

# City Should Not Neglect Southside

By MADELYN SHULMAN

"Will Fairbanks allow its Southside to develop into another 'Watts' as occurred in California or will it come forth with a carefully conceived plan of action to constructively integrate the people of this area economically, politically and socially into the main stream of its community."

A quote from a federal proposal? A government or scientific report? No, this is the disturbing question asked by the after dinner speaker at a Masonic convention dinner on July 19, 1971. As the most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand lodge members settled down for their coffee and sweets after a dinner at Traveler's Inn, they may have expected bright jokes and entertaining anecdotes. Instead, courtesy of Dr. R. London Smith, they were faced with disturbing questions about racism in Fairbanks.

"How many minority members of this community do we have in the main stream of business," the professor asked. How many, he asked, are professionals, technicians, supervisors? How many are trapped in the lowest jobs or living on welfare?

For the reasons behind these disturbing questions, TUNDRA TIMES interviewed Professor R. London Smith, professor of political science and assistant director of Research and Planning at the University of Alaska.

Dr. Smith, we found, has been a resident of Fairbanks since his retirement from the Air Force in 1967. Before that, he spent two 3 year tours at Elmendorf Air Force Base, teaching at Anchorage Community College among his other activities. In Washington, his last assignment was as assistant executive director of the Air Force Office of Scientific Research. In 1968, he was dean of the Business, Economics and Government School of the University of Alaska.

Professor Smith is black.

He, and his wife, are members of the intellectual elite. (Mrs. Smith is a professor of home economics at U.A.) Yet, he believes security in this society is determined by a man's possession of "good American dollars." So he tells his children.

Dr. Smith's concerns as a member of a minority group within a minority group (a black intellectual) focus on economics. The man, or woman, who is part of the main stream, has escaped from the taint of the ghetto.

As a member of those who have much to lose, he fears most a society which almost methodically disenfranchises the black, the native, the Indian, the chicanero, from the economic and social mainstream.

In doing this, he fears America may be plotting its own demise. They are creating a people with no stake in their society.

In July of this year, Professor Smith felt the "time was appropriate to alert people of this area to a very serious matter."

Interior Alaska is developing its ghettos—its prisons of men and women without hope. They occur on the Southside of Fairbanks, in many other places.

If Alaskans should ignore 'the Southside' and let its serious social problems go unattended

"then let me assure you that no amount of law enforcement agencies will be able through repressive measures to keep our streets safe, our homes happy..."

Law enforcement, says Professor Smith, was never intended to be capable of picking up the garbage when our social system fails.

"We have nothing to gain by institutionalizing and maintaining demasculated males in any group of people," Smith's speech went on, by condemning people to "a constant, searing, endless hell" in life.

What is the solution to the problem? It is not, Smith says, that personnel officers are over-

whelmingly honest, well-meaning people who would go out of their way to give qualified native, black or other minority applicants a chance at good jobs.

"The problem is that we must reallocate our resources to train people for jobs, and retrain them constantly to keep up with changing technology and job markets. It involves a whole reallocation of resources." A whole new direction for a society.

If the problem of a disenfranchised minority is ignored, he fears, Fairbanks may grow another Watts, or Newark or Detroit before it learns the lessons many other cities have learned too painfully and too late.