

and this by the way was prior, once again, to there being an official declaration that this was the site and that relocation payments would be made, there were approximately 3,300 people.

Now, this is an area which has a relatively tight housing market. These were people who basically had been displaced as strongly and as thoroughly as if their houses had been bulldozed. Our problem is that once an area becomes known as an urban renewal area, and let me use that term "known" in quotes, you begin to get a pattern of high vacancy rates, and as your vacancy rates go up, your landlords reduce their maintenance because the building is going to be taken.

We have had shocking experience here, verbatim testimony by landlords indicating that they had been approached by the State highway people preliminary to a route clearance and told not to make any repairs. Now, whether the landlord is excusing his misbehavior in this fashion, or whether this was actually indicated, is certainly open to question. But, certainly what we do have is a pattern of desertion. In turn this has a dynamism of its own. People are driven out. The drunks, the derelicts move into the empty apartments. You get a pattern of vandalism, and the decent people simply cannot live near that.

By the time we have our area declared an urban renewal area or an area for clearance, and by the time we have implemented this most excellent legislation we have here, a very substantial portion of the people most impacted by clearance have been forced out. This is a very serious problem.

Senator MUSKIE. What is the solution?

Mr. STERNLIEB. On several levels. First of all, I think we must stop somehow, some way, this mischievous propagandizing of the local renewal authorities on what is going to be renewed. We asked some 390 landlords, are you in an area of urban renewal. Let me suggest that a good many of them were in urban renewal areas and did not know it, and a good many of them were not in urban renewal areas and thought they were, and I can understand their lack of knowledge here.

Secondly, I think once we have a serious degree of interest in an area, that we set up some degree of facilitative mechanism, if nothing more than a centralized facility that the tenant or owner can turn to for information. "What is actually going on in my area? What is the calendar? What type of Government programs am I entitled to now? What can I look forward to in the future? Who is going to buffer me? This is not available now.

Typically what we have now are two forms of alleviation. One form is no alleviation unless you know about it, and the other form is alleviation in case you do know about it. And unfortunately, many of the people who are most in need of help, are those people who are least sophisticated.

We simply have all too frequently the Government in any of its manifestations taking a very passive role. If you come, if you qualify, if you know how to fill out the forms, we will take care of you, and if you are willing to wait. But, if you do not come, we are not going to go looking for you. I would suggest very strongly this is not an arm's-length transaction, but this is rather the type of thing that one would expect from a not too scrupulous merchant trading in goods whose quality he was not too sure of.