

factory or industry. We should allow people to live in pleasant surroundings spread out over the land.

Today, in the modern rural industry, according to a USDA study of selected rural industries, three out of ten of the workers live on farms and from ten to thirty percent more live in open rural areas which are not farms. Up to one-fourth of the workers continued farming.

For the past thirty years from twenty to forty percent of total farm family income has come from non-farm jobs, depending on the farm prices. We need a diversified rural community with a sound agricultural base.

Riots and poverty

Poverty is an underlying factor in these riots, but Farmers Union has never promoted the Economic Opportunity Act as an anti-riot first aid. This under estimates the power, the hate, the intensity and the factors involved in these riots. The War on Poverty is a human act which should raise the quality of life for human beings and hence improve the lives of all of us and strengthen our nation.

Those who have said give money to the War on Poverty, and we will go into the ghettos and prevent or stop riots are wrong and must be doing some soul searching. We are deeply saddened by these riots but not surprised. These riots are our first national riots. The social psychologists will rewrite their textbooks. Classically the contagion of riots was spread from person to person. This riot was spread by television. The interviews and the action pictures burned through the nation awaiting only small, meaningless, or normally ineffective action to trigger off the riot which was already in the hearts and minds of both whites and blacks.

The tensions were already present in our cities. The Detroit Metropolitan Study interviews from the University of Michigan found greatly increased fear among the white population in Detroit. Community organizers working in Detroit told of tension and hostility on the increase in what later became the riot areas. There is little doubt that those militants who cried on "Black Power," get the whitey police" and "overthrow the white power structure", aggravated the situation. The organized groups stimulated and used the situation. Such wide spread mania and irrational acts can not be explained simply by an arrest of a single driver, a very poorly planned and badly executed raid on a well known old "blind pig" operation, or a speech by a bitter young man. Other cities needed no excuse but simply erupted in irrational acts of hate toward the community and society.

What is the reason? The acts of any one single person or group is inadequate. Black Power groups are led by disjointed angry ambitious young men incapable of organizing anything as massive as the Detroit riot.

There is an explanation for the Detroit riot. About 20 years ago, Detroit had been filling up with poor, white, young hill folk from Kentucky, Tennessee, West Virginia, Alabama, Missouri and Arkansas. They came after the grinding poverty of the rural farms and mines in the thirties seeking jobs and a better life. They left in large numbers leaving their families there, and we in Green Thumb, CASA, and Farmers Union find the old folks in these areas now in their 60's, 70's and 80's living in poverty. These young people piled into the over-flowing slums. Their dress and language was the target for discrimination. They found overcrowding, rats, loan sharks, police mistakes and prejudice. They were up-rooted and put into the slums to work at good paying jobs in the factories. There was not vast unemployment, yet they rioted taking it out on the Negroes as the scapegoats. They were irrational, wild and frenzied.

Now a quarter of a century later, the young, poor rural Negroes from Tennessee, Arkansas, Alabama, and Mississippi have escaped the grinding poverty of the rural delta farms. They have been swarming in to the slums over a period of 5 to 10 years; just as the white hill folk had done before. Their poverty in the rural areas was deeply aggravated by the terror and fire of the Ku-Klux-Klan, the white citizen councils and years of discrimination. The young adults left their families, the old and the very young to face this poverty and discrimination and terror.

The scars of hostility, bitterness and even guilt for leaving their relatives and friends behind have been added to the turmoil, squalor, crime, rats, police mistakes, overcrowding, pollution, prejudice and other social ills of the Detroit slums.

In Detroit unemployment is very low. City officials are sympathetic and are working hard for people. Community organization is intense in poverty areas. Schools are community orientated. Unions are progressive. Companies pay well and have good management policies. Yet the riot still happened. The hostility, the turmoil and the aggression still came out as if it had been pent up for years—which it had.