



THE FLATLANDS

"TELL IT LIKE IT IS AND DO WHAT IS NEEDED"

Volume 1, Number 1

OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA, SATURDAY, MARCH 12, 1966

5¢ a copy

FLATLANDS SAYS:

Welcome to Oakland, the all-American city; welcome to Oakland, the "city of pain."

380,000 of us people live in this city. Most of the well-to-do whites and a small number of well-to-do Negroes live in the Oakland hills. The nigger-haters and the Uncle Toms and the people that run things, they all live up there too. From their homes they look down onto a patchwork blanket of grey. That's where the flatlands are, stretching out from the base of their hills and running on to the very edge of the bay. The flatlands are spilling over with people. The flatlands stink with decay.

The flatlands people have had no one to speak for them. The experts talk about poverty and segregation and all that; but the feelings and pressures they breed keep on being ignored or misunderstood. Let's spell it out for this all-American city, spell it out the way it is—from the poor's point of view. We'll be one-sided but it's a side that's been hidden too long. It's time that it be brought out and listened to.

Things aren't changing much in Oakland, unless they're getting worse. In the past twenty years over 100,000 minority people have pushed into this county. Most of them have settled in Oakland. Most of them, since the end of the war, have had nothing permanent to do. The poorest have crowded into West Oakland. Now it's called Niggersville. The people that count, they know all about it. They know that the ones who live there are noisy, dirty, stupid, lazy and dangerous. Besides, there's something wrong with most of them—something about the color of their skin. The Negroes, the Mexicans, the Chinese, the Indians—even the poor whites—they better stay put there too.

Oakland's ugly down in the flatlands. The people that count want to get rid of the slums; they want to get rid of the slum dwellers too. They want to make the whole place spick and span so that business and industry will hurry up and move in. They say that'll help the poor get jobs; but by then the poor won't have the money to live there. By then maybe it won't matter what the poor do.

You ask anybody in Oakland about it. They'll tell you how all this government money's been pouring in—so's the poor can pull themselves up by the bootstraps. But FLATLANDS can tell you how the poor see it; the poor say there isn't nothing that's been done. The money's out there somewhere. We wonder in whose pocket.

Take jobs. There's 90,000 Negroes who are living in Oakland. Multiply the average number of people in the whole country who don't have work by five and you'll know the average number of Negroes here who are out of a job. Take schools. Oakland does its segregating in a pretty slick way—de facto they call it; and it's not just by color but by class. There are 80% white hill schools and 80% black flatland schools; and there are 25,000 children in the flatlands the experts say are "educationally deprived." Then take housing. Even if the flatlands people had the money they couldn't move up and out unless they were white. Three out of five white citizens in our fair city wouldn't let them. Three out of five wouldn't be caught dead living on the same block.

Seems like Watts made the federal government jumpy. People from Washington, they come all the way down here. They ask us what's going on in the flatlands. They want to know how long we can wait. Some of these national magazines and newspapers write about us too. They say the flatlands is an area in which we have a so-called "potential explosion." But the people that count, they say that isn't true. They sit way back there on their easy chairs; they tell us everything's all right. After all, they say, "we have not only a strong council but a strong city government and a strong chief of police." When something happens, man, they won't know why. How could they? Who's down there in city hall, or on the school board, or in charge of the police. Which of them is our neighbor? Which of them sends his kids to our schools? Which of them works along side us? Which of them speaks for the poor?

City government's no mystery to us. City government likes things as they are. Pretty soon there'll be a new mayor and a new police chief. That won't matter. They've run with the pack pretty long. It's like city governments' just one big structure; and it won't bend or crack at all. We don't down any one person; we down the whole works, the whole way of thinking and promising and doing nothing. We're not going to take it no more.

No one has to tell us how it is. We've got to decide what to do. If we're going to change things around this city, we're going to have to change ourselves too. FLATLANDS says to the poor: This is a challenge for you as much as for the people who sit up high and let things go on as they are. If the poor don't get up off their butts and participate, they're going to be smothered. The people we have to fight aren't amateurs. They've been running things their way for a long time. They know how to work together. That's something we've got to learn too. We've got one good thing going. The weak points in the structure—they're our strong points. They're the issues flatlands people are beginning to get hot about. They're the points we can band together on. We've got to take them one by one. We've got to push each one through.

FLATLANDS says: "Tell it like it is and do what is needed." FLATLANDS challenges you.



Photo by Howard Harowitz

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Lew Harris, Oakland Project, Bay Area Urban Extension Program, University of California Extension.

West Oakland Christian Parish.

East Oakland Christian Parish.

Sunday Evening Discussion Group on Education (SEDEGE).

Citizens of West Oakland!

Here is what your so-called representative, City Councilman Rilea, thinks of you!

Councilman Rilea has served on Oakland's City council since 1951. He was elected at that time as the "representative" from West Oakland. Councilman Rilea doesn't understand what it's like down there in Niggersville. He doesn't know what it's like to be poor. Seems like he's more concerned about the garbage down there than about how much the people eat, where they sleep, and what they think of their police. Councilman Rilea wants to clean up the garbage down there. He wants to keep the place neat. Has he ever counted the number of trash cans the city puts down there along 7th street?

"Mr. Vice Mayor," said Councilman Rilea in a distressed tone the night of October 26. "You travel along 7th street. From 7th and Peralta on the north side of the street. I don't know what the people down there think of their homes and their community, but it looks like they are using the north side of the street, and . . . using the streets around the doors, the places that are vacant, and using that for a dump. Now isn't there something we can do down there to the people or get somebody to go up and down 7th street for a while and see if we can't stop all this stuff going into these doorways down there? And the old theater down there looks like it was starting to be a dump like the old mail place. And at 1647 there is another place there that they have a big can and there is a lot of - it is just garbage and stuff in there. Something ought to be done or else we are going to have another area down there that will be called somebody's dumps. It is something that

should be looked into. I don't know whether we have got a health department or not, but I do know one thing. I looked at one of them today and it is a good place to start a fire, if they want to start a building on fire, with the amount of paper that is stuffed around in there. We ought to have somebody down in there some way as long as we don't have a health department so that we can take care of the filth down there on the north side of 7th street."

Vice-Mayor Maggiora: "Maybe you can give those addresses to the city manager and he can follow through on it."

Councilman Rilea: "I think I have given them to him already and I know they are in the process, but I just want to let this council know that there is something going on down in there that I am ashamed of and a city of our size should be able to take care of it and get the people to realize that they are living in a city, not out on a garbage dump."

FLATLANDS heard recently that the store front owners down along 7th street were given brooms free by the city. That was just about four months ago, after Councilman Rilea's speech. We wish Councilman Rilea would tell the city council now about the rats and roaches down there. Of course they're not so easy to see. They hide in alleys and people's houses. They don't hang around on the streets.

Maybe we should send our dead rats and roaches to Councilman Rilea: He'd get more than brooms for us then.



WEST OAKLAND, SOUTH OF SEVENTH STREET

Photo by Howard Harawitz

How Your City Government Represents You

Flatlands people know they can expect either no help from the city government, or just enough help to keep them quiet. City government's no mystery to them. City government likes things as they are.

Take Mayor Houlihan for example. Mayor Houlihan never fails to show what he thinks of the poor and the minorities. He's always talking about what the taxpayers want, as if the flatlands people weren't taxpayers too.

Just after Watts, a group of Oakland Negro leaders asked Mayor Houlihan to meet with them. They wanted to talk about what could be done to prevent riots from breaking out in the Oakland ghettos. The day before they met, the Mayor told a public gathering "Tomorrow I have to meet with the biggest bunch of kooks ever assembled in Oakland." This was typical of the Mayor's attitude towards the people who try to speak for the poor.

At a meeting of the City Council held on February 1 of this year, the Mayor spoke about forming a human relations commission.

Oakland, said Mayor Houlihan, was the best authorized to look into such matters. "After all, there are spokesmen here in the City who are recognized as n- won't take a job, and is an ex-convict who gets front page publicity in the Wall Street Journal

tional authorities on the subject. There is a man who wears a beret hat, carries a cane, and the Los Angeles Times." The subject of the Mayor's remark, and the Mayor's lack of respect for this man were clear. "We have got other self-constituted spokesmen," the Mayor continued. "I feel quite strongly that if these people mean what they say, they might stop playing patty cakes in the mud pond, operating in a vacuum so to speak." Here the learned Mayor's meaning was less clear.

"Oakland does suffer substantially from discrimination by other activities within the county of Alameda," Mayor Houlihan pointed out. But he hardly mentioned the problems of discrimination within the city itself. The main purpose of the commission would be to deal with "discrimination and segregation practiced outside the city which results in the city of Oakland having to assume 75% of the welfare responsibility and a 9.6% average of unemployment within the community in the center of an affluent county . . . I am prepared to take the position," he conceded, "that perhaps such a commission may do some business in the City. Obviously, the Alameda County Human Relations Commission isn't doing this. NOT A SINGLE ONE OF THE BLEEDING HEARTS, AND THE DO-GOODERS AND THE

SOCIAL WELFARE WORKERS AND THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE MINORITY GROUPS HAVE THUS FAR FILED A SINGLE COMPLAINT . . ."

