

Union

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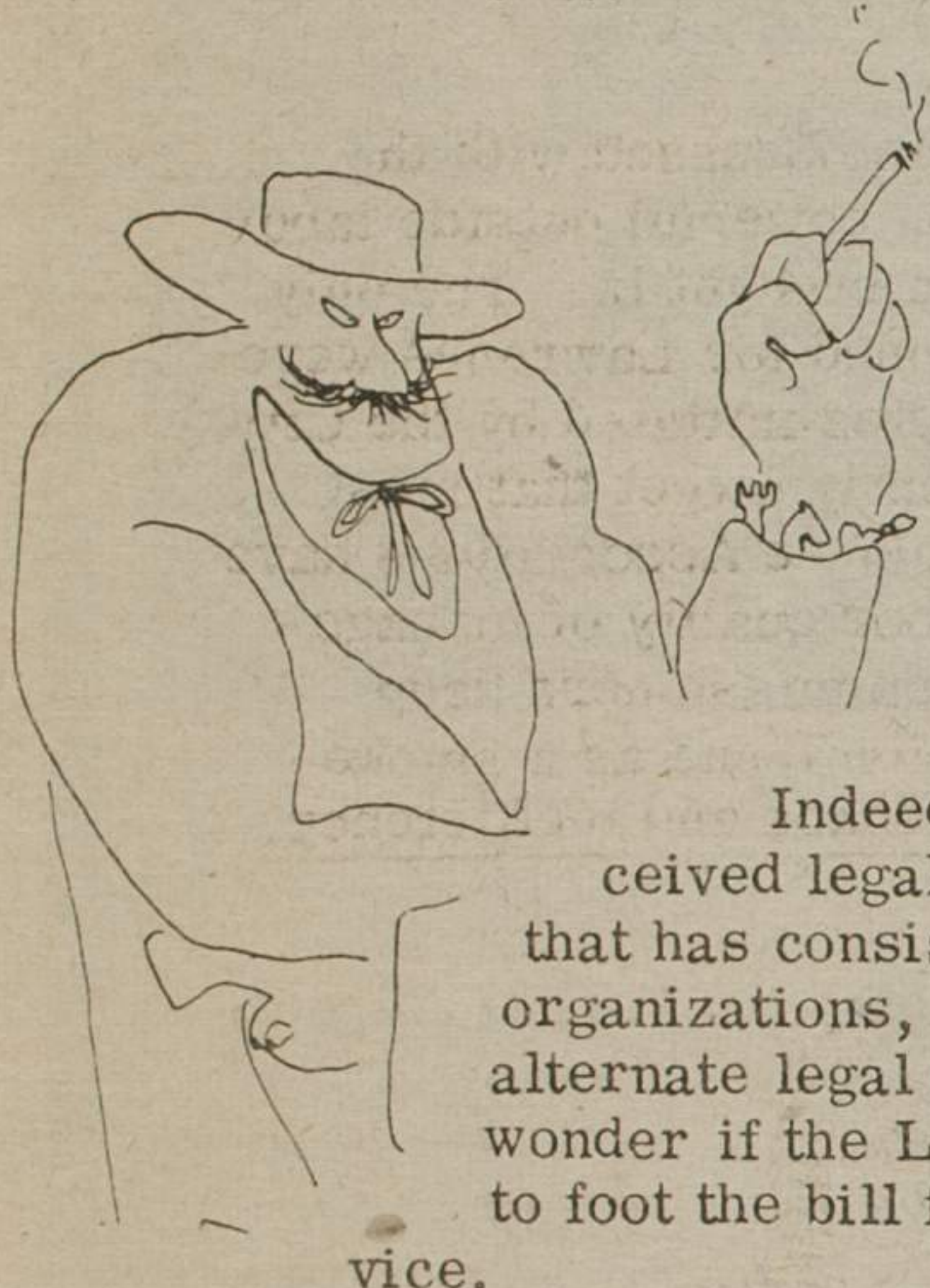
It has been a tradition in our democratic system that when local government is unwilling or unable to act responsibly, it's time for the people to act. We therefore call on all Lawrence citizens who want efficient, fair and open management to join with us in calling for:

