

viable. We should like to urge this Committee to consider such an amendment to the Title III-A loan program.

Funds for such loans are still inadequate, and there is still discrimination in the distribution of those funds which pass through FHA hands. It should not be necessary for NSF staff members and members of other organizations working in the South to spend time documenting the absence of loans to Negro farmers in county after county, to institute appeal proceedings, to demonstrate by comparison the larger amounts of money and assistance given to white farmers in comparable economic situations.

Further, FHA is still primarily concerned with the repayment potential of the farmer rather than with seeking ways by which the small farmer can retain his land and improve his income. Although OEO has made it possible for loans to be granted to farmers too poor to qualify under FHA previously, thousands more must be reached with grants, loans, technical assistance, and training. OEO personnel themselves have discovered, in situations in which they wanted a cooperative effort among agencies so that underemployed low-income people could learn to build their own homes (learning a skill while improving miserable housing conditions), that FHA would not grant loans for fear of non-repayment. This fear on the part of the Department of Agriculture is absurd, when one knows that poor southern tenant and sharecropping farmers often pay as much as \$50 per month of exorbitant rent for a two-room shack—a sum about  $3\frac{1}{2}$  times the monthly amortization payment for a thirty-year FHA low-interest loan! This situation must be changed. Further, NSF urges again its proposal made when OEO was first instituted, that in addition to loans, an experimental program of grants be set up to give a new start to rural people who do not yet have enough resources to qualify for the loan program.

We are completely unable to understand why funds have been cut for Title III-B programs for migrant and seasonal farm workers, where the needs are obvious and enormous, and where the programs instituted have been remarkably successful. NSF had some direct experience with the practicability of Title III-B projects in its two-year program, the Southern Rural Training Project, funded by the Department of Labor. Local leadership in southern communities was helped to secure funding for 12 programs providing education and training for more than 2,100 low-income adults; of these, 7 were III-B projects. Sixteen additional projects, to serve more than 3,000 trainees, were ready for 1967 funding when the Southern Rural Training Project ended; of these 9 were III-Bs. III-B programs can provide basic education, prevocational training, medical and counseling services, and assistance in job placement or in obtaining advanced training. Title III-B is flexible enough to be directly responsive to the needs of the rural poor. It is not subject to veto from vested interests or to time-consuming channeling through many state departments. Local poor people were able to take an active part in planning and processing the SRTP projects under III-B, gaining experience for further community organization. Title III-B gets things done, and more OEO funds should be channeled through it. The whole rural planning outlook of OEO seems questionable when it is discovered that the funds for this important and effective project have been cut.

To summarize: the National Sharecroppers Fund believes in OEO, supports its continuance and urges at least the restoration of Bureau of the Budget cuts in its appropriation. But we believe not merely in waging war against poverty. We believe it ought to be won. That means a much more imaginative and more adequately financed program—both for OEO and in the full economic rehabilitation program of the government—than has been proposed in 1967. We urge your support for this legislation. But we urge also that the vision of Congress be bold enough to plan the eradication of poverty in this decade. The resources are available. Confident and competent government leadership is needed.

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#### TESTIMONY OF THE NATIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON FARM LABOR

The National Advisory Committee on Farm Labor is a voluntary, nonprofit organization whose purpose is to gather and present information about the conditions of farm workers and about farm labor practices and policies. The Committee appreciates this opportunity to testify to the importance of the Economic Opportunity Act in bettering the lives of America's forgotten people, the farm workers.

When the Economic Research Service of the Department of Agriculture issued a detailed study on Poverty in Rural Areas in November, 1964, it said: "Some