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# Getting Smart

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## PART II

In our previous column, we discussed the abuse of the FHA 221 (d)(3) housing enactment, which provided funds for low income apartment complexes controlled by non-profit organizations. We saw how developers used non-profit organizations to reap profits and effectively control a housing project.

In the example I cited, the tenants were prohibited from maintaining a washing machine in their apartments. On the other hand, the laundry facilities provided in the development were woefully inadequate (two washers and dryers) for the 120-unit development. Women found themselves waiting in line for six or more hours to wash their clothes. Of course, the system broke down and tenants began washing clothes in their apartments and stringing a line in the kitchen, sometimes the living room, on which to dry their clothes.

Yet, in another development, controlled under the same program, but where the local corporation representatives were informed and involved, each housing unit contained a washer and a dryer.

Equally, if not more important, however, is the relationship that is developed between tenants and management. In those developments where the non-profit organization turns over the management function to the developer, with no real involvement from community representatives, the landlord-tenant relationship is very similar to that which exists between slumlord and tenant, one of the most dehumanizing relationships one could experience.

In those few instances where the non-profit organization has assumed the management role or played a vital role in the management function, the tenants have strongly supported and worked cooperatively with management.

In those instances where

non-profits have done poorly in management, the key factor was lack of expertise and failure to secure that expertise. It was not a case of lack of interest and intent. Good intentions cannot run and manage an apartment complex. There is a definite need for the training of persons to coordinate such community-based projects.

Approximately one year ago President Nixon imposed a moratorium on all federally subsidized housing with the exception of those projects which had already received some level of federal approval prior to the moratorium. To some, the pitfalls of the 221 (d)(3) program efforts may now seem moot. We now have the opportunity, during this period, to re-evaluate our efforts in community training so that the same mistakes do not recur. The government must also realign FHA 221 (d)(3) guidelines so that community people receive the desperately needed counsel to make great opportunities like this flourish, reaping a new urban America.

We are, indeed, facing a housing crisis. If we remain static, our situation will steadily get worse. The housing moratorium must end - the sooner the better for the poor of this land.

## Bike group meets

The recently organized Advisory Committee on Bicycles will hold its first regular meeting at 10:00 a.m. on November 16th in Room 321 of the Capitol.

Committee members were sworn in on October 31st by Governor Tom McCall. Members are Don Stathos, Jacksonville; Mrs. Dennis Ross, Hermiston; Mr. John Bascom, Eugene; Winslow C. Brooks, Tigard; Glenn Gregg, Portland; Larry Hook, Portland; Ernest Drapela, Eugene; and Rick Seres, Salem.

## DC welcomes Brown

Many of the elite among Federal and local government leaders and representatives of national private organizations gathered on October 23 to officially welcome Ronald H. Brown to the nation's Capital. Brown became director of the National Urban League's Washington Bureau on September 1 of this year.

The 32-year-old Bureau director was formally introduced to some 150 select guests at the Washington Hilton Hotel by Donald H. McGannon, the League's president, and Vernon E. Jordan, Jr., the executive director.

Paying high tribute to the new director, Jordan said that he would serve as the organization's principal representative and spokesman in the nation's Capital with responsibility for monitoring and analyzing Federal legislation, administrative guidelines and appropriations, and preparing testimony for delivery before congressional committees. He will also advise the National Urban League of the potential impact of such Federal actions on the national Black and minority communities.

Brown, who served as general counsel for the League in New York before coming to Washington, gave a brief talk to the group in which he noted the crisis situation in Washington precipitated by the firing of Special Prosecutor Archibald Cox. He added that "crisis situations are not new to Blacks and minorities of this country." For the most part, he said, "they live their lives in one crisis or another. That is what the National Urban League is all about - the reason for its existence for 63 years."

## Taxes collect interest

Homeowners must pay their property taxes to county tax collectors within the time limits set by law in order to avoid interest on late payments, said Charles H. Mack, director of the Oregon Department of Revenue.

Under the new homeowners' and renters' property tax refund program, homeowners apply directly to the Department of Revenue, after January 1, 1974, for a refund on property taxes due November 15, 1973.

"Refunds are based on the amount of the taxpayers' household incomes and property taxes, not on when the tax liability is paid," Mack added.

Property tax refund claim forms will be part of the income tax packet which will be mailed to all Oregon residences about the first half of January.

## Diggs effort brings DC Home Rule

Thanks to the effective leadership of Representative Charles C. Diggs, Jr., and intensive lobbying, the citizens of the nation's last colony, the District of Columbia, now have home rule, at least in part.

It was through the calm, sagacious negotiations and political maneuverings of Representative Diggs, as chairman of the House District of Columbia Committee, that saved the home rule bill from certain death. Overwhelming passage came after a hotly contested floor debate. Diggs and supporters of the home rule bill had to fight off last-minute attempts by opponents to amend the bill "to death."

Diggs, who is the ranking Black congressman on Capitol Hill with 18 years of service, became Chairman of the House District of Columbia Committee last January, after the election defeat of staunch home rule foe, Representative John McMillan of South Carolina.

Not openly mentioned by opponents of home rule for D.C. was the fact that the city is 70 percent Black.

He promised to work with selected Federal officials and private-sector representatives in assuring that Blacks have adequate opportunity for input on important social-economic issues, and invited those present to seek out the expertise and experience of the League before making important decisions and recommendations affecting minority America.

## Conference studies Mekong Delta economy

The World Affairs Council of Oregon and Portland State University jointly are sponsoring one of four conferences to be held in the United States this fall on the Mekong River Basin Project in Southeast Asia.

The conference - "Mekong Basin: A Rich Future for Southeast Asia and the World" - is scheduled for November 9th at the Sheraton Hotel in Portland. The cost is \$20.

All four members of the Mekong Committee, which oversees development of the rich Mekong Basin, will keynote the conference. They are Khy Taing Lin of the Khmer Republic, Houmphanh Saignasith of Laos, Boonrod Binson of Thailand and Bui Huu Tuan of Vietnam. The executive agent of the Committee, W.J. van der Oord, will accompany the four members.

Since 1957, through wars and revolutions, the representatives of four governments - South Vietnam, Laos, Thailand and the Khmer Republic (Cambodia) - have been engaged in a joint study of the development possibilities of the Lower Mekong Basin with an eye to harnessing the river for hydroelectric power, flood control and irrigation.

Some observers say the area potentially is the "breadbasket of the world".

The direct responsibility for the project lies with the four riparian countries, but already some 25 nations, 12 United Nations agencies and numerous foundations and firms have contributed man-

The first dam in the master plan for development of the region - the Pa Mang - would be built on the Laos-Thailand border about 20 miles above Vientiane, the capital of Laos. It would have a capacity of four Bonneville Dams. The target date for completion is 1985.

The Mekong Committee's stop in Portland is the only one on the west coast during

a week-long stay in the United States. The trip was arranged by the Asian Society of New York.

The registration fee for the conference is \$20. Reservations may be made by mailing the \$20 to Mekong Basin Conference, 101 Public Service Building, 920 S.W. 6th, Portland, Oregon 97204. The conference is open to the public.

For more information, contact the World Affairs Council of Oregon at 229-3049.

power, expertise, equipment and money to the project.

The proposed magnitude of the development exceeds similar projects in this country including the Tennessee Valley Authority. Though no dams have been built on the main stem of the Mekong River yet, long range plans indicate that by the 21st century there could be 12 dams on the main river and more on tributaries.

The price tag could reach \$12 billion.

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