1) an investigating committee for efficient management to investigate all of the above charged malpractices and report back publicly to the City Commission. The City Commission should then hold public hearings to receive citizen input with regard to the investigating committee's findings. The investigating committee should be comprised of two City Commissioners, two representatives of the United Public Employees' Associations and two neutral Lawrence citizens selected by agreement among the two Commissioners and two Public Employees;

2) an investigation by the appropriate state authorities into the uses of the 1/2 % sales tax;

3) an investigation by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration into the widespread safety violations in Lawrence municipal employment;

4) an investigation by the Highway Patrol to determine if City vehicles are roadworthy and safe to both employees and the public.



The Lawrence City Commission considers itself open-minded and impartial, yet as one Commissioner pointed out, all information placed in the Commissioners' folders by the City Manager were arguments against recognition.

Indeed, the Commission received legal advice from a source that has consistently opposed employee organizations, yet neglected to obtain alternate legal points of view. We wonder if the Lawrence taxpayers had to foot the bill for this one-sided advice.

Lawrence City Commissioners have pledged themselves to openness in government, yet by the Mayor's own admission, the Commission's vote was influenced by private meetings with unnamed citizens. As one Commissioner noted, only one citizen opposed recognition at the public hearings. We are dismayed that some Commissioners feel they can make crucial decisions in the public interest based on citizen opinions not stated publicly where such opinions could be challenged in open and honest debate.

We are also dismayed that although Commissioners have frequently indicated their interest in the Kansas Public Employer-Employee Relations Board they, in effect, voted against working through the Board without having invited its Executive Director to come to Lawrence and testify as to how the Board functioned and its effect in other Kansas communities. Our Employee Association invited the Board's Executive Director to Lawrence so it could learn about the Board. We also relayed this to the Mayor and the City Manager and indicated that the Executive Director's information would be extremely valuable to the Commission in their deliberations. As one Commissioner pointed out, there were "stories" about the Board's negative effect on certain communities which, upon investigation, proved untrue. Yet the Mayor and the City Manager chose not to expose the Commission to the facts directly from the Board's Executive Director.

Some Commissioners have noted somewhat critically that our petition for recognition was not specific as to whether our request was for regulation by state or local authority. We were not specific in order that the Commission have the widest latitude in its decision making. However, we will readily admit that our failure to be specific may have produced some problems in the Commission's decision making process. We are concerned that the rule of law prevail in Lawrence. The State of Kansas has provided a procedure whereby the many problems in City employment can be solved in a peaceful, orderly, legal and democratic fashion. We are also concerned that decisions be based on fact, publicly expressed, rather than on private influences. Commissioner Mibeck has noted this lack of fact and expert testimony at the last public hearing.

PUBLIC NOTICE endorses the labor union call for consistency. It asks the unions to remember what they have said about big city groups coming in--for the future. What is your opinion? Box 114.

Plea to Citizens



We will therefore call upon concerned citizens to join with us in submitting a petition to the City Commission, specifically asking that it consider an ordinance placing Lawrence under the Kansas Public Employer-Employee Relations Act. We will ask that a public hearing be held for which the widest and most expert opinion, both pro and con, can be solicited. We will do our best to cooperate with the City Commission to bring forward as much data as possible so that a fair and objective decision can be reached.

One final note: apparently word had leaked out to managerial personnel that recognition was to be denied and this has produced a renewal of thinly veiled threats against the job security of Employee Association members and officers. Although we have pledged our cooperation to the City and public we wish to emphatically state that under no circumstances will we tolerate harassment, intimidation or dismissal of employees for exercising their Constitutional right to free speech.

We wish to acknowledge the efforts of Commissioner Don Binns and Carl Mibeck for attempting to achieve an atmosphere of moderation, openness, rationality and elementary fair play in municipal employment. But above all we commend their compassionate understanding of the lives of working people.

This statement is intended for all the people of Lawrence. We urge its reproduction and circulation.