At the same meeting, Mayor Houlihan expressed his views on the need for a committee on full opportunity or a housing discrimination committee. The Floyd Hunter Report on Housing Discrimination in Oakland prepared in 1964 had shown that at least one-third of the city's real estate agents practiced discrimination. Even worse, it pointed out that 60% of the Caucasians in Oakland "harbor feelings of prejudice," a fact the flatlands people have known for a long time.

But Mayor Houlihan did not seem to think Oakland needed a committee to deal with these problems. Former members of the Committee on Full Opportunity had warned him that refusal to allow their group to continue would mean a cut in Federal funds for re-development. Even an argument on his own terms didn't sway him. "This Mayor certainly does not knuckle under that kind of threat."

If what they said was true, he told the council, "I would be pleased to recommend . . . that we withdraw from all re-development of the Federal Government, let its programs come to a grinding halt, and see who is going to pick up the tab!"

Houlihan's Big Bad Wolf

Question: Who is the "man who wears a beret hat, carries a cane, won't take a job, and is an ex-convict who gets front page publicity in the Wall Street Journal and the Los Angeles Times?"

Answer: I am The Curtis Lee Baker, a citizen of California and America: Indigenous fighter for a right that is called Freedom.

Each man must work in his own way.

I am sure most of you all knows me already and I know many of you so called true leaders hate my name. But one thing for sure. You do respect me. And that is a wonderful feeling.

But you know where the evil

hands stand with me. And I know where I stands with many of you so called goodies. I know for myself in California, as well as America, 75% of all the so called Negroes that suppose to be leaders are not leaders. They hide behind the evil powers. They becomes white in so many ways.

Now 90% of the so called white leaders, they cares nothing for blacks and poor white minorities. Blacks are not the only sufferers of pains, misuse, and being hated. Yes, this is something that many white leaders wants to keep a secret. But I am bringing it out to the public.

Many of you don't know me because I have a good side. Sure I played a role. But I'd have been an actor if I had played anyway different. Believe me Oakland would have been in War. I say things that I believe in and I feel talking is easy to do. But one must be willing to give his life for the cause of freedom. I have made my life a donation in this fight for freedom. I can see 100 mens running this country. This county is worse than any of the southern lands.

I been for freedom long before the 90 day wonders started. So I have no fears of the Uncle Toms and the white evil haters of this America. I am an old hand at fighting the Mayors and Police-mans of this country. I started fighting them in 1948. I don't

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The Big Bad Wolf Himself

WAR ON THE POOR

By Robert Olmstead

EDITOR'S NOTE: The War on Poverty in Oakland is being lost. The reason for this is simple. The people who are fighting the war are not the poor. The following article tells how this happened and how it could be changed. The author, Robert Olmstead, is pastor of the Shattuck Avenue Methodist church, chairman of the North Oakland Advisory Committee and member of the North Oakland Christian Parish.

The War on Poverty in Oakland has become a war on the poor. The War on the Poor is being waged by well-meaning social workers and bureaucrats. The weapons are funds for the War on Poverty. The casualties are the dignity and pride of the poor people of Oakland.

It might have been thought that War on Poverty funds would be controlled by the poor, so that the poor, for once, might have the dignity of determining their own destiny. But authority for spending Poverty funds rests securely in the hands of the Oakland Economic Development Council (O.E.D.C.), which is a committee of the Mayor's appointees. The majority of this committee are not poor. They sincerely want to help the poor, but fail to see that the dignity gained from controlling their own program would do more to help the poor than any services given to them.

By failing to grant control, O.E.C.D. is contributing to the hopelessness and despair which comes when others always control your destiny. Even when the control is benevolent it contributes to apathy and inertia. If the poor could determine how the Federal Poverty funds were to be spent, they would gain a new self-respect. Action could replace inertia; pride could replace hopelessness; and dignity could replace despair. This initial action could lead the poor to assert more control over other aspects of their own destinies.

WHO ASKS THE POOR?

But the poor of Oakland have not been asked what they want—they have been told what they need. They have not been accorded the dignity of running their own program. It is being run for them. In short, Oakland's War on Poverty says to the poor, "You are not capable of handling your own affairs. We know what is best for you. We intend to give you what you need so that you can become Middle Class, like us."

If a poor person wants to have any voice in determining how Oakland's War on Poverty funds are spent, he must work his way through a bewildering maze of "official channels" which completely exhaust his influence (as well as his patience). These

channels were definitely not set up for the convenience of the poor. They are rather the traditional complexities of bureaucracy which multiply themselves while bottleneaking constructive ideas. The poor were never consulted when the O.E.D.C. or the Department of Human Resources were being established. This is what the poor mean by the "Establishment." They had nothing to do with it, but it was established to manipulate their lives.

The Oakland Economic Development Council determines who gets to spend War on Poverty funds. The Department of Human Resources, a specially created City Commission, is responsible for coordinating and facilitating the entire effort. After the first year's funds had all been spent, the O.E.D.C. instructed the Department of Human Resources to set up an Advisory Committee of local citizens in each of the four target areas. These advisory committees were to elect two representatives (since raised to three) to the forty-member O.E.D.C.

MAZE OF COMMITTEES

The advisory committees, through their representatives, were then to hand in recommendations on new requests for funds and evaluations of on-going programs. The Council of Social Planning, the Department of Human Resources, and the Technical Committee of the O.E.D.C. also hand in recommendations. By the time the voice of the poor is mingled with these other voices, it has become weak and faint.

The advisory committees, although they supposedly represent the poor, have no authority at all. Existing public agencies are presently receiving all of the War on Poverty funds. This enables them to hire additional staff to work in the target areas. But these agencies do not have to confer with the advisory committees in any way regarding their program or their personnel.

When it came time for the advisory committees to write their by-laws, it became apparent that the O.E.D.C. intended even to determine the precise functions and limitations of these citizens' groups. With no money, no authority, no power, and no meaningful work to do, it is little wonder that the advisory committees have had trouble involving many really poor people. The poor are too busy trying to stay alive to spend time posing as window dressing for the O.E.D.C.

The Oakland Economic Development Council does not operate at the convenience of the poor. The majority of the meetings have been held at 8:00 in the morning on work days. The professionals who serve on it are able to manipulate their schedules to do this. The representatives of the poor — if fortunate enough to have some kind of a job — can seldom take two hours off in the morning.

But more serious than this is the structure which calls for one two-hour meeting a month, at which decisions involving millions of dollars must be made. There is never time for any depth study of agenda items. There is seldom time for even superficial study. The recommendations of the Executive Committee and the Department of Human Resources are heavily depended on.

This largely delivers policy making into the hands of the Department of Human Resources, though they will roundly deny it. Shortage of time leads both the Executive committee and the



"I AIN'T NEVER HEARD OF THE WAR ON POVERTY"

Photo by Howard Harawitz

O.E.D.C. to turn to the full time staff of the department of Human Resources for direction and suggestion. The staff of the Department of Human Resources is an enlarged version of the staff of the old Interagency Project, which involved a number of existing social and educational agencies in experimental programs. The Interagency project sought to change institutions. They never thought of letting the poor participate in the decision making process. The same mentality afflicts the Department of Human Resources. They work well with such agencies as the Board of Education and the Department of Public Health, but have great difficulty relating to the poor.

This philosophy of supporting existing agencies, rather than using the money to help groups of the poor organize themselves, can be seen by a review of the first year's twenty component programs. \$791,888 went for educational programs. (There is the strong feeling that the Board of Education is using these funds to set up programs of compensatory education, in hopes of avoiding the more urgent problem of de facto segregation.) \$342,779 were spent on employment projects (all for youth). \$252,448 were spent on health, family and legal services. \$56,528 were spent for community organization. And \$215,259 were spent on administration (Department of Human Resources). Seven component programs were entrusted to the Board of Education. Seven components were run by other social agencies, and two by church groups. In each case it was an agency doing something for the poor. In no case was it the poor being allowed to do something for themselves.

CHANGES NEEDED

There would be great value in junking the entire structure and starting over again with poor people taking major responsibility from the beginning. But if that is impossible, three basic changes must be made to make the existing structure usable.

If the Oakland Economic Development Council is going to retain the power to decide which proposals will be submitted to Washington for funding, then the O.E.D.C. should have at least a majority of its members elected from the advisory committees. It seems highly unlikely that all the representatives from these four areas would ever vote as a bloc. But if there are issues where the representatives of the poor vote as a bloc against the

"Establishment" bloc, then surely the representatives of the poor should have the majority.

A second change would give the advisory committees authority over the contracts of professionals working in their target area, if the professionals' salaries are paid with Poverty funds. If the funding has been awarded to public agencies and these agencies intend to put added staff in the target areas, then the agency and the target area advisory committee should work out the contract together. It is apparent that the professionals are needed. But they should be working FOR the poor. A person on the city payroll (as are the staff of the Department of Human Resources) will be working for the city. Persons on the payroll of service agencies are working for those agencies. If the payroll was controlled by the poor, they would work for the poor. One lawyer doing research for JOBART (Justice on Bay Area Rapid Transit) might help create more jobs for the poor than all the millions now being spent by M.D.T.A.

