

The Pentagon gave us first-class care as a hard case deserves. They pinned the purple heart on our bosoms and then they applied the pain killers. The date for Schilling's sudden death is still June 30. Why was the arrow broken for Schilling? Certainly it was not political. Even Republican Congressmen are agreed. The seven of us went to Washington like Kansas Dorotheas off to see the wizard, the wonderful wizard of Oz. Mostly, we saw Kelley, George, Colonel. This Kelley, an urbane trooper with a Ph. D. and a bright future already had slipped the mickey to Carlson and Dole. Kelley had the answers to any questions we put. He was briefed and then some. He was so good he should be solving Vietnam. Secretary Vance assured us that they would mobilize all the resources of government, and not only those of the Department of Defense, to minimize the impact upon Salina. We know that time is of the essence. We shall cut every corner possible to help you.

Austin reported Bradford to be an "energetic and enthusiastic man who has no use for redtape" and that Bradford and his staff would visit Salina in mid-January to help with the closing. The delegation was assured that if there was a failure to find another governmental use, the Government would use its resources in order to lessen the economic impact on the Salina area.

Congressman Bob Dole announced on December 18, that he would open a branch office in Salina to operate at least during the scheduled closing of the base. Dole said that there had been numerous inquiries and requests for information and that in his opinion, a congressional office in Salina would be beneficial, not only to the community and the surrounding areas, but also to the Federal agencies who had indicated their willingness and interest in helping Salina make the necessary adjustments. This decision of Congressman Dole's proved to be a highly important contribution to the community. His office became the focal point for all of the community's efforts in the conversion processes that were to take place in the ensuing months.

### Chapter III

#### THE ORGANIZING EFFORT

On the day before Christmas, the Salina City Commission and Salina Chamber of Commerce, announced jointly that a coordinating committee had been formed to unite the community business and political elements in a harmonious effort to counter the economic blow of the base closing. The committee was not to have power to expend public funds without the approval of the official bodies but could act in the name of the city in the liaison work with the Air Force and other Federal agencies. The committee's main job was to bring industry and commerce to Salina.

At its first meeting this newly formed committee chose for its name the "Schilling Development Council" and elected John Williamson, vice president of Kansas Power & Light Co., as its chairman. This carefully selected committee of seven included:

- Whitley Austin, editor and publisher of the Salina Journal.
- Clem Blangers, secretary of the local labor unions.
- Allen Dodge, owner-director of Homestead Building & Loan Co.
- Tom Lillard, attorney and chairman of the chamber of commerce industrial development committee.
- Carl Rundquist, mayor of Salina and manager of the Credit Bureau of Salina.
- Murray Wilson, consulting engineer and founder of Wilson & Co., Engineers & Architects.