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On Thursday night, the Markham area tenants met again and this time decided to send a delegation to meet with the mayor and inform him of their grievances and determine what action, if any he would take to protect the rights of the tenants of the condemned houses on Markham Street. A petition was drawn up listing the tenants grievances (see copy of petition) and demanding that the Mayor take action against landlords to see that they made repairs on their houses as provided by the law and to ensure that the residents of the condemned houses on Markham Street be relocated in good housing before the houses they were now living in were torn down.

On Friday afternoon, a delegation from Markham Street, led by Willie Williams met with the Mayor. (See notes on this meeting.)

The delegation was dissatisfied with the Mayor's response. The Mayor refused to make any statement against law-breaking landlords. Instead he affirmed the right of landlords to their rent even when they failed in their responsibility to live up to the laws protecting tenants. The Markham Area tenants then arranged for a meeting with Attorney Moore who agreed to take legal action on their behalf.

Four families who were withholding rent had received warrants and were facing eviction. Attorney Moore decided to file counter-affidavits. These counter-affidavits, which are filed in the county marshalls office, are the sole means by which tenants can legally block eviction and get a day in court to air their grievances against their landlord. But at present a tenant must post a bond along with his counter-affidavit equal in amount to one year's rent. This means that poor tenants are almost totally at the mercy of eviction action taken by their landlords. Certainly no person (or for that matter even fairly well off people) could afford to post such a high bond. Attorney Moore decided that this situation must be challenged. He had the four families who were facing eviction sign pauper's affidavit and got a hearing before Judge Osgood Williams to rule whether such affidavits could be a valid substitute to the bond. In the hearing on Thursday morning, February 10, Attorney Moore argued that (check on the brief he filed) the bond requirement denied poor people a day in court and that this was in violation of the equal treatment clause of the 14th amendment. (Include something on the court proceedings of last Thursday.) On Monday morning Judge Williams ruled.....







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Most important, those who have become involved in the movement feel free ~~from Shaffer's power~~ from Shaffer's power and are determined to carry out the fight against him until the entire community is liberated.

In addition, the pressure of the movement in the Marham Street area has had city-wide effects. Within a week or so of the first picket line in the area, the city's two major newspapers, the Constitution and Journal were acknowledging that slums were a ~~major~~ major problem in Atlanta (something of a discovery for them) and a Negro legislator had introduced a slum clearance bill in the state legislature. Among project staff, a discussion has begun of initiating a city-wide tenant's right movement to begin an assault on the immense powers of the city's landlords. The campaign would be directed against the municipal government with the objective of getting tougher laws against landlords and more adequate enforcement. And finally, it is expected and this housing battle will ~~have~~ have a significant influence on the new elections to the state legislatures this fall.