DOLLARS AND DIGNITY

Finally, a significantly larger portion of the money must be at the disposal of the poor themselves. Incentive to participate would be provided if the poor felt that they were going to get to spend part of the money. Dignity would come from the process by which they organized themselves to determine its use. At the present time, agencies have the staff to develop proposals rapidly, and they siphon off the money before the poor have the experience of getting organized.

It might well be that the same services now being offered would be requested. But achieving something yourself is far different from having it given to you. It is more likely that the poor would choose to spend their money on Ad Hoc groups rather than on-going agencies. These Ad Hoc groups would be for the

purpose of pressuring existing agencies into providing more of the services that are desired. The poor could then tell the Board of Education what kind of education they want, instead of the board deciding what the poor need. Similar pressures could be brought to bear on the Council of Social Planning, Department of Public Health and other social agencies.

So far the Oakland Economic Development Council has shown no willingness to release any funds that will challenge the existing power structure. Until that is done the War on Poverty will fail to get at the roots of poverty.

If the poor are responsible for their own poverty, then there is justification in trying to change the poor. If the poor are the victims of the social and economic structures that create poverty, then it is these structures that should be changed. So far Oakland has aimed its War at the poor instead of at poverty.

The benevolent paternalism of the Oakland Economic Development Council and the Department of Human Resources can only aggravate the loss of dignity already afflicting the poor. Freedom can never be given. It must always be taken. These Federal funds should be available to help the poor TAKE their freedom.

MAKE THIS PAPER SPEAK FOR YOU!

THE FLATLANDS is Oakland's only independent newspaper. Its success or failure depends on you.

If you wish to submit an article or know of a story or event that should be covered, contact any member of the Editorial board or call Sandy Close (845-2193) or Darrow Bishop (848-5152).

HELP CHANGE OAKLAND NOW

"The only way to help is to run the right people for office and get some faces changed around here."

VOTE FOR THE MAN YOU FEEL BEST REPRESENTS THE FLATLANDS. VOTE FOR THE MAN YOU KNOW SPEAKS FOR THE POOR.

The primaries for state offices will be held on June 7. Registration ends 54 days before the primary elections, on April 14.

If you have recently changed your address or your name, or if you did not vote in the last general election, you will have to register again.

Houlihan's Big Bad Wolf . . .

Continued from Page 2

like wrong doers. And we know this country is run by those who can pay their way to do wrong. Money lets these dogs get away.

So blacks, as well as whites, are being misled and cared for by phonies and crooks who care nothing for the poor people of this county and state. I know the indigenous believe in freedom. This county and state needs a new leadership if we are looking to live in peace and stop the war that will hit our cities and state. Keep the old and you will bring a War to town. Watts started because of Uncle Toms and evil white leaders. We have a chance to stop our war if we act in time.

The Poor Speak Out



The War on Poverty isn't reaching the people. Many of those interviewed in the flatlands had never even heard of it. Those who have had this to say:

West Oakland wife, Negro, mother of five, husband not living there: "The first thing that should be done, you should be able to get a doctor. My children and I have certainly suffered. My family doctor was out of town; me and my five children were down with the flu. The Welfare department said there weren't nothing they could do for us. So we called the Service Center. The Service Center tells you to go to Welfare. They tell Welfare about every cent they give you."

West Oakland business man, white: "I'm in sympathy with the objectives of the program, but I haven't seen much in the way of results. It disturbs me that the people who are able to say where it goes have not been able to do better. The employment situation hasn't been taken care of. And somethings' got to be done for the kids. The program needs more contact at the local level. We've got to get the kids into the flow of life down here."

West Oakland missionary, white, mother of five, husband not living there: "I don't know anything about the poverty program, except what I hear. And I hear that it isn't doing what it's supposed to be doing. I never went out myself to find out whether this was true. My own observations of what the people down here need—First, nurseries for working mothers that are within their means—I went into a home the other night; the baby sitter was a man, about 50 or 60, drunk. Children are a big responsibility—you can't just leave them with anybody."

"Second, something for the kids to be doing. They should have some place to go where they can use their minds. They don't have anything to occupy themselves—that's why they're getting into trouble."

"I haven't heard of the West Oakland Area Service Center until now. If it's on Peralta and 14th, it's completely out of the

people's reach. And most of the old people don't have transport. There's nothing that's down here (west of the freeway, between 12th and 5th streets). But this is a community right here and there is nothing that you can go to. They don't have anything in the places where it's needed.

"You can't reach the people being something that they aren't themselves. You have to be one with the people you want to reach."

West Oakland unemployed Negro. "People don't hire people at my age. I be 60 November 19. I've been out of a job for two years. I'd do pretty near anything to make a living for my family. Yes, I been down to the War on Poverty office. They always get your name and tell you to come back later and see so and so. You come back and they tell you he's not in. You don't know who's who by then. I went to see if there was some way to get me a job. I need some help. They done cut off the telephone already."

"You go down to the Welfare, they want to know how your grandmother died and why she was cross-eyed. You go down to the unemployment office. It's the same runaround. That man there he talk to you like you don't have to vote for him no more."

"I wish I had 300,000 votes to cast in the next election. Boy, I'd clean out a lot of people. I don't see a poor person around here getting nothin'. Some of those people, they get \$250 a month just to go around and TALK about the War on Poverty. My honest opinion of the War on Poverty? I don't want to tell you—you're a lady. I guess it's doing something somewhere. As for me, I'd like to see what it's doing."

"I reads the paper—the Democratic and the Republican side. They both tells you what the War on Poverty's doing. They talk about the hundreds of thousands of dollars allocated to Oakland. Now where's all that helping the little people? Something's gotta break before July, or I ain't gonna vote. I don't have no real citizenship anyway."

Advisory Committees Protest

OEDC runs the War on Poverty program with a pretty strong hand. The only problem is that the majority of OEDC members are not really of and for the poor. So when the poor try to speak at OEDC meetings, they tend to get pushed around.

Recently, the North Oakland and Fruitvale Action Committees sent letters to the OEDC Chairman objecting for one to the way open meetings were being run. Some of their other points were taken up in Mr. Olmstead's War on Poverty article (see Page 2). Others, like the legal aid controversy, will be covered in detail by FLATLANDS in its next issue.

The two letters follow: Judge Wilson and members of the OEDC Executive Committee:

The Fruitvale Action Committee is formally protesting the conduct of the OEDC meeting of January 26, 1966 for the following reasons:

1. There was no chance for an "in depth" discussion of the proposals. It was possible to vote for approval, disapproval, or approval with a cut in budget, but no discussion was allowed as to what specific budget items or what specific parts of the proposal might be removed without completely destroying the proposal.

2. The recommendations and priorities in the memo presented to the members of the OEDC were produced by Dr. Smith and NOT by the OEDC. Dr. Smith claimed that he had simply drawn together the comments and priorities resulting from the OEDC workshop and from the action of the area committees and the other review agencies, but we find it impossible to see how different and often conflictint recommendations could be drawn together in such a way. Furthermore, the Action Committees did not see the revised versions of the proposals until after the memo was prepared, and their final recommendations and detailed lists of priorities could therefore not have been included. At the request of staff, we had reviewed the revised proposals, made recommendations in detail, and listed them as we saw their order of priority. We expected the results of our work to be considered by the OEDC. They were not, and Dr. Smith's memo; its recommendations, its categories, and its priorities, were used to structure the meeting.

3. The Chair showed an appalling lack of impartiality and a lack of respect toward several members of the OEDC. He openly ex-

pressed his personal disagreements with some of the speakers, but sat strangely silent during outbursts such as the personal attack on one of our delegates by Mr. Corona. The OEDC, or at least the chairman should have understood that our delegates were acting according to instructions set by the whole committee after their review of the proposals.

We therefore make the following specific recommendations, which we ask to be placed on the agenda of the next OEDC meeting:

1. That no proposals be submitted for funding until all proposals presently before the OEDC

2. That each proposal, including those acted upon at the last meeting, be given a careful point by point consideration. Extra OEDC meetings should be called if necessary.

3. That all future OEDC meetings be held in the evening and in the target areas.

4. That a majority of the OEDC be made up of elected representatives from the target areas. Sincerely, Gerald Leo, Chairman, Fruitvale Action Committee.

Dear Judge Wilson:

The North Oakland Action Committee, meeting on the night of February 8, 1966, at 905 Market St., has directed us to make the following observations. They are in the form of formally protesting certain actions that transpired at the Oakland Economic Development Council meeting of Wednesday, January 6, 1966 and requesting that certain items be placed on the agenda of the Oakland Economic Development Council meeting of February 23, 1966.

We are gravely concerned at the irresponsibility with which the various proposals were handled by the O.E.D.C. on the night of Jan. 26. It was obvious that many members had hardly read the proposals, and were simply voting "yes" or "no". In no case was there any opportunity to go through a proposal point by point. With the phenomenal sums of money involved it is grossly irresponsible to treat it this way.

