

Skid road hotels visit staggers Rep. AuCoin

By HUNTLY COLLINS
of The Oregonian staff

Rep. Les AuCoin, D-Ore., paid a visit to skid road hotels in downtown Portland Monday and said he was "staggered" by what he saw.

In a walking tour, AuCoin visited Burnside area and Lownsdale Square hotels threatened with closure next January unless they are renovated to meet Chapter 13 of the Uniform Building Code.

He recalled one skid road alcoholic telling him, "If they close this hotel, the only alternative I have is living under the bridge."

AuCoin called his encounter with the man "the most profound experience I have ever had."

A member of the Housing and Community Development subcommittee, AuCoin said he did not see "any magic wand" to solve the immediate housing problem that will be created if downtown property owners fail to meet the city's January deadline for bringing their hotels up to code.

In the long run, he said he would push for several reforms including strengthening of Section 8 of the federal Housing Act of 1975 which provides federal rent subsidies for low-income persons.

"But there needs to be more sensitivity on the part of the private lending sector that it has a stake in the survival of the city," AuCoin said.

"Public funds simply cannot do the job alone," he added. "Private capital has to be put to work, also."

AuCoin said he was "encouraged" by the renovation he saw at the downtown Foster Hotel, a project accomplished by a combination of public and private investment.

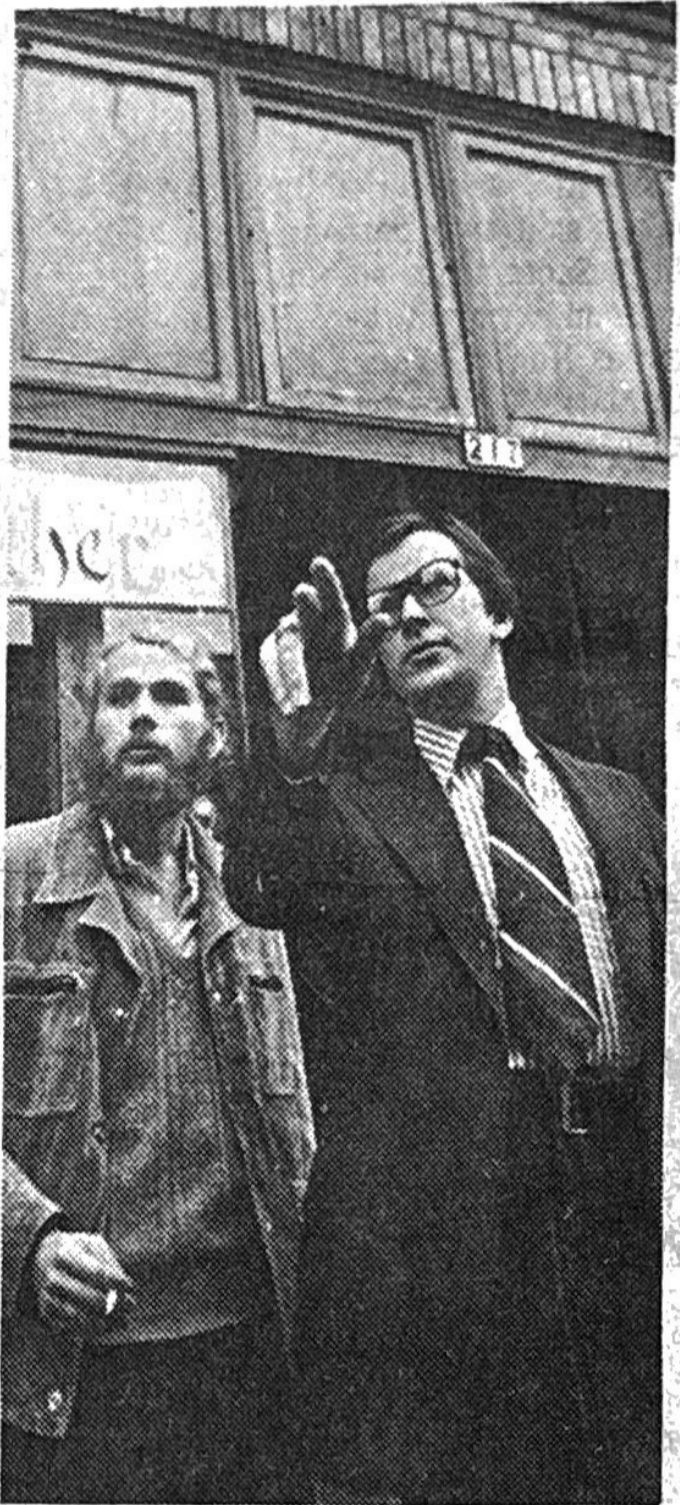
In other remarks, the first-term congressman said he would push for a coordinated housing program at the national level instead of the "mishmash" of current programs.

