

Mr. BARRETT. My time has expired.

Mr. Widnall?

Mr. WIDNALL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Mayor, I want to commend you for the emphasis that you have placed on slum clearance and in aiding the poor and low-income people in New York City. Because this is a major concern and should be.

Now, on Monday of this week, Secretary Weaver admitted that the urban renewal program and other vast Federal urban programs had not lived up to their original promise. With that, I agree. And Secretary Weaver is the first high administration official who has ever admitted this obvious fact. Had these billions been allocated for the relief of truly low-income slums and ghettos during the past 20 years, perhaps there would not have been the Watts or the potential Watts here in this country.

The statements of intent in H.R. 12341 are fine, but largely without legal support.

Would you support an amendment to this bill that would prohibit outright continued Federal urban renewal funds for construction of luxury type \$500-per-month penthouses and materially restrict the commercial—that in the last 5 years has eaten up 50 percent of the urban renewal program? Fifty percent. And that is a higher figure than Secretary Weaver admitted to, but these are figures obtained from the Reference Service of the Library of Congress.

I think if we are to do the job with the emphasis that you have placed on it for the low-income people, and in clearing the slums, we have certainly got to tie down the use of urban renewal funds more to that purpose than to permit the absolute leeway we have had in the past.

Mr. LINDSAY. Mr. Widnall, I think my answer to that will have to be a careful one.

In New York City gradually the city has gotten away from the use of any Federal moneys in urban renewal to build high-rent housing. They have had in the past a list of horrible examples of where this has happened. And as you know full well, some of the work we did on title I about fund disclosures were as a result of that. I don't think Federal money ought to be used to build luxury housing. And I support the purpose of such an amendment in principle that you have just outlined.

However, you can head into other troubles if you should write this into a flat national law, I would think. What you need in laws of this kind is maximum flexibility. And sometimes if you are attempting to integrate a neighborhood racially and economically you can head into difficulty if you write flat statements in a national statute which may come back to haunt you.

As you know, we have had to introduce flexibility in public housing in order to get away from some of the economic rigidities which were put in there.

So I would hesitate before I would endorse flatly an introduction by way of national law of a measure which in principle no one could be against, but in practice, if you put it into the bill, I can see might create some difficulties.

Mr. WIDNALL. I think your reaction is a just one, and certainly a sound comment on the proposal that I make.