We protest the fact that Dr. Norvel Smith's list of priorities became the agenda for the meeting. This meant that his opinions had a very disproportionate influence on the conduct of the meeting, since his document created the categories in which all the proposals were discussed. His list of priorities could not have reflected the consensus of the various reviewing bodies,

since the North Oakland Action Committee had made its final votes on the revised proposals the night before the O.E.D.C. meeting. That was the earliest possible date at which we could review them, since they had been in our hands for only four days.

We protest the grave lack of respect shown by the chair for certain individuals and proposals. We desire impartiality in the chairing of the meeting. Yet repeatedly the chairman was mocking in his attitude of certain proposals and individuals. Some members of the North Oakland Action Committee expressed fear at speaking out at future meetings lest they be made fun of. Chairing such a meeting is admittedly an extremely difficult task, but we would like to request that respect and impartiality be the marks of the chairman.

We would like to request that all votes be taken by a show of hands, so that they can be recorded and so that there may be no ambiguity.

We would like to make the following requests for agenda items for the Oakland Economic Development Council meeting of February 23:

1. The resignation of Mr. Dan Daniels from the Department of Human Resources is a blow to us, for we have respected his creativity and concern. We would like the O.E.D.C. to publicly review his resignation (and the resignation of others from the staff) to determine if there are causes of dissatisfaction. We would certainly want this to be done in such a way as not to embarrass Mr. Daniels.

2. We recommend that if priorities must be established in the submitting of proposals, top priority be given to neighborhood self-help proposals. Within this category we recommend that further priority be given to proposals dealing with employment and the nursery school proposals.

3. The meeting schedule of the Oakland Economic Development Council is exceedingly inadequate. We recommend that all meetings be held in the evenings. We recommend that meetings be held in the Target Areas. We recommend that meetings of the O.E.D.C. be held more frequently. The O.E.D.C. is handling millions of dollars, and affecting the lives of hundreds of persons. If a person is too busy to spend the necessary time (either a full weekend every month or two or three long evening meetings a month) then he should not be a member of the O.E.D.C.

4. We recommend that O.E.D.C. review proposals point by point. We should not depend on the Technical Committee or any other group to do this.

5. We recommend that 51% of the O.E.D.C. be composed of representatives ELECTED from the Advisory Committees.

6. We recommend that means be established whereby any agency hires persons who will work in the Target Area, and will be paid with O.E.O or Ford funds. The Advisory Committee will then maintain contractual authority over such employed persons, thus genuinely making them the employees of the poor—since they will be responsible to the poor instead of an agency.

These protests and proposals for agenda items are not submitted in a spirit of antagonism or hostility. They express our concern for a more effective War on Poverty, a better Oakland and more satisfied people. Yours truly, Mr. Harvey Peters, member O.E.D.C. Executive Council; and Rev. Robert Olmstead, chairman, North Oakland Action Committee.



How the "hill people" see the War on Poverty



Photo by Howard Harawitz

"Just enough to keep them quiet"

OEDC Okays Police Review

The city of Oakland will soon have a police review board where persons who are involved in cases of police brutality or harassment can go to tell their story and receive help in filing their complaints.

The board will be set up by an independent organization called the Police Affairs Committee and will be paid for by a grant from the Poverty Program.

The board will be made up of representatives from several categories, including lawyers, ministers, physicians and representatives from the Target Area advisory committees, and from ethnic and civil rights organizations. About two thirds of its members will represent minority groups.

The decision to fund the program was made Feb. 23 by a 16 to 3 vote of the Oakland Economic Development Council, in spite of the fact that the Oakland City Council refused to set up a review board last year.

It is hoped that the new program will be established by May 1st, after the program is incorporated and the funds made available. Once it is set up, there will be a 24 hour a day telephone number where persons can call in and get an immediate investigation of their problems with the police, and there will be regular hearings in West, North and East Oakland where people can come to file their complaints.

When the board investigates a complaint and decides that it is valid, the individual involved will be given assistance in using the existing channels for filing a formal complaint. Each case will be followed up until a satisfactory conclusion is reached.

Who Wants Police Brutality?

Toward the end of August, after the riot in Watts, several flatlands spokesmen appeared before City Council to ask that a police review board be set up. The question of police brutality was not a new one for the City Council. The demand for a citizens' review board had been presented to them many times before.

On September 21, Mayor Houlihand announced: "This Council will make its decisions. We are not going to conduct interminable debates and hearings on this question. We have been supplied with letters, correspondence. We have heard a great number of speakers, most of whom are asking again to speak tonight. The sheer weight of numbers or the sheer repetition of these positions is not expected to influence the judgement of the members of the City Council. We try to operate in an area of reason, not in an area of panic or concern for pressure groups of any kinds."

As the Mayor had pointed out at an earlier meeting, "We have only heard from a minority group of the community, and not from the majority who vote for the members of the City Council and who pay the bulk of the taxes. We have an obligation to consider the wishes of the rest of the community, not the most vocal part of the community certainly."

On September 21 a motion was passed that the City Council was not in favor of a police review board. The so-called "wishes of the rest of the community" had not been made known. As far as the City Council was concerned (with one exception), they did not

GUNS BUT NO MILK

EDITOR'S NOTE: The high cost of the Vietnam war has already cut into the budgets for the government's new anti-poverty programs and old economic help programs. The 12-year-old Special School Milk program is one such program being affected. Howard Harawitz, who wrote the following article, is an assistant editor of the California Farmer Consumer Reporter and member of Welfare Rights Organization.

President Johnson has asked for a multi-million dollar cutback in the Special School Milk program.

This program enables school children to buy milk for a nickel that would otherwise cost a dime. The federal government pays the difference. Any child in the Oakland schools is eligible. No embarrassing questions are asked about how much money his parents make.

It now looks like this successful program of 12 years is about to be all but eliminated. The President has asked for an 80% cut in next year's budget. \$3 million is already being withheld from this year's grant.

President Johnson had originally asked Congress for \$100 million for the Special Milk program for this school year. This is \$3 million less than last year. The number of children in school has increased by 4%. It is estimated therefore that \$108 million is needed.

Some labor unions, consumer organizations, school boards and dairy farmers persuaded Congress to increase this year's budget to \$103 million.

But now it seems the program is not going to get the additional \$3 million, even though it was voted into law by Congress.

Why? Because, says the President's Bureau of the budget, "as a result of the increased Vietnam defense requirements . . . the President asked each agency to review its 1966 programs and to make reductions wherever possible. Subsequently a decision was made to hold the special milk program to \$100 million, the amount originally requested by the President for 1966."

The President's action overrides the will of our representatives in Congress. This has forced James Hemphill, California's state school lunch supervisor, to advise all sponsors of Special Milk programs including the Oakland school district, that "effective Feb. 1, 1966, Special Milk claims will be subject to a 10% reduction."

This means that the price of milk in California schools will have to be raised or the cost of school lunches increased or the

have to be. "The wishes of the rest of the community" were simply the councilmen's own.

On Tuesday, March 8, the issue of a police review board once again reared its head in the City Council. The City Council was afraid that the decision to set up such a board might now be taken out of its hands. The OEDC meeting of February 23 had voted to fund the establishment of a Police Affairs Committee with War on Poverty money. The Council, it now appears, wants to have the final say.

What is the new Mayor's position on this issue? What does the new Police Chief have to say? Will the Council be able to veto the decision taken by the OEDC? For the full story of what happens about the police review board, be sure to see the next issue of FLATLANDS,



"Death Drafting the Youth" by Chastain

money will be taken from other educational programs. Anyway you look at it, this part of the cost of the Vietnam war will be paid by school children.

80% CUT NEXT YEAR

Next school year the administration has proposed that the milk program budget be cut 80% to \$21 million. This would eliminate the program in most schools or create so many problems for those that could participate that they would soon drop it.

The Bureau of the budget claims that this sharply reduced grant "reflects the administration's effort to focus this program more on needy children. It will be directed primarily to underprivileged children and children in schools without a lunch service."

Needy children, however, are already included in the present program because ALL children are eligible on a no-questions-asked basis. What the Budget bureau's language means is that next year children who can't, or won't "prove" that they are "needy" will be excluded. Some kind of "means test" will have to be employed.

That is, if the program is restricted to "needy" children someone will have to decide which child is eligible and which is not.

Once again children from poor families will be singled out and questioned about their family income. Or perhaps their parents would be investigated. Many poor children currently participating in the program would rather do without the milk than be subject to such indignities.

This policy of exclusion, moreover, would increase already existing tension between economic and racial groups in our cities. Many finally pressed, middle-income parents would feel a great deal of resentment if their children were no longer to receive low-cost milk while other children were still getting it.

Increased resentment and hostility among middle-income people, who form the bulk of our population, will make it even more difficult to establish new

medical care, education and job creation programs that are desperately needed by low-income families. Programs that will ultimately benefit all Americans.

