

Firsthand SC Welfare Fraud Testimonry

6-22-77

Lee Collins, a county social services employe, may have won himself an unofficial award of courage for his testimony before county supervisors Tuesday.

Collins readily told the board that he was one employe who appeared before the county grand jury last year, bringing charges there is major fraud by welfare recipients in this county.

Obviously angered, Supervisor Gary Patton stated, "Then the grand jury should start prosecuting these cases."

Collins answered that there is only one investigator for his department as the board of supervisors has not funded more, and that when he turns in suspected fraud cases, "The district attorney sits on them for a year, until the statute of limitations runs out, and then drops the cases."

Collins said he did not "name names" to the grand jury, and Patton insisted the grand jury should have investigated "to find the facts and indict the people."

Collins was asked by Supervisor Marilyn Liddicoat if he believed the fraud amounted to a rumored \$300,000 a month.

He answered, "I agree."

Chairman Ed Borovatz cut in heatedly, "I see nothing but a political statement in saying we have \$300,000 in fraud unless we have the facts."

He and Supervisor Cecil Smith told the social worker that he should have brought the issue and cases to the board, promising they would do something about it.

Borovatz reiterated, "And the grand jury does have the power of indictment."

To which an unperturbed Collins quietly replied, "I wish Mr. Borovatz would speak to the district attorney."

Collins also took time to urge the board not to refuse cost of living wage increases to employes as a budget savings, but to save the taxpayers' money by ending welfare fraud.

S.F. Airport

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — A \$13 million expansion program at San Francisco International Airport has been approved over the objections of the federal Environmental Protection Agency.