

Ferdie J. Deering

11-27-74

'Where to Live' Policy Not Funny

AMERICANS have joked quite a bit about governments in other countries telling citizens where and how they should live.

This might not be so funny if a "population distribution policy" being proposed for this country by sociologists should ever become a reality. We already have national policies on air, water, employment, safety, traffic and many other things.

Population distribution policy is defined by professors advancing the idea as "a set of measures designed to influence where people live and work within the country."

Few people have complete control over where they may live and work now, but so far we don't have to obtain a government permit before we decide to move or change jobs.

A current publication lists seven studies that have been made, partly at government expense, dealing with population distribution in the United States.

The reports issued include such theories as these:

Growth of cities is seen to be at the cost of an increasingly inhospitable urban physical environment.

Urban psychosocial environment deteriorates with increasing city size.

Political environment of larger cities is characterized by inadequate representation for the poor of the inner cities.

The spatial organization of a growing metropolitan area is viewed as depriving central city residents of

easy access to jobs.

Growth of cities also is seen as sapping rural towns of their vitality, leaving poverty, unemployment and impoverished government.

In a presentation made at a conference on regional economic policy, conducted by the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis, George S. Tolley and John L. Gardner of the University of Chicago had this to say:

"As a nation, we seem to avoid going down the road of really effective measures to influence population distribution. Rightly or wrongly, we may be suspicious of ability to avoid boners if government has more power over location. Too, con-

gressional and executive pressures in location of activity would become more subject to control."

As "cornerstones" of population distribution, they suggested that we must first "get rid of the adverse population distribution effects of existing institutions and policies" and "face more squarely troublesome questions about mixes of people."

How? They suggest numerical formulas be specified to indicate goals sought, with revenue sharing funds increased for those communities "showing progress in racial and economic integration."