"The aim would be a national housing policy," he said. "Currently, I think we have none."

Previous federal housing programs, such as FHA loans, have mainly met suburban housing needs, with urban housing needs "overlooked," AuCoin said.

"But if we are going to save the cities, we are going to have to provide decent housing, strengthen neighborhoods and allow a mix of people," he said.

Decent inner-city housing would reduce the growing demand for social services, stem the exodus to the suburbs and diminish urban sprawl that overloads transportation systems and other public services, AuCoin said.



TOUR — Rep. Les AuCoin, D-Ore., Monday toured area north of W. Burnside Street, guided by David Rath (left) of Burnside Project. AuCoin represents 1st District, which includes Western part of Multnomah County and skid road.

In afternoon meetings with city officials, AuCoin was urged to help insure that the congressional intent of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 is carried out.

Under the act, Portland has \$8.7 million in federal funds for housing rehabilitation and other neighborhood improvements this fiscal year to alleviate urban decay.

Gary Stout, head of the city's Office of Planning and Development, said congressional guidelines of the act are "very good," but the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has been selling it as a revenue sharing program with few regulations.

Stout also told AuCoin that federal agencies should be encouraged to be more supportive of bankers who want to pump money into inner-city housing.

"The federal establishment that is controlling the banks gets nervous when bankers try to do something that has social utility," Stout said.



— Journal photo by Dana Olsen

Congressman Les AuCoin met some of his Burnside area constituents in Skid Road tour Monday

Solon Favors Old Town Neighborhood Mix

U.S. Rep. Les AuCoin walked through the Skid Road area on W. Burnside Street Monday investigating urban problems. He found the neighborhood full.

He walked unannounced into an overnight hotel named Western Rooms at 9 SW 2nd Ave. Rates there are \$1.25 a night, \$8 a week or \$35 a month. Most

of the "rooms" really are stalls with cots and chicken wire enclosures over the top.

"There used to be thousands of these around here," said Sam Naito, who is involved in a variety of urban redevelopment projects in the neighborhood. "Now there are only a few left."

Western Rooms may not be left for

long. It is one of the hotels which must meet city code requirements by Jan. 1 or close.

"I couldn't believe the conditions there," said AuCoin, in his first year as a congressman from the district which covers Northwest Oregon from the Willamette River to the Oregon Coast.

"But the men who were huddled

around the stove told me that if it is closed down, there they will have no where to go," AuCoin said.

He talked to a wino with tears in his eyes who told him he would be out in the street if the Western closed.

"Some of these men are scared to death," AuCoin said later.

A member of the Housing & Community Development Subcommittee in the House, AuCoin said the "mix" in the neighborhood must be preserved. He toured the "Old Town" area with its street level shops and upstairs housing, the new commercial enterprises and social service agencies that serve the transient and permanent residents.

State Rep. Vera Katz, D-Portland, arranged the tour for AuCoin, a former colleague in the Oregon House of Representatives when he represented Forest Grove.

Besides the overnight hotel, the tour included the Clean-Up Center where residents can find a warm shower, the Transit 1 Bank where safe deposit boxes can be rented for 10 cents a day and the Detoxification Center, drying-out quarters for drunks.

Don Clark Recall Drive Called Off

By JEFF WOHLER
Journal Staff Writer

An attempt to recall Multnomah County Commission Chairman Don

Clark was called off Monday — for the time being, at least.

Don Carmichael, chairman of the Recall Donald E. Clark committee, said

"we are not going to file Tuesday because we are about 2,000 signatures short."

Carmichael and his committee had until Tuesday to file 32,084 certified signatures with the county elections division to get the question of Clark's recall placed on the ballot.

Instead of filing Tuesday, Carmichael listed four substitute courses he may pursue, including:

- Testing the constitutionality of Oregon's recall law which sets a 90-day time limit for the gathering of signatures;
- Seeking a declaratory judgement to

Lower Cost Of Utilities For Poor Wins Backing

By DON JEPSEN
Journal Staff Writer

SALEM — A round of "town hall"

regulated utilities submitting testimony in brief appearances.

The order was issued by Commissioner Charles

Clark was called off Monday — for the time being, at least.

Don Carmichael, chairman of the Recall Donald E. Clark committee, said

"we are not going to file Tuesday because we are about 2,000 signatures short."

Carmichael and his committee had until Tuesday to file 32,084 certified signatures with the county elections division to get the question of Clark's recall placed on the ballot.

Instead of filing Tuesday, Carmichael listed four substitute courses he may pursue, including:

- Testing the constitutionality of Oregon's recall law which sets a 90-day time limit for the gathering of signatures;
- Seeking a declaratory judgement to