

# AN OPEN LETTER TO THE VANPORT FLOOD VICTIMS

## *From The Citizen's Committee*

Dear Fellow Flood Victims:

We want you to know what happened at the meeting with Mayor Riley and the City Council last Wednesday. There were so many people there that you probably weren't able to get in and see for yourself.

We told the City Council that we want them to appropriate MONEY immediately so that EVERY VANPORT FLOOD VICTIM will NOW have funds for immediate needs such as carfare, necessities for the children and so on. The City Council HAS the legal authority to do this.

We told the City Council that we want them to immediately take over AUTO COURTS FOR THE FLOOD VICTIMS, VACANT HOTEL ROOMS, AND OTHER DECENT LIVING QUARTERS. We want NO TENTS, BATTLESHIPS, and TRAILERS for us and our children to "sleep" in. The City Council HAS the legal authority to do this.

We told the City Council that we want them to immediately FREEZE RENTS. We want NO PROFITEERS to live off the backs of the Vanport flood victims. The City Council HAS the legal authority to do this.

We told the City Council that we want IMMEDIATE JOBS for the Vanport flood victims such as repairing the damage caused by the flood. The City Council HAS the legal authority to do this.

Now what happened? The Mayor, at the close of the hearing, referred our demands to HIMSELF without comment. But our committee is NOT going to let the matter rest with the Mayor. WE WANT RELIEF AND WE WANT IT NOW. WE WANT IMMEDIATE FUNDS FOR CARFARE, SHOES FOR THE KIDS AND SO ON. WE WANT NO TENTS TO SLEEP IN. WE HAVE THE SAME RIGHT TO A DECENT PLACE TO LIVE AS OTHER HUMAN BEINGS. AND IF THE PEOPLE WHO LIVE ON PORTLAND HEIGHTS SUFFERED THIS CATASTROPHE, THEY WOULDN'T BE ASKED TO "SLEEP" IN TENTS!

Remember this: Nobody is coming around and giving us anything. WE ARE ONLY GOING TO GET WHAT WE STRUGGLE FOR. That's the reason we held the large public meetings in Benson and Commerce High Schools. That's the reason we held the City Council meeting. AND WE ARE GOING TO HOLD MORE AND EVEN BIGGER MEETINGS UNTIL WE ARE ALLOWED TO LIVE LIKE HUMAN BEINGS.

Beware of disrupters. Beware of people who seek to destroy our UNITY. FOR ONLY BY PRESERVING OUR UNITY AND INCREASING OUR STRENGTH WILL WE SUCCEED. WE WANT IMMEDIATE RELIEF AND WE WANT PERMANENT HOMES IN PORTLAND—NOT SLUMS. WE ARE ALL AMERICANS WHO BELIEVE IN DEMOCRACY AND WE WANT NO RACE DISCRIMINATION IN HOUSING OR OTHERWISE.

CITIZENS COMMITTEE FOR FLOOD DISASTER

510 S. W. Second Avenue

SPENCER GILL, Chairman

June 17, 1948

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