

FRIDAY, SEPT. 1, 1972

EARL RAAB

Candid Comments

Quotas, Ballots, Etc.

One San Franciscan has complained about the negative comments made here about female-male quota systems. She said that it was remiss not to mention the legitimacy of genuine affirmative action programs on behalf of women. She's right. Probably because men have always been oppressed by a sense of their own inferiority, they have always felt compelled to ascribe an inferior status to women. To overcome that long cultural overlay, it now becomes necessary to actively search for qualified women, and to go out of the way to train qualifiable women for equal job positions. That's affirmative action.



Raab

So is this: In a San Francisco Human Rights Commission study of genuine affirmative action programs in our city's health institutions, the Jewish community came out on top. Mt. Zion Hospital has trained more racial minority people for up-graded jobs than any other institution by far. This kind of thing doesn't fit in the fashionable image of the American Jew having suddenly turned redneck reactionary.

As for quotas, they became a presidential campaign issue last week, when Richard Nixon made his acceptance speech. It's an important issue, but a dangerous one to over-simplify. The reference is to "benign" quotas in employment, for example, or in graduate school admissions—for purposes of redressing past wrongs. Jewish agencies have opposed such quota systems, because they threaten to expunge the individual—and that's the beginning of the end for any democratic society.

But opposing quotas is not enough. After all, if a man is under-employed because of his ancestry, he also feels expunged as an individual. That's why all persons or agencies that actively opposed quotas must just as actively support affirmative action. If they don't, then their opposition to quotas will just be seen as hypocritical, self-seeking dedication to the continued oppression of the less fortunate.