KINGSTON, N. Y.
FREEMAN
D. 20,500

FEB 2 4 1976

EDITORIALS

Pick Your Poison

State Department of Environmental Conservation Commissioner Ogden Reid may not realize it, but the course he is now taking to clean PCBs from our mighty Hudson River and the banning of commercial fishing so that we won't eat any of that poisonous chemical is a giant step towards the rehabilitation of the State, of the entire nation.

The Freeman applauds him for having the courage to take it. PCBs (polychlorinated biphenyls) is a highly toxic chemical waste that has been seeping into our river for years. Recently, two General Electric plants near Glens Falls have been charged as the main sources of PCBs pollution.

Reid has told the company to clean up its act or he is going to close those plants. State Commerce Commissioner John Dyson is looking for a compromise solution. He is afraid that the job loss, if those plants close or move elsewhere, as has been threatened, would only add to an already devastating unemployment picture.

Obviously Dyson figures that a little pollution and jobs saved is better than no pollution and no jobs. Reid will have none of this and neither, by the end of the year, will the Federal government. The government is obliged by treaty with foreign nations to enforce a zero discharge of PCBs by the end of the year. So, it won't matter whether GE stays or not, the problem will have to be solved.

Reid is undoubtedly moving to stop the PCBs discharge from the GE plants before the federal regulation comes into play.

The Freeman feels that Reid is absolutely right. The pollution must stop, and right now. No more stop-gap measures that seem to work for a little while, but only add to the original problems.

You see people, it has got to stop somewhere. We just can't keep sweeping things under the rug in the name of economic feasibility. The only way to bring the system, State, Nation back to a place of prominence, where everyone can live safely, happily, is to tear down the weakened structures, reinforce or rebuild the foundations and start building from the ground up.

With all the technology we have at our disposal, this shouldn't be too hard, or too expensive. Even if the cost, monetarily, is high, who among us can put a price on our lives. Why can't GE put some or all of those people, who stand to lose their jobs when and if the plants close, to work on a project that may keep this situation form happening again. Sure, it might cut the margin of profit for GE stockholders. Maybe they would have to settle for $32.6 million instead of $33.9 (fictitious figures). That's really too bad. Did you ever notice how easily the terms "Live within your means, tighten you belts" roll off the tongues of millionaires?

The only way to cure disease is to perform lasting surgery. Cosmetics wash away too easily. We have to do it now, before those little PCBs poison us all.

MONS 033078