final steps are concluded by the Soil Conservation Service in Washington. It looks like that would be a possible way of working with these types of projects.

Mr. BLACKMON. I am not quite as familiar with your State. Do you have one FHA office in Atlanta covering the entire State?

Mr. STEPHENS. Yes.

Mr. BLACKMON. You have more than one office?

Mr. STEPHENS. We have a regional office. Georgians come there more frequently than is possible in some of the other States of the region.

Mr. BLACKMON. Where you have one office, this could be a workable thing. We have five in our particular State and since I operate under several offices, I get several different versions of what the little operating book says, very frankly, and it could lead to some confusion.

Mr. STEPHENS. I know what you mean. I just read in the paper this morning where in spite of the fact that we passed a bank merger bill, it is not being read by the Justice Department like I read it.

The other thing I wanted to inquire of you does not have a direct bearing on this testimony, but before long we are going to try to get an appropriation for the rent supplement program. It is my understanding that the National Home Builders Association has endorsed this program and is still in favor of the rent supplement being initiated. Is that correct?

Mr. BLACKMON. That is correct. We came before you last year and endorsed rent supplements as a free enterprise way to house low-income families of this country. We think it has many aspects that are an improvement over public housing. I recall that some citizens living in public housing in certain areas, once they reach a particular income bracket, are required to move. Then they move out of public housing and move into—they actually wind up moving into less desirable housing, and it costs more money. We contend that in this rent subsidy program, a man can live there and once he obtains sufficient amount of money to pay his way, he can still continue to live there, and over all the time he is reaching the point where he would be paying his own way, three-fourths of the money goes to his family.

It further can provide, under the rent supplement program, homeownership. As the man not only attains the point to where he does not need rent subsidy, where he obtains additional money by which he can make a downpayment or begin to pay a market rate, then he can, if properly conceived, become a homeowner and this is very desirable, as Mrs. Sullivan indicated.

We also believe that economics will result in compromises to the public housing program. It will cost the taxpayers less, from a rent supplement standpoint. It will be economically desirable when it comes to the amount of money it takes to house these people. Therefore, it is desirable from that point of view as well.

Mr. BARRETT. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. Blackmon, I just want to say that the gentleman from Georgia has been a great advocate of rent supplements and has done a splendid job on that legislation.

Mr. BLACKMON. He is to be commended and we in the private sector of our business feel that this is a real step in the right direction of housing these low-income families and we welcome the opportunity to try to do something about it. We hope that Congress will take action