

WEEKLY REPORT, FEDERAL PROJECTS (September 28 through October 4, 1964)

9/28...

Spent morning in staff meeting. Afternoon was taken up with a meeting of community "F" of the Farmer's league. Was very satisfied with the attitude of the people there. Because of the heavy rains the day before the group was small, numbering fourteen people. After a discussion about the nature of the ASC elections and several inquiries concerning the character of the man who would be nominated to represent them, the people decided they would like to have another meeting where the group would be larger and better representative of the community. Instrumental in arriving at the decision was Mr. Stoakes and the Rev. Charles Smith. Both these men were concerned that the community select the best man to represent it and it was their counsel that motivated the group into the delay. When the decision had been made to hold another meeting at a later date I explained to the people that Eartiss's and my time was taken up for the three days prior to the date they selected and that it would have to be their responsibility to see that the word got out to their neighbors. Five people plus Mr. Stoakes and Rev Smith agreed to take 15 announcements each and hand them out to their neighbors.

Note: The Rev Charles Smith's daughter is Married to RC Owens of professional football fame and the Owen's family is the only negro family living in Belmont, Calif, an upper class suburb outside San Francisco. RC and his wife were in an automobile accident in the summer of 1964 in which the wife was seriously injured and a daughter was killed. Read up on RC's season before you try to use this.

9/29 ...

Spent the morning walking around to the various clubs on and immediately adjacent to Hickory street, drinking coffee and talking to people. Whites on the staff should do this at least one morning a week on the same day of the week so that the local people will be in to know and talk with them in public. We've got to start getting out of the center and meeting new people. The best way to do this is to be in the same public place at the same time each week so that people can seek us out on their home grounds instead of trying to relate to us in the office (that is those who come to the office.)

The afternoon and all the next day (9/30) spent organizing the files. Divided them into five sections: 1) Files of materials from state, local, and federal agencies; 2) Files of materials from COFO; 3) files of office correspondence 4) files of Chamber of Commerce correspondence; 5) files of the Farmer's league. The reason for this is that it will enable the Chamber and the Farmer's league to take with them when they establish their own offices, a complete set of files. It is very important that these files be maintained in their present arrangement as 90% of an organizations work depends on what it has done in the past.

Also spent two hours talking with Eartiss about his work. ~~XXX~~ Reactions after the first week. Given a year's hard work Eartiss should be one of the best field men in the movement. He's intelligent, hard working and extremely serious about the movement.

Recommendations:

RECOMMENDATIONS :

Eartiss

1. For the next two months ~~work~~/work solely on the Farmer's League.
~~xx~~ This course of action is necessary for several reasons. With the ASC elections coming up, we should have at least one staff member working full time helping to organize the county. The Farmer's League itself is developing into a statewide organization and we should begin thinking about training at least one person who will be competent to serve as a COFO staff assistant to the league. This person should be both black and a native of Mississippi, and Eartiss fills both these requirements.
2. Requisition a jeep from CORE. We need a four wheel drive vehicle, to get around on the muddy roads that are the lot of the Negro in this Godforsaken hole.

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10/1

Spent the day sitting around the office and cursing the fact there was no available automobile. Wilbert Robinson and Reverend McRee came by and the three of us talked for about three and a half hours. We talked about the movement in general and the chamber of commerce in particular. Accomplished two things in this conversation- first, I think, I've established a good relationship between the Reverend and myself; and second, Reverend McRee and I succeeded in getting Wilbert Robinson to agree to the need for a committee to write a constitution and bylaws for the chamber of commerce, with the Reverend as chairman of the committee. Hopefully this will prove to be a major step forward in the development of the chamber, as it will give us an opportunity to engage the entire business community in a discussion over the nature of a chamber of commerce and the need for one here in Canton. At the present time the chamber seems to be composed of several wealthy community leaders who hope through the ~~the~~ construction of a shopping center to make a good deal of money. The poor merchants who comprise the vast majority of the business community can see no apparent reason for participating in the chamber ~~and~~ and their main activity has consisted of staying away in droves.

10/2

Spent the day in the office watching the rain, cursing it, and wishing for a car. By the evening went to Rankin County where I talked briefly about the Farmer's League. Every northern "white liberal" should have the opportunity at least once while they are in Mississippi to be the first to speak to a local movement in the first stages of its formation. It is the best cure for "white liberalism I know."

10/3

Freedom Rally at Dearon's Farm. Spent the night there watching the place, waiting for an attack by the "enemy". For the first time since I've been in Mississippi I slept in a decent bed and had a decent breakfast, consisting of chicken, eggs, sausage, rice, toast, and coffee.

10/4

Drove out to New True Light Church with leaflets for the October 9th meeting. Tried to drop some off at one of the local farmer's homes, got stuck in the mud, and had to be pulled out by a tractor. Sure do need a jeep.