Mr and Mrs. Louis Ward should be happy. Recently they made their final mortgage payment to the Lawrence National Bank. At last, they own their own home at 946 Pennsylvania in East Lawrence where they have lived for 30 years.

The Wards take pride in their accomplishment. They have worked hard for more than 30 years and are comfortably settled in their medium-sized, white, frame house on the quiet corner of 10th and Pennsylvania.

Their son is grown and married. Now, money that was needed to live day to day could be spent for a few luxuries. Some repairs could be made on the house and a few new appliances could be added. Life could be just a little easier.

But, something is wrong. Clouding the horizon is the threatened destruction of the Ward's home. The proposed Haskell Loop will pass through the Ward's property.

Feeling that the city has ignored the human toll extracted by such projects, the Public Notice decided to sit down and talk to Louis and Ruth Ward at their house recently. We wanted to know how they felt about the road and about themselves. We knew they were upset and consumed with a sense of deep despair and confusion, as well as righteous embitterment.

Before we had even spoken, Louis Ward was getting angry, just thinking about the road. His face was flushed.

"They're not going to move me!" he said, his voice rising. "I'm too old, too nervous, where am I going to go, where am I going to go."

We began to take some notes, and tried to interject a few questions, but Louis wasn't finished.

"You not only cease to be a citizen, you are not a citizen, you cease to have rights. A few Commissioners can just tell me where I'm going to live.

"You call that freedom?"

Mr. Ward continued, "You've seen those bumper stickers... I've been told that I could move if I didn't like the country.

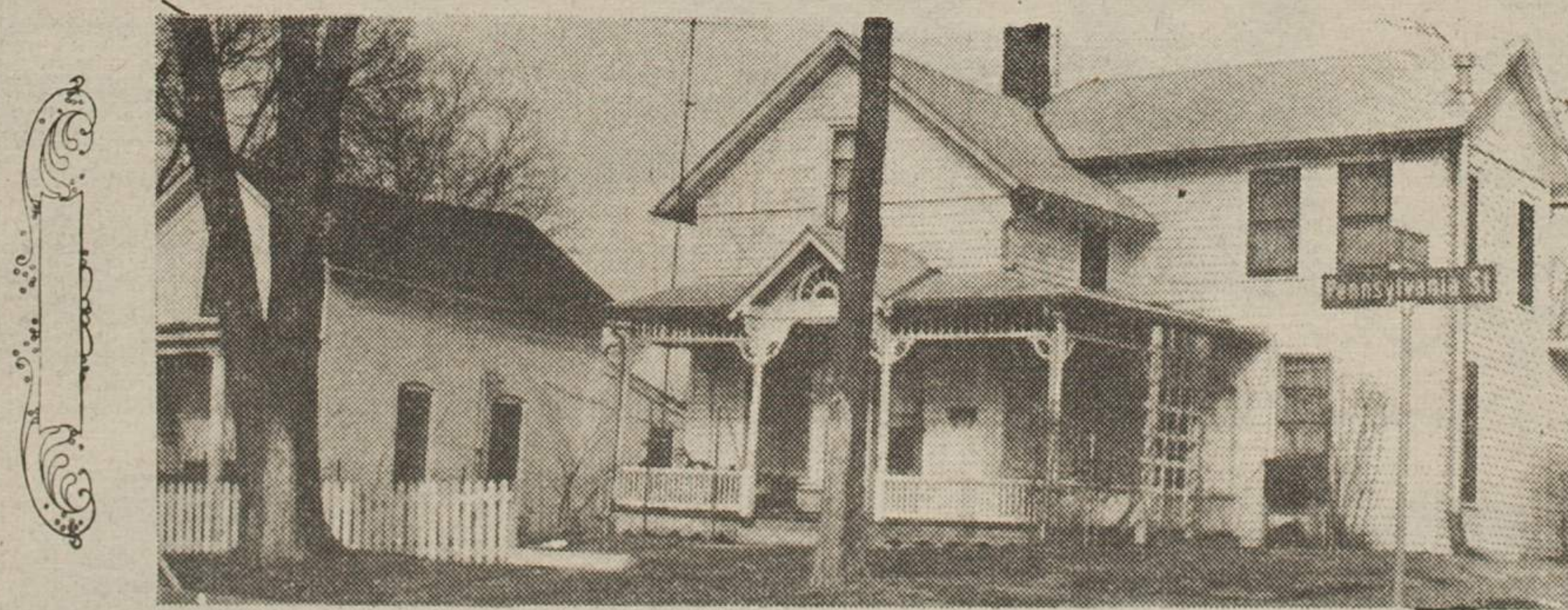
"Where is freedom when the city government can tell you to move out? if the

public doesn't want that, then it's dictatorial!"