The cutbacks in the School Milk program are particularly unwise since the federal government will ultimately have to pay for the milk that is not consumed in the schools. Senator William Proxmire, of Wisconsin, says that "more milk will have to be purchased under the price support program because less milk will be used in the Special Milk program . . . In other words, instead of going into children's stomachs the milk will be powdered and stored in warehouses at government expense."

Programs like School Milk and School Lunch were set up to all of America's school children, regardless of their parents' income, would be able to reap the benefits of our abundant food supply. As part of our nationwide effort to eliminate poverty such programs must be improved and expanded, not eliminated.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

As a member of an organization: If you belong to a union, church group, civil rights group, war-on-poverty advisory committee or other organization, have your organization pass a resolution demanding that the \$3 million taken from this year's Special School Milk program be immediately restored. The resolution should also state that the organization supports legislation such as H.R. 12806 (Sisk), which would establish the Special Milk program on an adequately funded permanent basis, with a minimum appropriation for next year of \$110 million. Have copies of the resolution sent to Oakland Congressmen George Miller (8th CD) and Jeffery Cohelan (7th CD); Senator Thomas Kuchel of California; Rep. Harold Cooley, chairman of the House committee on agriculture; Senator Allen Ellender, chairman of the Senate committee on agriculture and forestry; President Lyndon Johnson; and the press. Have your

organization bring its resolution to the attention of the city council and the board of education and urge them to pass similar resolutions

As an individual: Send a message, by letter or telegram, similar in content to that suggested above for organizational resolutions to your Congressman and to President Johnson.

For copies of a sample resolution, or if you want a speaker on this subject for your organization write to:

California Farmer-Consumer Information Committee
740 Hilmar Street
Santa Clara, California,
or phone 296-5850.

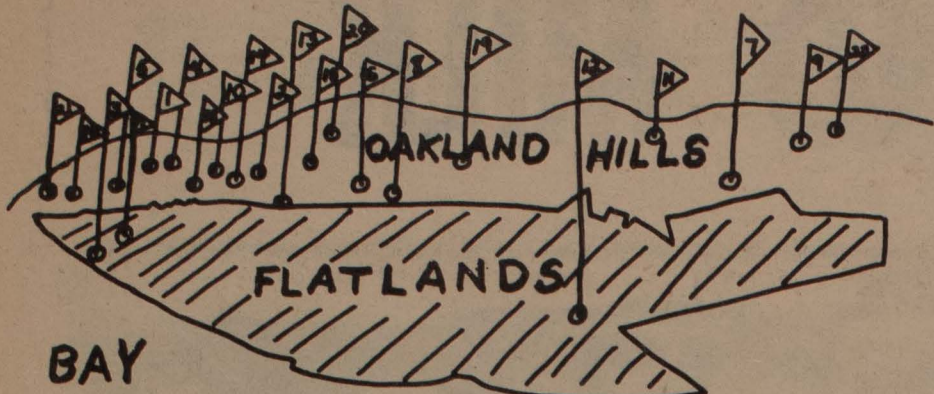
About the Artist

Willard Chastain was born in 1933 and lived as a child in the slums of Washington, D.C. He spent his youth on a small farm in northern Virginia. His talent for drawing was noticed at the age of seven and he worked at it, though not really seriously, until his discharge from the Marine corps at the age of 20. He then began to study art in earnest in New York and Washington, D.C. though his total attendance at formal art school is a few weeks. He studied the German Expressionist school of art and was greatly impressed and influenced by them. His art exhibits social awareness, and he feels his true biography can only be seen in his art.

FREE MOVIES

Parents Association for Better Schools has asked FLATLANDS to announce that free movies will be shown in the Lockwood School auditorium, 67th Ave. on East 14th St. the first and third Monday of every month. The show will begin at 7:30 sharp. Children must be accompanied by a teenager or adult. We suggest you bring a carload of kids.

WHERE YOUR LEADERS LIVE



Your "leaders" live in the hills where they can keep an eye on you. But far enough away so they can't hear you. This is a key to your "leaders" point of view.

CITY COUNCILMEN

Dist.	Member	Address
1	Felix F. Chialvo	168 Cross Road
2	Joshua R. Rose	856 - 32nd St.
3	Howard E. Rilea	1474 - 12th St.
4	Robert L. Osborne	6861 Estates Dr.
5	Fred Maggiora	590 Radnor Road
6	Paul A. Brom	4548 Fairbairn Ave.
7	Mayor John H. Reading	4735 Sequoyah Rd.
8	Dan Marovich	714 - E. 24th St.

BOARD OF EDUCATION MEMBERS

9	Melvin Caughell	10950 Lochard Ave.
10	Carl Munck	5940 Zinn Dr.
11	Lorenzo N. Hoopes	45 Mott Place
12	Barney Hilburn	789 - 61 st St.
13	Alan Lindsay	21 Humphrey Place
14	Mrs. Ann Corneille	1064 Hubert Rd.
15	Seymour Rose	45 Hillwood Place
16	Dr. Stuart Phillips	5720 Buena Vista Ave.

Supt. of Schools

HOUSING AUTHORITY COMMISSIONERS

17	T.W. Anderson	478 - 12th St.
18	Paul B. Godkin	6150 Estates Dr.
19	Leon R. Riese	1843 Brentwood Rd.
20	James A. McHenry	2070 Mountain Blvd.
21	John J. Kronenberg	626 Caldwell Road
22	Police Chief Robert J. Preston	3618 Dorisa Ave.

OEDC WORKSHOP

On Saturday, March 12 at 1:30 a.m., there will be an important meeting.

This meeting is for the Office of Economic Development Council, commonly known as the Anti-Poverty Office.

To be discussed are these topics: What do advisory committees (called Target Area committees) do in crucial areas of Oakland? Can Target Area Committees choose their own members? Can Target Area Committees have a voice in the policies of agencies receiving funds?

Also to be considered is the important issue of whether representatives of the poor should have a controlling majority (51%) of delegates to O.E.D.C.

But who can attend? On calling the Department of Human Resources, one citizen was told that this meeting is "closed to the public" and that "there is only room for the delegates."

Dr. Norvell Smith, head of the Human Resources Department, has stated that he has been "sheltering" the people and that they do not know how little power they have. He has said that the City Council can veto any suggested program or, as in the case of the proposed police review board, "table" the motion.

THIS POLICY - MAKING MEETING, IS, IN FACT, OPEN TO THE PUBLIC.

It will be held at Dunsmuir House, with probably the most important issues being considered at the beginning of the meeting, 8:30 a.m. To get to Dunsmuir House from the MacArthur Freeway, turn off on Dutton Freeway exit, turn left and go under the freeway where Dutton becomes Marlowe. Turn left off Marlowe onto Covington. A private road turns off Covington and leads to the gate to Dunsmuir grounds. Go through the gate, drive about 1/2 mile to Dunsmuir House. Perhaps car pools can be formed, so that OEDC and Department of Human Resources will not be able to hold a secret meeting.

POOR PEOPLE NEED MONEY, NOT EXPERTS

When it comes to buying food, even the so-called experts can't top women from low income families in stretching a dollar, a recent study has shown.

The agricultural experiment station at Manhattan, Kansas, conducted a study of food shopping habits of 31 women from poor families. Their performance was compared to that of home economics students especially trained to get the most for their money.

Results of the tests showed that when buying the same quality of food, the students not only spent more but failed to match the selective skills of the women.

The researchers concluded that in order for the low income family to be fed adequately, more food money was necessary.



ATTENTION!

Unfair treatment by POLICE? call 776-9669, or call any member of THE FLATLANDS editorial board.

1. Never resist the police or talk back.
2. Get the policeman's badge number.
3. You must tell the police your name and address ONLY!

IF ARRESTED

4. Keep demanding a phone call until granted.
5. Phone for assistance as soon as permitted.

CITIZENS ALERT
366 Eddy Street

What's Cooking in School?



Educationally Deprived Does Your Child Want to Change Schools?

EDITOR'S NOTE: 25,000 Oakland public school children are "educationally deprived". They should be receiving special help through the money which has been granted to Oakland under the Elementary Secondary Education Act. Flatlands people should be helping to decide how the ESEA funds are spent. As usual, someone slipped up in all the bureaucratic bustle and red tape. Only 12,000 children are being reached. The ESEA programs are being worked out independent of the flatland people's ideas!

Late last year Oakland received \$2½ million under the new Elementary Secondary Education Act (ESEA). ESEA funds had been granted by the federal government for children who needed special help in school. Some 25,000 Oakland children need such help but the money is not enough to reach half that number.

Oakland could probably have received more money if the Oakland school administration had used the figures of the Department of Human Resources and of the Welfare Department to figure out how many of their children were receiving a poor education. Instead they used the 1960 census figures which are now out of date. The Guidelines for ESEA funds in fact stated that the 1960 census figures "were not satisfactory for making such determinations". According to Supt. Stuart Phillips, the state of California used the 1960 census figures and forced Oakland to follow suit. If this is true, the state went against the spirit and letter of the Elementary Secondary Education Act. As the Federal Guidelines makes clear, it is the responsibility of the local agencies to decide how many children need special help, not of the state.

