

Atlanta's Great Need

CITIES, we regret to state, can expect little or nothing from the states in which they are located.

We live in an urban society and the great problems and challenges are in our urban areas. Here our people have congregated. Here are the opportunities for the young and ambitious.

Alas, here also are the conditions which breed crime and illnesses. Here are the slums.

Cities do not have enough money to do the things that need doing in order to make them healthier and more pleasant places. These things must be done. But the cities do not have the resources to finance these civic improvement programs, and the states couldn't care less.

The result has been a cutting of the ties which once bound states and cities and a new orientation of the cities to Washington.

Washington understands the problems of the cities. Washington is more responsive to these needs than are the states. Washington also has the money.

In the last few years Atlanta would have been lost without transfusions of federal money. These funds have gone into slum clearance and rebuilding programs. They have been used to train the unskilled, and to improve the quality of education in sub-standard schools. They have gone into recreation areas in parts of town where the streets furnished the only recreation. They have gone to meet many pressing human needs.

Without this direct federal aid, Atlanta would be in sorry shape.

Atlanta is counting on more federal aid to get it over some big hump tomorrow. Portions of the city ought to be rebuilt. We must continue to train people for jobs and there are other human needs which must be met.

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THE PRESIDENT'S budget contains many items to aid urban areas. But the President is having a hard time mustering votes for his budget.

Metropolitan Atlanta is represented by two senators, and congressmen from the Fourth, Fifth, Sixth, Seventh and Ninth Districts.

This is a nice block of votes. We trust these representatives understand Atlanta's need for federal urban aid.

Of these congressmen, two especially represent Atlanta and we assume understand this problem and the needs of their constituents.

These are Fletcher Thompson of the Fifth and Ben Blackburn of the Fourth. They are Republicans and some might expect them to vote against the administration for political reasons.

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POLITICS is politics. But representing their constituents is more important. The needs of these two districts should outweigh pressures to vote the party line.

Atlanta's 'Demonstration'

ALL OF ATLANTA will be affected by the \$100 million "demonstration cities" project announced Tuesday, which will encompass 3,000 acres, 10 per cent of the city's people and 19 per cent of its officially designated "poverty households."

This is more than just a bigger version of an urban renewal project; more than just physical improvement of a blighted area.

It envisions a combination of physical improvement and social services directed toward betterment of the people themselves. It will involve not only housing but also employment, education, health and welfare services. Emphasis will not be upon removing people but improving their lot.

This all-encompassing nature is the unique feature of the \$1.2 billion demonstration cities act which Congress approved as one of President Johnson's most far-reaching proposals for curing basic ills of American cities. Under that federal act Atlanta is certain of 80 per cent federal financing for this development, with the city providing 20 per cent. And a shifting and refinancing of some related programs may bring this ratio to 90-10.

In effect, in this endeavor Atlanta and its federal partner will be tying together every kind of available service of city, county, state and federal government.

The "demonstration" adjective means what it says. If this kind of project is successful, the idea probably will be extended.

Surely the need for big and fundamental new approaches is evident at a time when the inner cores of most big cities have the kind of rot and human deprivation that leads to a waste of children and possible turmoil.

It is a sad irony that the congressional representatives of many of the areas most needful of this kind of approach opposed the program. There was a time when it seemed that it had died. As usual, a chief threat was the votes and the power of numerous backward-looking Southern representatives in Washington who were oblivious of the situations of their own cities.

But President Johnson mustered the votes required and the program, several times on the verge of death, survived. If it had not been passed before the 1966 elections put more conservative and reactionary representatives into Congress, it surely would have been put aside for a long time to come.

So Atlanta (and other Georgia cities, for others also apparently will participate) have had a lucky break in timing.

We are glad to see this hopeful undertaking moving ahead.

Atlanta Inquirer A Healthy Sign

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Mayor Ivan Allen and other city officials went to the people last Wednesday and Thursday nights to explain the model neighborhood proposal for the areas south of the State Capitol. Overflow crowds at Bryant Elementary School and the Grant Park Presbyterian Church heard the officials express their hopes that Atlanta will become one of the "Demonstration Cities."

If Atlanta becomes a "Demonstration City," the area south of the Capitol, comprising some 3,000 acres and a tenth of the city's population, would be upgraded to stem the tide of deterioration, or as one observer put it, "prevent the area from turning into a vast slum."

The officials did much to dispel the doubts of the residents stemming from rumors that the area was to be cleared for motels, high-rise apartments and parking lots. Such rumors, it is said, caused some property owners not to bother to repair their homes. The Mayor told the audiences that he hoped not one family would have to be moved out of the neighborhood.

City officials stressed that the citizens will be consulted as plans are made and that their needs will be considered first.

This is a healthy sign since so many times decisions involving the people are made without consulting the people the decision will affect.

We want so fervently to see Atlanta continue to grow and to mature so that it will really become Lovely Atlanta and we hope that more such meetings are in the planning stages so that our leaders can be in tune with their followers.

*Demonstration
Cities*