

September 22, 1966

Atlanta Firefighters Union Independent  
1960 Lakewood Avenue, S. E.  
Atlanta, Georgia

Gentlemen:

Regarding your "Fact Sheet" I am listing below my sentiments to your and the City of Atlanta's predicament.

1. The city has no right to arbitrarily grant a raise unless it is within the framework of the budget, since we the taxpayer constitute the working portion of that budget.
  - a. In my hometown, the firemen circulated a petition presenting their case, and the people overwhelmingly agreed to the necessity of the raise to insure the continuance of keeping qualified firemen.
  - b. I for one, feel both the firemen and the police are far under paid in this city and would cast my vote to secure the necessary revenue to offset the cost of living for self-respect and the incentive for qualified applicants to our protection forces.
2. The firemen walked-out leaving this city in an extremely vulnerable position in the event of an emergency and refused to return after a more than fair ultimatum had been issued, so I cannot sympathize with your second statement.
3. Two main causes for fire insurance rates to increase are unsafe structures and inadequate protection such as city vs. rural. Any escalation in Atlanta would have been due to inadequate protection and not caused by a lack of equipment.
4. The elected officials did fire your well-trained men, because they refused to put duty first. The truth is we do not have adequate protection due to the fact the firemen in question are mercenaries and not dedicated to their position or duty. Under the present conditions we would be better off with one driver per truck and a bunch of trained chimpanzees than having untold numbers of unmanned fire equipment.
5. It is also the paramount duty of any person on a taxpayers payroll to honor their obligation to provide safeguard for the security, safety and welfare of the people residing in the community. You are not going to win support with Ruether type action.
6. Yes, we are the victim of circumstances due to hasty replacement of the discharged firemen, but I for one do not feel it has been hasty enough. You have been coddled far longer than you should have been.

I am greatly concerned with your "Fact Sheet" but I will not hold Mayor Allen responsible since he didn't walk out --- you did. You can be very thankful the Lord was watching over this city during the rioting for Sherman's march would have been a campfire in comparison to SNCC's cocktail party or Atlanta on a flaming sword.

In closing, I want to thank the firemen who remained on duty and/or returned to work for they are the real victims of your irresponsibility and deserve our highest praise.

Sincerely,

4520 Santa Fe Trail, S.W.  
Atlanta, Georgia 30331