

Our small towns and cities need help and the Georgia Municipal Association has been a party to encouraging Federal and State programs to assist city officials in the provision of improvements and services. We hope this will result in a higher rate of local employment and keep our people and economic resources scattered throughout the State in a progressive sense. We have helped organize 17 area planning and development commissions in order to concentrate professional know-how and programs, and make them available to our rural towns and counties. We are making real progress, but people are still coming to Atlanta and our other large and medium cities, bringing problems with them.

Atlanta is attracting people, not only from other areas of Georgia but from other sections of the South, as well. Apparently, many see Atlanta and its sympathetic attitude and concern, as a place where their hopes and ambitions may find fruition. We are proud of this, and we think we are doing a pretty good job, but Atlanta can't go it alone, nor can our other cities.

We see in the city demonstration programs an opportunity to concentrate Federal assistance and the resources and energies of our cities toward a crash program, calculated to alleviate, or reduce, urban blight and help many of our poverty-stricken people by placing them in a better environment with better job opportunities.

We believe that a substantial investment in the city demonstration grant program will inevitably result in a general uplifting of our people, better job capabilities, reduced dependency upon public welfare, reduced crime and a happier, healthier, and more productive country.

Gentlemen, I am not smart enough to suggest all the development and administration of the Demonstration Cities Act, however, we would like to make a few pertinent observations. In the selection of cities for demonstration grants, it might be prudent to evaluate all factors relating to the need and potential result of the program. Not only should the criteria of competition, preplanning, excellence of existing programs, etc., but also that of circumstance, need, and the progressive influence of the results should be given consideration.

Also, cities other than our very largest should be given consideration, since they have the same problems relatively speaking. In Georgia, other cities such as Savannah, Columbus, Macon, and Augusta have similar problems as do many other cities such as Marietta, Rome, Gainesville, Brunswick, Bainbridge. I'm sure this is true over the Nation.

We have taken the liberty of attaching a statement from the city of Atlanta in support of the city demonstration programs. Also, examples of fiscal problems from a few other Georgia cities. Naturally, it goes without saying that we hope our own cities get the first and the biggest grants—because we need them desperately.

Thank you, gentlemen, for permitting me the privilege of appearing before this distinguished committee.

A SAMPLE OF NEED OF GEORGIA CITIES FOR DEMONSTRATION CITIES PROGRAM

The basic revenue structure of local government in Georgia is dependent almost entirely on the ad valorem property tax. It is one of the most restricted revenue structures in the Nation. Property tax levies have grown from \$33.5 million in 1957 to \$55.2 million in 1964.

Basic requirements in traditional municipal services are expanding at an accelerated rate. Current and new service requirements have resulted in the problem of not having enough money to expand traditional municipal services in accordance with demand and to meet also the needs of our growing cities for new and additional services in such areas as housing, water pollution, recreation, and the many cultural and social needs of today's urban community.

The following pages list a sample of certain of the most critical problems and needs of Georgia municipalities within and outside the Atlanta metropolitan area complex. The cities presented represent all sections and areas of the State. The demonstration cities program would offer a concrete opportunity for cities, such as these as well as others of our State, to accelerate an attack on the extensive blight and deterioration of vast areas resulting from rapid urban growth and development.