

Mr. WHITENER. We have a statement from the Honorable W. M. Abbitt, of Virginia which we will make a part of the record. He was unfortunately detained and could not be here. We will make his statement a part of the record.

**REMARKS OF HON. W. M. ABBITT, A REPRESENTATIVE IN
CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF VIRGINIA**

Mr. Chairman: I would like to express my appreciation to the Subcommittee for calling the hearing this morning as, in my opinion, the crisis with which we are confronted is still far from resolved and such measures as have been announced publicly leave unanswered many questions which are being raised by the general public with reference to the so-called Poor Peoples Campaign.

In the last several days, there have appeared in the press a number of articles which tend to indicate that an arrangement has been worked out for an orderly handling of the so-called camp-in. However, it is perfectly obvious to me that the District of Columbia government has no intention of taking the steps necessary to contain the crowd which will be coming here in increasing numbers over the next several weeks. They have not acted forthrightly nor have they made it clear that violations of the law will not be countenanced and that proper precautions will be made to see that law and order will be maintained.

If the disorders here last month proved nothing else, they showed conclusively that riotous groups are not afraid of policemen who have been ordered not to shoot nor are they cowed by National Guardsmen or Federal troops who have no ammunition in their guns. I do not know who issued the orders for such unorthodox law enforcement but I would certainly hope that history would not be repeated if trouble breaks out in connection with the campaign getting under way now. District law enforcement officers should not be restrained from taking the necessary steps to prevent the rash of arson, looting, rioting, etc.

I have tried in vain to ascertain from officials of the District government and various other Federal agencies whether any effort has been made to discourage the bringing of thousands of people into the city for this purpose or to in any way attempt to restrain those who are leading the campaign so that they will not feel that they have an open invitation to go any place and do anything they want to while the campaign is going on. Apparently the main focus of the "negotiations" which have been carried on for the last week have been in the nature of working out an accommodation for the march and camp-in and not to circumscribe its limits or goals in any way.

I realize that we in Congress cannot carry out laws—all we can do is put them on the statute books. It is then up to the law enforcement agencies and the Judiciary to see that they are obeyed. I am told that many of those arrested during the recent riots had criminal records and it will be interesting to see what disposition is eventually made of these cases. According to the newspapers, most of the serious crimes committed in the District are committed by people who have been convicted of felonies and are out on probation. Certainly something seems to be wrong with the probation system here when this is allowed.

I believe that the leaders of the so-called Poor Peoples Campaign are prepared to take advantage of the leniency of law enforcement and