



Army Photo

## Commands MDW

Maj. Gen. John H. Stokes, Jr., has assumed his duties as commanding general of the Military District of Washington. General Stokes, 58, who was graduated from Central High School here and West Point, was a member of the Review Board Council prior to his present appointment.

# Alexandria Slum Plan Draws Fire

Arguments for and against the slum clearance plan proposed by the Alexandria Redevelopment and Housing Authority were voiced last night in a hearing before the City Council's housing committee.

Some 200 lower King st. merchants and others were present in opposition to the plan, which calls for purchase by the city of a 6½-acre tract bounded by Duke, King and West sts. and Hooffs run.

Of 100 homes in the area, 68 are considered substandard. All but nine of the existing structures would be razed and the land, when cleared, would be offered for sale to the highest bidder as a site for a shopping center.

Winder Harris, a member of the Housing Authority, expressed the opinion that "major commercial development will draw more people to all of Alexandria business—I'm convinced that business begets business."

"The housing situation is acute for the people who cannot qualify for public housing," objected Edwin C. Brown, attorney for several homeowners in the area. "Where will they go?"

Richard S. Marshall, director of the Housing Authority, said that body is required to find suitable space for displaced residents, but not for commercial renters in the area.

Richard S. Lockett, Jr., attorney for 12 homeowners in the area, presented a petition against the plan which, he said, had been signed by 958 Alexandria voters. He said the project would cost the city an estimated \$180,000 and would bring in additional taxes of only \$16,000 a year. He argued that any land taken by eminent domain must be for public use.

The League of Women Voters, favoring the project, argued that legality of such slum clearance plans has been upheld in Virginia and said the undertaking would be "a financial asset to the city."

Frederick H. Allen, New York consulting engineer, said he thought the payments that would be made to property owners in the area "are very substantial, ironically, too much so."