

[Oct 11, 1964]

Weekly Report - Week of October 4-11

Klayne DeLott - Federal Programs

In my first week here most of the work I did was involved with getting used to the community, the projects, and past activities. Generally this meant reading through all the files on federal programs, going to meetings of the Chamber of Commerce, and of the Farmer's League. My report this week will be a short evaluation of what I saw and what I think is worthwhile for me to work on in Canton.

The Chamber of Commerce is important because it represents a fair amount of money that could be used to aid more of the local businessmen. Those having the money don't necessarily intend it to be this way without some substantial gain on their part, and therefore it is a tricky operation. The Chamber, without careful direction will turn into an operation allowing the rich to get richer, and effectively shut out the poorer merchants. This would be the case if the wealthier merchants got their shopping center right away. The problem here is to maintain control of the chamber by the average businessman, and to use its unity and resources for the whole community. It is my feeling that the members are too politically naive to ~~make~~ do this effectively at this time. However, since this project has been started it should be either terminated or brought along quickly with weekly meetings.

The Farmer's League is a much more encouraging enterprise. The people themselves seem to be able to handle the organization, the politics of it. Perhaps one difference is the farmers don't seem to be in competition with each other in the same way businessmen are. Another is the clear cut benefits of having a farmer's league. At any rate, I think the farmers seem ready to take over their own administration and planning whenever necessary.

The other material I worked with is more abstract. We have many files on violations in the field of welfare, social security, unemployment, etc.

I think these files should be kept, any violations entered when heard about, and reports sent to Washington constantly. This in itself does nothing immediately, except keep a constant pressure on Washington to put pressure on the state administration of these programs. Meanwhile, stronger action can be taken on the local level and through legal sources. Individual cases should be appealed through proper local channels and if necessary through Washington, and in clear cut instances the COFO legal staff should file suits. Cases like American Tent should be worked on through the Justice Dept, civil rights commission, and through the courts. The broader areas like welfare and social security will need a broader program that is possible only when we have our precincts set up and can have the local people canvass for us and get the bulk of information necessary to show definite patterns of discrimination on a consistent and large scale level.

In the meantime I am working on American Tent, on individual violations of social security and welfare, and on possible programs under the new poverty Bill ~~is~~ in combination with mdts.