The Ward's home is only one of many which will be removed by the roadway. The City will take their home under the rule of "eminent domain," or that law which allows for the confiscation of private property when deemed in the "public interest." The Loop budget actually allows for \$60,000 in legal expenditures, or \$2,000 for each home, to facilitate this process.

Louis Ward came to his feet, with an anger and frustration which thrives in the gut of many working Americans. His face reddened.

"Do we need the road," I asked. "Do you think..."



"No! We don't need it!"

"Do you think many of the neighbors know much about the road, the plans, the route and the whole thing?" I asked.

Louis glared at me. He picked up a light jacket.

"Nobody knows anything about!"

He turned in disgust and rage, and retired from the house.

Mrs. Ward had remained in the room. She was obviously grieved. A little moisture appeared in her eyes. The situation had become a bit strained. I even felt a bit awkward, and was anxious to return to some conversation.

"Have you gotten any notification, from the city, or anyone," I asked quietly.

"No," she replied. "No one ever con-

tacted us. No one sent us a letter, came by. We still haven't been officially informed that our house will be taken by the road."

She was staring at the floor.

"I don't understand how the neighborhood will be improved. There has to be housing for low-income people. Everyone can't be making top wages."

We expressed our agreement.

"My husband has said something about moving to the other side of town, but our taxes would go up so much."

I asked, rhetorically, if the whole idea of having to pull out was not extremely unsettling.

"It's causing me a lot of inconvenience," she replied. "We'd like to put up storm windows, you know, with heating bills going up so. We need to move the hot water tank, but we don't know what to do."

I was thinking then of how Mr. Ward had reacted moments before, to our coming over to talk about the roadway. I asked Ruth how Louis would ever be able to stand the strain of seeing his house run over by a bull-dozer.

"We've thought about that," she said, staring at the floor still. "I think we're probably going to have to move out before the road goes through, to save my husband's health."

I envisioned the real estate people coming to the house, having heard of the Ward's desire to sell out quickly. I may have winced a bit. I almost blurted out something about the real estate business, but decided upon soliciting more conversation from Mrs. Ward.

"If you didn't get anything in the mail or

any calls, then how did you first learn of the road," I asked.

"I think we first learned about it in the paper," she said, a little whimsically. They printed a map, so we got out our magnifying glass... we wear bifocals, you know... and I said, 'well I believe that road goes right through our house!'"

We all laughed.

"A man from City Hall, a friend of sorts, told us that he intended to write us a letter to tell us that it wasn't going to take our home. I believe that was in August of '74, and we've never heard anything."

The story sounded familiar.

I was wondering how many of the people in East Lawrence the city had failed to notify. Mrs. Ward's comments shifted to the impact for the residents of East Lawrence.

"Do they think they can just buy up our homes and put us in those homes for old people. You know people don't last long in those places," she said.

The dogs began to bark on the front porch and Mrs. Ward looked a bit anxious, wondering when Louis would return.

"I'm terribly worried about Louis," she said. "His health has gone down hill. He looks about five years older than he did a year ago."

The atmosphere became more uneasy. What can one possibly say to make things better? We offered our sympathies, but they sounded meaningless.

Mrs. Ward had said repeatedly that she felt uneasy about having their names appear in print. We tried to reassure her that it would be alright, but it was obvious that she didn't trust us.

"You just have to be skeptical now days," she said frankly. "I just don't trust people like I used to. I used to trust everyone when I was a child, but in the past few years I've become more leary of people."

"I don't know if you've felt this, but things just aren't the same. Things have changed so much since I was a little girl."