

# Supervisors Hurl Abuse At Burton Courthouse Move

By Ron Miller

Supervisor Robert Burton suffered the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune at the hands of fellow supervisors last night in a public forum on the courthouse-juvenile hall squabble.

But, as usual, he came through it all unperturbed.

Burton and Supervisors Lewis Nelson, Francis Silliman and Hulda McLean were among the speakers at a meeting of the Live Oak Improvement association at the Live Oak school cafeteria.

In his remarks, Board Chairman Silliman inferred Burton had "scuttled" the juvenile hall proposal with his initiative petition to make construction of a new courthouse the county's top building priority. The measure will be on the November ballot.

"I think the people have been sold a terrific bill of goods," Silliman said. "I hope the board of supervisors won't have to pay the consequences."

Silliman explained that construction of a juvenile hall is the last major social need the board has yet to satisfy. He cited construction of the county health center and the Ferguson rehabilitation clinic at the county hos-

pital as needs the board has met.

"There can be a purposeful confusion of the facts at this election," Silliman said. "People will be most concerned about electing a governor and congressional representatives. Frankly, the timing couldn't be worse."

Glancing at Burton, Silliman asked how the public would feel if a bad beating, a killing or a hideous sex offense were committed at the present juvenile hall. He said "it could happen."

"Some of these things not only could happen, but already have happened," Supervisor Hulda McLean said. "We shouldn't keep children where we wouldn't keep animals."

Mrs. McLean also got in her digs at Burton. She said the public has been received by the initiative campaign into thinking the county can't afford to build both the courthouse and juvenile hall immediately. She said that isn't true.

In his presentation, Burton told the audience he believes the money in the county building fund was always meant for courthouse purposes. He said he doesn't have a legal leg to stand on, but is still certain

former boards of supervisors meant the fund to be spent on a courthouse.

Supervisors Nelson began by correcting Burton.

He recalled that when he was elected two terms ago, there was only a few thousands dollars in the building fund. He said the present board — with Burton's exception — has always considered the fund for all building needs.

"Due to the efforts of certain individuals," Nelson remarked, "the county's other building needs are rarely mentioned."

Nelson said the hospital laundry and kitchen facilities are about ready to collapse. He said the courthouse and juvenile hall priorities would have to be pushed immediately if that happens.

"I've consistently voted against giving any of these projects a higher priority," Nelson said. "But I finally voted to put the matter on the ballot so the burden of making this decision will be on the people."

Nelson pointed out that the courthouse and office needs can always be satisfied by renting space, even though such a method is far from satisfactory.

"You can't rent a new juvenile hall or hospital kitchen," he said. "They're single-purpose buildings."

Nelson urged a "no" vote on the initiative measure, but asked the people to look into the situation themselves instead of taking someone else's word.

"I guess I've been a bad boy," Burton quipped after his fellow board members were finished.

County Administrator Ed Hane outlined methods of financing the county's building program for the group and County Probation Officer Tom King spoke briefly in favor of the juvenile hall. About 30 persons attended the meeting.

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