

May 12, 1952

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY'S REPORT

TO EXECUTIVE BOARD, DETROIT BRANCH NAACP

The Housing Commission's New Resolution

According to the recent report of the Detroit Housing Commission, the new resolution, bearing on the problem of segregated public housing, reads as follows:

"In the selection and removal of tenants of housing projects, the Commission will be guided by the best interests of all the people of the City for the purpose of protecting their rights and interests and the promotion of harmony amongst them, all in accordance with the Constitution and the laws of the United States and the Constitution and laws of Michigan."

It is obvious that the new resolution was designed to say everything and, therefore, says nothing in terms of a concrete change of policy. Recently, the Director of the Housing Commission stated that the resolution gives the Commission and staff a large frame-work within which to operate and allows for more discretion on the part of the Housing officials than the old resolution. Therein, of course, lies its real danger.

The Commission, it appears, only intends to ease the Housing situation confronting Negroes, and that situation as of January 31, 1952, was as follows: White persons on the waiting list numbered 433, Negroes 8,240!

In view of the new resolution, however, the Federal District Court has postponed the first trial of the NAACP's housing suit until attorneys for the City of Detroit have been able to file an Amended Answer. This Answer, presumably, will clarify the meaning of the new resolution.

H. Res. 561 (The Cox Resolution)

We have made available to each member of the Board, copies of a special memorandum from Clarence Mitchell, Director of the Washington Bureau, NAACP, regarding the Cox Resolution.

Although the Committee, proposed in the Cox Resolution, has been given the right to exist, we can still help make ineffective the work of that committee by urging our Congressmen to deny appropriations to the committee.

We hope, therefore, that you will note carefully Mr. Mitchell's memorandum and act immediately on this matter. The office has already sent telegrams to our Congressmen on behalf of the Branch.

Political Action

In order to conduct an effective political action program in this election year, it is proposed that the Branch conduct a leadership conference in the early part of June, which will seek to accomplish two objectives: (1) A definition of the major civil rights issues in the elections campaign, and (2) Development of a community-wide registration campaign. Such a conference should involve as many as possible of community organization leaders or representatives, ministers, precinct delegates and out-state NAACP representatives.

The program of the conference should involve consultants on the Association's national legislative program, such as Walter White and Clarence Mitchell, Director of the Association's Washington Bureau and leaders of the local and state civil rights program.

Following a review of the local, state and national program, the conference should then address itself to the problem of developing adequate machinery for a thorough community-wide registration drive and a similar drive to get-out-the-vote in November. The urgency of this political action program seems quite obvious in an election year that finds on the one hand avowed reactionaries aspiring for the White House, and on the other, a series of unknown quantities. The problem, in brief, has already been summarized by the Association in its recent Southern Conference, held in Atlanta, Georgia, when it said in effect that "none of the presidential aspirants on record are entirely square on the civil rights program".

We have explored the possibilities of holding such a conference in Green Pastures, the summer camp of the Detroit Urban League, and have been informed by the Director of the League that the conference could be held in the camp at no cost to the Association, except for food for the delegates. Over and above the food item, for which the delegates should pay, we would have the travel expenses of the national representatives and promotion of the conference itself. Should the Branch attempt to conduct this program, we shall perhaps need a special committee to work with the Finance Committee in making the necessary arrangements. We hope that you give this matter very careful consideration.

May 25th Membership Campaign Rally

The concluding Membership Campaign Rally has been scheduled for May 25, and will be held in the Church of Our Prayer, 3711 Woodward Avenue, of which Reverend James Lofton is Minister.

The principal speaker for the rally will be Attorney Thurgood Marshall, Special Counsel of NAACP. In addition, we are attempting to secure the services of the Loftonnaires for the musical portion of the program.

Also in the May 25th meeting, delegates to the Association's National Conference will be elected.