The ESEA funds have already been granted to Oakland. It is too late to do anything about increasing the amount. What the people in the flatlands must do now is make sure that they have some control over how the \$2½ million is being spent. They have the most at stake in this issue for it is their children that the ESEA money is supposed to help.

So far, the Oakland school administration appears to be completely ignoring the poor in plan-

ning ESEA projects. It has consistently failed to carry out the requirements of the federal act. These requirements state that community action agencies work with schools before plans for spending ESEA money are submitted and while they are being carried out. The community action agencies must be represented not just by their directors but by all the members of their policy boards, in particular "those who represent low-income areas."

This is how the Oakland school administration is allowing the poor people to help plan ESEA projects. Recently, the administration began to set up school advisory committees. These committees are supposed to prove "citizen involvement" in the drawing up of the administration's policies. But they do little more than act as rubber stamps.

The first meeting of the McClymonds High School Advisory Committee was held on January 13. The members were handed a leaflet called a "Program under ESEA", dated January 10. They were listed in the leaflet as being involved in a program which they had never seen or discussed before. Of the seven members of this committee, only two actually had children at McClymonds. No attempt was made to reach some of the "silent poor" parents and involve them in the planning.

At another school a teacher heard that the same type of committee was being formed. She gave the principal a list of names of the parents she felt should be asked to join because they never came to PTA meetings and were representative of people who were never consulted. She was told by the principal that he did not want "those people" and that he had his own hand-picked list of parents to invite.

ESEA projects are not meeting the real needs of the poor. The reason is simple. The poor have not been in on the plans. They have not been in on the plans.

The worst problem of Oakland schools - de facto segregation - has been ignored.

In December Dr. Phillips said that it was impossible to use

The hill schools in Oakland have better buildings, more experienced teachers, more equipment, small enrollments, and fewer problems. If you want to help integrate schools in Oakland and have your child receive a better education, this is how to apply for transfer to a hill school:

1. If your child goes to Lockwood, Highland, or Woodland schools, apply at one of the schools below the week of March 28th:

Burckhalter, 3994 Burckhalter Ave. (north of 73rd and MacArthur) phone 568-5802.

Howard, 8755 Fontaine (just south of Mountain Blvd.) phone 568-4355.

Marshall, 3400 Malcolm Ave. (north of MacArthur, east of Jones Ave.) phone 569-3112.

Maxwell Park, 4730 Fleming Ave., phone 533-9558.

Redwood Heights, 4401 - 39th (south of Mountain Blvd., close to Redwood Rd.) phone 533-1973.

Sequoia, 3730 Lincoln Avenue (near Lincoln Ave. and MacArthur Blvd.) phone 261-8003.

CHILDREN TRANSFERRING FROM LOCKWOOD, HIGHLAND, OR WOODLAND TO ONE OF THE ABOVE SIX SCHOOLS WILL RECEIVE FREE TRANSPORTATION.

II. If you have a ninth grader and want him to go to Skyline high school next year, here is what to do:

If the child goes to Hoover, go to the meeting there Tuesday, March 15, 2 p.m.

If the child goes to Madison, go to the meeting there, Wed., March 14, 2:30 p.m.

If the child goes to Lowell, go to the meeting there, Wednesday March 16, 7:30 p.m.

If the child goes to Woodrow Wilson, go to the meeting there Tuesday, March 15, at 2 p.m.

If the child goes to Elmhurst, go to the meeting there, Tuesday, March 15, 10 a.m.

If your child goes to Havenscourt, go to a meeting there Tuesday, March 15, at 10 a.m.

If your child goes to Roosevelt, go to a meeting there Tuesday, March 15, at 10 a.m.

If your child goes to Hamilton,

Continued on Page 7

Continued on Page 7



What is his future in the Oakland public schools? Photo by Howard Harawitz

EDUCATIONALLY DEPRIVED . . .

Continued from Page 6
go to a meeting there Tuesday, March 15, at 2 p.m.

THERE IS AN UNLIMITED QUOTA FOR STUDENTS FROM HOOVER, LOWELL AND MADISON.

III. If you have a sixth grader who would be going to Lowell, Madison, or Hoover junior high next year, and you want him to go to Monteria junior high (on the hill above Warren Freeway) here is what to do:

1. Call your school principal and ask him when the transfer meeting for parents will be held.

2. Go to Monteria junior high (on the hill, 5555 Ascot drive, phone 531-0626) some time between March 11 and March 18 and ask for an application to transfer.

IV. If your child is in an elementary school other than Highland, Lockwood, or Woodland, and you want to transfer him to another school, go to the school of your CHOICE the week of Mar. 28 and ask the principal there for a transfer application. If your child is in junior high or will be next year, and you want to transfer him, go to the junior high of your CHOICE the week of March 28 and ask the principal for a transfer application.

These meetings and dates are taken from a school bulletin dated Feb. 23. In case of change of dates, call the Oakland Public Schools, phone 836-2622 and ask for "Boundaries" or call your principal and the principal of the school you want to transfer to (look under "schools" in the yellow pages of the phone book.)

As of March 2, 1966, transportation will be provided ONLY for schools mentioned in I. However, if your child is in an overcrowded school and there is space in hill schools, you MAY receive transportation, if the transfer would help integrate the schools.

CHANGING SCHOOLS? . . .

Continued from Page 6
funds to wipe out de facto segregation. A look at what has been done in Berkeley shows that he was mistaken.

Berkeley used ESEA money to bus children from schools which are largely Negro to schools which are largely white. This helped fight de facto segregation and also cut the class size in the flatland schools.

Although Oakland had about 24 EMPTY classrooms on the hills, the administration preferred to move portables into crowded schools grounds in the flatlands. Moving these portables cost almost \$390,000. Ghetto children could probably have been bussed to empty classrooms in the hills for half that amount.

Teachers say again and again (see "Let Us Teach", a Report of the Senate Fact Finding Committee on Government Administration in California) that the one thing that would help them do a better job would be to reduce class size.

But the Oakland administration plans to hire only 93 additional teachers with ESEA funds. The salaries of 93 teachers comes to \$83,700 (approximately) a small slice of the 2 1/2 million dollars granted under ESEA.

The following Oakland schools are receiving ESEA funds: Lafayette, Bunche, Prescott, Cowle, Durant, Willow Manor, Clawson, Lazear, Woodlawn, Highland and Lockwood (elementary); Lowell, Hoover, Havenscourt, McClymonds.

If your children attend one of these schools, be sure to ask your principal when the next meeting of the school advisory committee will be held. While you're at it, ask him about ESEA funds. You know what your child needs in school. You know how ESEA money should be spent.

BART: THE LAST STRAW

MRS. SNEED GOES TO CITY HALL

EDITOR'S NOTE: Not everyone in West Oakland knows about BART from first hand. Most of the home owners who live in the way of the Rapid Transit system have been told they will have to sell. But the rest of the people, many of whom will be directly affected, hear only vague and frightening rumours.

A number of residents in the 7th to 5th Streets area west of the Nimitz freeway began to hold meetings to talk about just what was going on. On February 15 Mrs. Sneed, a member of this group, told the City Council that she and her neighbors were being railroaded by BART. She told the City Councilmen what she felt they should do.

The following is a slightly revised version of Mrs. Sneed's original speech:

The West Oakland citizens, home owners, tenants, and taxpayers resent the action of BART negotiators. BART feels that the property owners should not expect very much money for their property because their neighborhood is run down. We feel that this is a poor excuse.

Unsanitary houses in our area are not the responsibility of home owners but of absentee landlords. Most of the undesirable business places which have caused deterioration and depreciation to our property have been perpetrated by many new elements which have moved into our neighborhood. This has caused a blighted area, which has been renamed as ghettos and slums.

As taxpayers, in the past we have not cost our city a great deal of money. For we have not had good lights for our streets, or good paved sidewalks to walk on without stumbling and falling, because of their poor structure. We have not had good sanitation. The Police service has been poor, and many other factors I will not mention. When we call these departments the response has not been good.

We have been denied and overlooked. These are errors and should be erased.

We still have faith in our city government. We ask you not to overlook this specific problem, for this is the last straw—our homes.

When we were contacted by officials of BART and informed our homes were to be purchased, we decided to give up our homes in good faith; not to condemn or condone or evade the issue of this moving project, Rapid Transit Construction. But the negotiators were not fair in their negotiations. So we called a meeting for January 20, 1966. We invited Mr. James Brown, an official of BART, to discuss our problem. A letter was read from Governor Brown, sending his best wishes for a highly successful meeting. Rep. Jeffery Cohelan . . . sent his field representative Mr. Roy Lemon. He stated in his letter he will do all he can to assure maximum employment for our Oakland minority groups, and the protection of our property rights. Assemblyman Byron Rumford (17th District) and Councilman Rilea attended the meeting.

At the meeting we raised the following questions:

1. Why aren't home owners getting fair market value for their property?

2. Since we live in an industrial area, why aren't we getting industrial prices for our property?

3. BART plans to establish a station and parking area in our

neighborhood. Why can't the property owners share in the profits?

