites from racially balanced schools in fringe areas.

The St. Paul school system is considering a plan to combine a rapid-transit system with a cluster of four or five 300-acre educational parks that would bring youngsters from the ghetto, from other city schools, and from parochial and suburban schools into central locations for classes ranging from nursery school through junior college. Other cities looking seriously at the possibility of similar educational parks in-

clude East Orange, New Jersey, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, and New York City.

In describing the St. Paul plan, School Superintendent Donald Dunnan admitted that the educational park may not be the entire answer to school desegregation. "But", he said, "it is the kind of step that's needed. Everybody has been saying, 'Let's do something.' We are."

And that is the point -- to do something.

But let us agree on this: that in terms of the magnitude of the task, none of these approaches--not the special arrangements made by the schools nor the programs sponsored by the Federal Government--is a perfect instrument for doing the job they are supposed to complete. Yet that is precisely why educators who know both the uses and the limitations of these ideas must act on them, for we must supply in courage and in action what our plans lack in ingenuity. There is no such thing as the perfect way to achieve school desegregation. There is no magic key that will unlock all the doors that private prejudice and public pressure have placed in the way of equal opportunity in education. We must simply bore ahead with the tools we have, and it won't be pleasant, and it won't be quiet, and it would be much nicer if someone else would share the work.

But the job is there to do, and if any of us entered education with the idea that it would be a soft touch, this is as good a time as any to concede that we made a big mistake. There is lots of conversation about local control of the schools; if we really believe in it -- and I assure you that I am in that

number -- we must make it work. We must guide the schools to a continuing freedom while at the same time responding appropriately to calls for national action. Local school districts must not sit on their hands and then bellow about having the reins of educational policy yanked from their fingers.

We are in the midst of a struggle for excellent education for every American youngster, and we must use every likely tool we can devise. Local school administrators must consider such means as redrawing school district boundaries, and consolidating with neighboring districts for educational purposes, even though political boundaries may remain unchanged. We cannot wait for mayors and city councils to do the work they hired us to do. And sometimes we must do work they don't want us to do.

There is no point in waiting for real estate salesmen to get the message from on high and ease our job by selling homes to anyone who wants them. There is no point in our waiting for American corporations to start hiring Negro men as readily as they do light-skinned, well-dressed Negro women. Neither American home salesmen nor American personnel managers have ever insisted that they have a major responsibility for building American democracy. They have never pretended to do anything but their jobs.

American schoolmen, however, have quite properly taken a large share of the credit for establishing national unity and freedom of opportunity. Our predecessors in the classroom helped 20 million European immigrants become Americans, and we haven't stopped bragging about it yet. If we are to retain that

pride in our tradition, I think we must recognize that the great achievements of the past are not only a legacy, but also a heavy burden. If we want to wear the laurels, we must also carry the load.

The load we must carry is that of irritating a fair percentage of our white constituents -- of embarrassing some governors and mayors, of alarming some newspaper publishers, and of enraging suburban taxpayers who in proportion to their means are not paying as much for their good schools as paupers in the cities are paying for their bad ones.

And all this means that, finally and most grievously, we must run the risk of being invited to resign. Unless all of us are willing to put our jobs and our integrity on the line, we should admit that American educators are no longer prepared to be the prime movers in American education.

American education today is perhaps the hottest room in our national house. But we picked it out all by ourselves. To paraphrase a metaphor first wrought by President Truman, I would say that we must either adjust ourselves to the heat or let somebody else take over the kitchen.

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