

Eric Orr
Canton, Mississippi
Federal Programs

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WEEKLY REPORT

On Monday, September 14, the first pre-election meeting was held at Mt. Center Church. The purpose was to nominate a man from the Flora area to run as community committee man in the ASC elections. About fifty people attended. Henry McClenty, Jr., the man nominated, is 28 years old, a graduate of Jackson State, and has 300 acres of land and 150 head of cattle. There was a lively discussion of ASC elections and need for supporting Mr. McClenty. The meeting was very successful.

Canvassing for this meeting was done last week and Sunday. On Friday, Saturday and Sunday we canvassed for the meeting to be held next week at Ridley Hill for the Madison-Ridgeland area.

The pilot committee of the Chamber of Commerce met Tuesday evening at the Washington home. The meeting began about 15 minutes late and people were still trickling in after it was over. We gathered the necessary information for filing the incorporation papers: choice of names, par value of shares, number of shares for capitalization, percentage allowed one family, names of ten incorporators. The land option was discussed.

The last is the most significant. Five of the people present each put up \$100 for the option (good for 120 days) on the 43 acres of land they want. Mr. Clarence Chinn has initiated the negotiations on the land with the old fairground ~~for~~ incorporation. He wants to purchase one-fourth of the land from the Chamber of Commerce corporation and will build houses on it. He decided to tie in ~~in~~ with the Chamber because he is not able to raise the total price \$44,000 by himself.

A word about the old fairground corporation. They have been plagued by poor management and inter-shareholder strife. They have wasted money in suing each other. The corporation lacked a lawyer when the fairground racetrack was split by the highway. Without legal advice they received only \$3800 for the land, which does not touch its real value.

The land has not been used for the last two years. The highway is a blessing for the Chamber's purpose. It makes the property much more valuable in terms of a shopping center.

The agreement of five members to put up \$100 each for the option is the first real move that has been made. It represents a commitment by the people in the community to go ahead with the corporation and the shopping center. We immediately sent off a

letter to Jim ~~SOMBY~~ Sobieski for the papers to incorporate. This time when we submit the papers we will do it through a lawyer who has no connection with the movement. We submitted the Farmers League papers through Young and Hall and we have had a long wait. Two letters have been written to the Secretary of State without reply. The speed with which we incorporate the Chamber will in part determine its success. With this in mind we are going to use an independent lawyer for filing purposes.

The following day two churches were burnt down. They were strangely enough the two alternatives for the next Farmers League meeting. The League's effectiveness is beginning to show with Mr. Charlie. We scrapped the mailing and began again with different location for the meeting. This change wasted the good part of the day.

Violence will probably increase in geometric proportions as the ABC elections get closer.

The next two days were spent in canvassing for the next ~~local~~ community committee nomination meeting. We have decided to run one or two rather than five in each community. To run five would be unwieldy in terms of education. The ballots have to be written and it is easier to write one or two, rather than five. Not only is it simpler, but it will add to our potential win to limit the numbers. Voting for five will ~~split~~ split the vote. The vote for only one or two is a legal ballot. The man with the most votes is chairman, and automatically a delegate to the county convention.

In addition, in talking with the farmers I have discovered they would prefer to pick a young qualified man to fill this position. It would be very hard to find five brave and qualified men for the first election. The Flora nominating election is an example of this. Mr. Henry McClenty, Jr., is a successful farmer with 300 acres of land, 150 head of cattle and a college degree. He is not the most popular farmer in the community, but the most qualified. In canvassing for the next community I find the same sort of thing occurring, i.e., farmers saying they have already been considering a man to run and they think he should be qualified, young, educated and successful on the local level.

On Saturday morning at the Court House the federal agriculture agencies sponsored a county-wide meeting of farmers ~~and~~. There were about 100 Negroes there and ten or twelve whites. The agencies explained their programs and how they can benefit the farmer. The meeting was quite good but would have been better had we had a Negro farmer to ask pointed questions.