4. We cannot purchase comparable houses in our own West Oakland area with the prices BART offers.

5. Relocation facilities are needed for the tenants and home owners who must move.

6. Our senior citizens feel very tense about this present situation. Some of them receive old age assistance, Welfare, and others receive income from their businesses and their rental property. Some of them are veterans of wars. Some are sick, disabled and they need assistance through a workable program.

I will read a letter from Dr. Robert Weaver, our new Cabinet Secretary, replying to our letter to the President:

"Dear Mrs. Sneed:
"The President has asked me to thank you for your letter of January 13 concerning the relocation of families that will take place as a result of the construction of the Bay Area Rapid Transit System.

"The Bay Area Rapid Transit System is being built with funds secured by the Transit System through a bond issue. The federal government therefore has no authority with respect to the prices offered for properties or over relocation assistance to the affected families. We can only suggest therefore that the West Oakland Neighborhood Council ask for the assistance of the Oakland City Officials in dealing with this problem.

"Oakland's workable program for community improvement is now being considered for recertification in our San Francisco regional office, which is located at 450 Golden Gate Avenue. The City has been informed that a relocation service must be provided for families displaced by the Transit System, as well as those displaced by other governmental actions. We are sending a copy of this letter to our regional office in order that they may be aware of your problem.

"This Department does administer a program of federal grants for rapid transit. Agencies participating in this program are required to provide a relocation service for displaced families as well as relocation payments.

"We share your concern about the hardship faced by the families being displaced and we regret that we have no authority to render more direct assistance.

"Sincerely yours, Robert C. Weaver, Secretary."

The citizens affected by BART bear grief. Anxiety exists. We are pressured by our negotiators to get out of our homes by March, 1966. Just because injustice has been inflicted and imposed on citizens living in our all American city of Oakland, we must not forget what our great emancipator Abraham Lincoln said in his Gettysburg address: All men are created equal . . .

We ask our city officials to take affirmative action, to see that the Oakland citizens' ideas are fulfilled. We do not want to be misplaced in this "Great Society." We do not want to wear the scars of hate or the wounds of deception, indifference and injustice. No, nor of humiliation. We do not want these afflictions imposed. These afflictions have no place in our society.

We want our citizens' rights protected. We need your support. Thank you.

The Poor Speak Out



BART is planning to tear down the buildings in West Oakland from Cypress to Lewis between 7th street and 5th street. FLATLANDS talked to some of the tenants who live there to find out what they knew about BART. On the door of one building was a BART business card which said: CALL ME MONDAY OR THIS BUILDING WILL BE TORN DOWN.

Other residents on the same block received similar messages. They were told either to pay their back rent or move out by the end of the month.

People who have experiences with BART like the following should get in touch with JOBART (Justice on Bay Area Rapid Transit) for help. Tel. No. 832-2269.

West Oakland Negro tenant, retired: "I don't know when I'll have to move out. My landlord sold this place to BART before Christmas. BART told me they give me 30 days notification before I gotta clear out. If I ain't got no place by then, they'll give me another 30 days. I've been living in this room 18 years come this July. I pays 25 dollars a month. This here's the last of the rooms - I know I won't get no place like this in Oakland. I'm just unhappy because I don't know what I'm going to do. I don't know if I'll like the people where I'll move. I ain't trying to do nothin' about moving. The people will have to move me. BART should see to getting people a place to go.

"A rapid transit system - we don't need that thing. If we have jobs at all, they're right here. It's only the rich go into the city. I don't see what you need rapid transit for. It ain't nothin' but a big mess. If you would have a home paid for, and the deeds and everything, and a man comes, shoves you out, and just gives you what he wants you to have - you wouldn't feel good."



"I been here 18 years!"

West Oakland housewife, Negro, tenant, mother of six. Husband unemployed: "We're going to move out the last of this month. There's eight of us. We haven't found anything yet. The landlord stopped collecting rent around about November. Guess she sold the place then. She ain't ever tell us anything. We wondered what we was going to do.

"Along about December a man came down to say he was going to collect rent. He didn't have any identification. My husband was not in. He say he'd call back the next day but he didn't. One of us is always here - we've got these small kids. So I know he didn't come around. Another man came around today and said we have to move or pay \$250 for

back rent. That's too much to pay all at once. He say if we didn't pay he'd take it to small claims court. He gave me a choice to pay or move. I guess we gotta move.

"I asked him about my three windows that are busted. I asked him to put some new windows in. He said he wouldn't less we pay the back rent. It makes no sense for us to put in money when we have to move.

"I got two little kids in school. I don't want to have to take them out. I don't want to leave here. But that man today, he say if we move at the end of the month, he won't report that we been living here and we won't have to pay. He didn't offer to help to find us another place.

"I didn't like his attitude. He told me it was his house. We been living here 12 to 13 years. We got five rooms. We pay \$50 a month for rent.

My husband works at the cannery. When the cannery down, he's just out of work. If the landlord had explained, we could have gone on paying each month just like we used to. To have to pay \$250 all at once - it's just too much. My husband got to go out tomorrow and find us a place."

West Oakland couple, retired: "A BART man left a card on the door today when we was out. It say BILL JONES, CALL ME MONDAY, 3/7/66, OR I WILL HAVE TO TURN OVER TO ATTORNEYS FOR COLLECTION.

"I was paying \$50 a month. I paid up to the 9th of January. Then we hadn't heard anything. One man came here once after that and say we have to pay BART. We haven't seen or heard from him since. No one came here to say when we have to move. We've been trying to find out about it. We didn't know who to ask. The landlady when she sold the place didn't tell us anything.

"I know I can't pay them any back rent. My husband's out of work. Someone told me not to say anything cause we're not supposed to have to pay.

"This place is infested with roaches and rats. The BART man, he'll have to do something. The landlady, the more she spray the fatter they got. At least she tried.

"We haven't found any place else to rent. Apartments are running very high: \$125 a month.

"I like West Oakland. All our people's here. But now they going to tear this place down. Guess that's the only way they'll get rid of the roaches; they'll have to burn the place down. I see roaches in my sleep."

Justice on Bay Area Rapid Transit (JOBART)

929 - 12th St.
Phone:
832-2269

Flatlands Calendar

MARCH 12-26

SATURDAY, MARCH 12

Workshop of O.E.D.C. (the War on Poverty). Very important meeting — OPEN TO THE PUBLIC, at Dunsuir House. 8:30 a.m.

MONDAY, MARCH 14

Public Housing Authority Meeting at 935 Union St. 3 p.m.
Corporation of the Poor at Longfellow School in Library room at 8 p.m.

TUESDAY, MARCH 15

Oakland City Council meeting at City Hall, 7:30 p.m.
Baymont Library Committee Meeting at Lockwood school, 8 p.m.
East Oakland Parish meeting at 1601 Fruitvale, 7:30 p.m.
Bd. of Directors meeting of North Oakland Child Care center, 905 - 55th St. 8 p.m.
BAND, (Bar Area Neighborhood Development) Topic: Code enforcement, at North Oakland Service Center, 8 p.m.

THURSDAY, MARCH 16

Oakland City Council meeting, City Hall, 10:30 a.m.
Program Review of War on Poverty
Program Review of War on Poverty at City Hall, room 315, 4 p.m.

Prescott Neighborhood Council meeting at Prescott school, 7:30 p.m.
Fruitvale Advisory Committee at Franklin Recreation center, E. 15th St. 7:30
M.D.T.A. meeting at State Dept. of Employment office, 9 a.m.

FRIDAY, MARCH 18

Lockwood Improvement Teenage party at Lockwood Social hall, 8 p.m.

SATURDAY, MARCH 19

C.D.C. (Calif. Democratic Council) Local convention at Fremont High school, 9 a.m.
People's Defense Union meeting at 617 Jackson, 1 p.m.

TUESDAY, MARCH 22

Oakland City Council meeting at City hall, 7:30 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 23

O.E.D.C. meeting (War on Poverty), time and place of meeting to be announced

THURSDAY, MARCH 24

Oakland City Council meeting, city hall, 10:30 a.m.

The Flatlands PROFILES



Mark Comfort

EDITOR'S NOTE: Mark Everett Comfort was born on February 6, 1934, in Oklahoma City. He moved to West Grand (now 22nd Street) West Oakland in 1941 where he lived with his grandmother and uncle until the age of 16.

In the following interview he tells about his experiences since that time and how he came to be one of the foremost leaders of the freedom movement in the East Bay. FLATLANDS didn't ask him for any particular political views: we feel his biography pretty well speaks for itself.

"Ever since I was a kid, I've been fighting. I was introduced to the Movement by my wife. In February, 1953, there was this demonstration against police brutality in my defense in front of the old Oakland Police department. That was the first time I got hip to old man Knowland and the power structure. It was the first time a demonstration in this town ever happened. They had me marked since then. It was during the McCarthy era. I didn't even know what Communism was."

