

Ill.; Kalamazoo and Battle Creek, Mich.; Minneapolis and Duluth, Minn.; Lafayette, Ind.; Bloomington and Fort Wayne, Ind.

To complete the record, Mr. Chairman, I submit the text of a letter from Mr. Charles H. Goddard, Bloomington, Ind.:

MARCH 4, 1966.

DEAR MR. TALCOTT: Indiana's experience with urban renewal and redevelopment as it is called in Indiana, shows the need for those who are affected by urban renewal to have an opportunity to express themselves by referendum. Too often the municipal officials have seen urban renewal as an opportunity to get some money, and to clear away homes for some project which they think might benefit the city, without consideration for the people involved. This is not a matter of slum clearance because "blighted" areas are not supposed to be slums, although some slums are certainly blighted.

Indiana has the Redevelopment of Cities and Towns Act of 1953, with amendments, which describes and defines what a "blighted" area is. Because of these blighted conditions, as so described, an agency or commission may be set up, a declaratory statement made, and the powers of eminent domain exercised. The statute makes it clear that these powers are granted because of the existence of blight blighted areas, the use of which causes an increase in crime and disease, constitutes a menace to the health, safety, morals, and welfare, and which conditions necessitate excessive expenditures of public funds for crime prevention and punishment, public health, and safety. Unless these conditions exist there is no jurisdiction so to act. Nevertheless, many of the municipalities have undertaken to form the public agency required under the Federal act, to receive funds, without any effort to establish that these blighted conditions exist, and in most instances they do not exist to a large extent in said area. Consequently, the acts of the cities are illegal, and is subject to injunction since these acts are without jurisdiction.

Although the Federal law provides for some community approval and participation, those who are affected by these projects have no opportunity to express themselves in an effective way. The public hearing provided under the State law, has no definitive effect upon the actions of the commission and in most instances is ignored. They brush aside the protests of the homeowners, and call the bulldozer.

In Bloomington, there was no effort to obtain the sentiments of the people in the area, nor was there any attempt to establish that the area was blighted according to the act. The testimony at the public hearing showed only talk among officials but no securing of evidence to prove that it was blighted.

In Jeffersonville, the disregard of the people's rights was even more extreme. They sent inexperienced housewives around to make a so-called survey. None of the indicia of blight were present. No attempts were made to show it was blighted. New homes and developments had been built in the midst of the so-called blighted area.

Now a second effort is being made to tear down most of Jeffersonville in the same indifferent and callous disregard for the rights of the homeowners. Similarly no consideration is being given to the concern of the people most seriously affected.

In Batesville, Ind., we have an even more outrageous and high-handed disregard for peoples property. The powers that be in Batesville decided that Batesville had not grown as fast as the rest of the State so they plan to condemn two of the best business district blocks, which show no evidence of blight, tear the buildings down and invite a supermarket to come in and build, hoping it will bring in new business. The businesses which are being torn down, in many cases will not be able to reestablish themselves in a new area, because of the inadequate prices given for the buildings and the cost of new buildings.

Of course, one of the most outrageous features of these programs is that in most cases the people are not given prices which will enable them to buy homes of comparable character elsewhere, and many of them being older persons, cannot readily obtain loans for purchase. Consequently, many of the homeowners are forced to move into inadequate homes, or to live in hole-in-the-wall places. Of course, many of these people who have lived in blighted homes, when moved into new homes, will carry the blight with them. Eradication of blight is not accomplished by moving the blighted into new homes, any more than we change people's character or habits by buying them new clothes. We only change people by changing them inside, by giving them new ideals, by giving them a belief