

Housing Program Described To Columbia Merchant Group

An informative insight into the public housing situation in Columbia was given 60 members of the Columbia Merchants' association at their August luncheon meeting yesterday afternoon at Hotel Columbia.

The guest speaker was William R. Geddings, manager of University Terrace, the \$760,000 housing project in operation here.

Mr. Geddings gave the merchants a survey of housing as it affected Columbia social, property and financial interests, and declared that the two new \$1,000,000 projects to be erected shortly will have a further salutary effect upon Columbia.

Vote Labor Day Holiday.

The association voted in favor of closing stores here on Labor day, Monday, September 4.

President C. Y. Reamer of the association presided.

As yesterday was his 58th birthday, President Reamer was honored by applause from the association members. He was presented a large basket of flowers by Charles Sligh, expressing the congratulations of Mr. Sligh and the association.

Yesterday's program was arranged by Charles Reyner, one of the directors. Mr. Reyner introduced Mr. Geddings.

Guests Are Introduced.

A number of guests were introduced by members who sponsored their presence.

A new association member, the Yellow Cab Company, Inc., was announced with Dr. B. W. Kendall, president and treasurer, being introduced. Mrs. Helen Dawkins is secretary.

H. B. Trull, who has been manager at Efird's for several months, was present for his first meeting and was introduced.

Miss Ernestine Sinclair of Houston, Texas, who is with the Betty Lee shop, and Miss Maye Payne, manager of the shop, were likewise introduced.

Announcements were made by Virgil Dibble, secretary and treasurer of the association.

He made special mention of President Reamer's birthday, and of the celebration in Columbia September 15 by the South Carolina chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution, marking the 152nd anniversary

of the signing of the United States constitution.

Address By Geddings.

The association's speaker, Mr. Geddings, made his address upon the subject, "Columbia Merchants and Public Housing."

Declaring the merchants were interested in good business and that public housing offers no threat to private enterprise, Mr. Geddings added, "I feel sure that I can convince you that building of housing projects helps business; that in the end you will agree with me that public housing is good business."

Mr. Geddings said that from a dollar and cents standpoint—forgetting momentarily the great social advantages—that a total of \$2,760,000 has, or will be spent in Columbia for better housing.

"A large percentage of this money," Mr. Geddings emphasized, "goes for wages paid to working men in Columbia. Building materials take up another large percentage. The remainder goes for land purchase."

Mr. Geddings said that Columbia's housing authority was composed of Smedes Hendley, chairman; Dr. E. C. Coker, Geddings Crawford, S. L. Latimer, Jr., and L. Cooper Smith, and operates as agent for the federal government the present University Terrace project.

Speaking of the housing project completed and the proposed projects, Mr. Geddings asked for whom did the expenditures bring better business.

He answered that question by saying, "It means better business for the contractor, the manufacturer, the landowner, the investor, the employer, the taxpayer and the merchant."

Cites Building Costs.

Mr. Geddings said that three-fourths of the money expended under housing here goes to the contractor, who in turn pays wages and purchases materials.

About \$750,000 will be expended on materials, which means sales and prompt payment.

"In this connection," Mr. Geddings stated, "it is well to remember that since the housing program is designed for families who would otherwise be entirely outside the market for new homes, these orders will displace no others, but will all be additional business."

Under the new Columbia program, he said, the land cost will be approximately \$239,000, both for vacant and developed land. The land cost for University Terrace was \$50,000.

Families who could afford privately-built or managed homes will not be accepted at tenants in public projects.

The families which will be housed in projects assisted by the United States Housing authority will be those with annual incomes averaging less than \$500 in some communities and not more than \$1,100 in any. Competition, therefore, Mr. Geddings explained, "between the local housing authorities participating in the United States Housing authority program and the private enterprise is out of the question."

"Whenever a public low-rent housing project is constructed," Mr. Geddings declared, "a revival of building activity can be safely predicted."

Relates English Building.

Mr. Geddings said that from the period of the World war in England through 1937, that 1,010,806 low-rent houses were built by English local housing authorities. During the same period