"Why I got arrested . . . at that time I expressed myself in violence. Not many Negroes lived on the lower side of East 14th at that time. It was all white on the upper half. We were living down in West Oakland. We didn't know anything about what was happening on the other side. Some of us had come up to Arroyo Viejo park for a Halloween dance. They told us they didn't want no niggers or Mexicans there. We ended up fighting about 47 people. I guess we come out of that pretty well. "A lot of police showed up but

we was still able to get back to West Oakland. My uncle, he talked me into turning myself in. I regretted that ever since. They told me down at the police I faced from one to 14 years in San Quentin. That's when we had the demonstration. The Civil Rights Congress picked up the case. They came to my rescue. They bailed me out and got me a lawyer. I was charged with assault with a deadly weapon in a race riot, but the case got transferred to juvenile court. None of the white kids in the riot got sentenced to jail. Me, I got a year.

"I left school in the 12th grade. I went to trade school to take up airplane mechanics. But after a while I quit and started to work in the airport on transport planes. It was during the Korean war and I lied about my age to get the job.

"I had all kinds of trouble at that time. The gangs of Oakland were going out of sight. It was easy to get into trouble. Bop was just coming on. This town was really jumping. There weren't many police at that time. There was the Earing gang - they wanted us to join them. I had a gang called the Apaches - they were completely integrated. Chinese, Puerto Rican, white, Filipino. They were the most integrated gang this town had.

"I guess I been on an integrated basis since I was a kid. Civil Rights never even occurred to me. In Oklahoma City there were Indians, Mexicans, blacks, whites. We lived right at the back of the Arkansas river. As kids we were always together. It was the same thing when I came here. "People here thought I felt I

was better because I was Jamaican. I didn't know if you were black you belonged to the Negro race. When people asked me what my race was, I said Jamaican. Negroes were something the white man made up. We all belonged to the black race of people. To say I was a Negro was hard for me to take. I felt very proud. "We just about run Oakland then. I've been hated by the police for a long time. My first arrest was in 1948, for fighting. Most of my arrests as a kid were for that.

"After that race riot, I went in and did my time. I got more education about people than you could ever learn from books. The board had recommended me to go to forestry camp. You got \$7.50 a day, then they deducted all but 50c. I went in weighing 150 lbs. and came out 210. Guess I ate better there than I did at home.

"Then I almost got killed fighting a forest fire. I told them I wasn't fighting no more fires and get killed so they moved me into the kitchen at Tracy.

"Tracy - the baby San Quentin - had just been built then. Fort Lancaster, a prison in the middle of the desert, had been torn down. A man would escape from there and they could watch him walk for days in any direction. Soon's he'd fall down they'd get in a car and go out and pick him up.

"It was pretty integrated at Tracy too. We stopped one race riot between Mexicans and Coloreds there. One night I noticed that about five or six knives were missing from the kitchen. I was getting ready to leave. I spoke Mechuko - slang Spanish - so I told them not to mess me up by starting any race riot. I wanted to go home."

"When I got out they paroled me to Los Angeles. I got married. I wanted to make a new start.

"Seems like everything happened in '54; I ran through a whole pack of jobs. I got this job washing telephone booths for \$1.05 an hour. It didn't last very long. Then I got a job washing cars next door to the restaurant my wife worked in. I worked 48 hours a week and got \$32.50.

"The only thing I could think of then was getting away from Oakland - getting away from my past. I only ran into the cops a few times down in L.A. Sure I saw what was going on in Watts. Once I saw this cat laying in a pool of blood. A cop kicked him to make him get up. Ain't nothing I could do. The people there, they just stood around and looked and looked. I didn't want to go back to jail. So we just flushed it.

"I got me this job in a car lot up in Bellflower, California. They paid me \$1.15 an hour. I guess I

was getting better jobs all the time. They wanted me to work there seven days a week. So after a while I quit and got another job. They didn't pay you at this new car lot until 12 o'clock Sunday - so you was really working 6 1/2 days a week. The other Negroes in the car lot - they would work overtime for no money. I told them not to. You washing cars, I said.

"You supposed to work certain hours, and they pay you for certain overtime. Man, you ain't quitting, they said. Sure I quit.

"Then I got a delivery job for \$1.25 an hour with Sam the Battery man. I went all over Hollywood, working 8 hours a day, 6 days a week for \$55. Sam the Battery Man was near Hollywood. So all these movie stars would come in.

"I worked at the Teagarden Jams and Jellies in San Leandro. Up there I wasn't known in show business. I didn't belong to any union. In LA I had belonged through my partners. We were members as a team. I played here in talent shows cause I couldn't play professional. It was one way of getting some dough.

"Then in '56 I finally joined union, Local 6 in San Francisco. That union, they didn't know was I a musician or an entertainer. I guess I just about blew their minds up.

"In '62 we had been working in Fremont. There was an Indian, a Puerto Rican and me. The foreman was a southerner. The Indian had been working there for a long time. Well that day we got all the way out there, and the cat said there was nothing for us to do. I got mad. I guess that's when it started all over again. After all that had happened between 1953 and '62 I said to hell with it. Its time to start fighting again.

"Youth For Jobs sounded like a good thing. I had always wanted to work with kids. It seemed like finally something was getting started for youth. Youth for Jobs was an organization for unemployed youth. We tried to get unemployment insurance for youngsters just out of high school. We had our first demonstration at the unemployment office in 1962. The head of unemployment came down from Washington to stop it. He said it might spread. That's what we wanted. Roscoe had set up YFJ - he was a known Communist but he never tried to hide it. The cat had a dream - I could see where it could go. The whole thing was based on one thing - creating jobs for youth.

"At the time of the Birmingham bombing, in September '63, YFJ called a protest march. We passed out leaflets one night calling for a walk out of schools the next day. 1800 Negroes showed up with about 50 whites. We blew these people's minds; we caught the police off guard. They went ape. We marched from DeFremery Park to the police department.

"I became a leader without realizing it. It was sort of a natural instinct. When I seen something to move on, I moved. People began to follow. I got bugged like hell with people sitting around talking; I'm the type of person who has to get out.

"I stayed with YFJ for 18 mos. Then people began to get hung up in meetings; the whole thing became stagnant.

"Later I joined the Ad Hoc Committee to End Discrimination. The Ad Hoc Committee was the only thing close enough to a movement in the Bay Area I ever seen. All the organizations joined together in that. It became so famous. First it hit Mel's Drive In; hundreds were arrested. Then the Sheraton-Palace and Cadillac Row. I told them, when you hit the Tribune, you got the big man. Then they'll hit you back with everything they've got. "The Tribune demonstrations

Some of the topics to be covered in the next issue of FLATLANDS:
*JOBART Relocation
*Ministers of the East Bay
*Housing *Hot Lunches
*Mexican-Americans
*Police Review Board
*Convention of the Poor
*RAMPARTS and WRO

went on for 9 months. We got some jobs opened up. I got arrested again. Then an ideological difference came in between the DuBois Club and Progressive Labor. That ended the Ad Hoc Committee. It was a shame. The weapon was so great, you just had to go and talk to people and tell them who you were from. The'd give in.

"When the Ad Hoc Committee dissolved we had to keep a militant organization going as long as possible. So I formed ODAC, Oakland Direct Action Committee. In March of '65, I got sentenced to 30 days in the county jail and 2 years probation. I was guilty of contributing to the delinquency of minors. This is how it happened. There was this case of three sisters being beat up by Oakland police. It was the first real case of police brutality we could nail down. CORE didn't do anything. ODAC got onto it - it was our first case. We asked the sisters what they wanted us to do. They wanted to have pressure put on the police department. So we called a demonstration and a school walk out. We got about 400 kids from schools . . .

"I'm running for Assemblyman for the 15th district. I don't care much about being a politician. They'll probably throw men out if I win. Cause I'm going to raise as much hell as I can once I get in. They'll have to find a way of getting me out. Cause I'm not for sale.

"I'm not a lawyer. But I know what's wrong and what's right. I've been arrested so many times - I finally got hip to what's going on. We gotta cool it man - slow down. We can't win it in a day; sitting behind bars you lose everything you built up. But anytime you can put the pressure on you gotta do it. A person even in the power structure can only take so much."

Housing Bureau

Since the West Oakland area Service Center opened last July, roughly 20% of the people seeking help from the Center have needed emergency housing.

It is hard to find places for rent in West Oakland, especially if you have children or are on welfare. Adequate housing is very expensive. Many landlords are lazy and do not bother to keep their houses up to code. Tenants are at the mercy of their landlords. They have no way of making sure that the housing codes are enforced. Tenants evicted by their landlords often have nowhere to go.

With the help of the Center, interested residents in West Oakland are forming an Emergency Housing Committee. The Committee will keep a list of temporary housing available for emergencies.

We hope that the Committee may also act as a sounding board for people who wish to talk about improving housing conditions or about solving specific problems with their landlords. Since the Committee will be a community project run by the people, it will have the power of the people to back its demands.

Those interested in joining the Emergency Housing Committee of West Oakland may contact Mr. Joseph McClaran, the coordinator, or Miss Johnnie Lacy, at the W.O.A.S.C., 724 14th St. Phone: 835-2164.