**THE SPARK**

**Young Girl Stunned by Billy Club**

**Margaret Nelson Story**

FLATLANDS tried to find out School on Wednesday, October 5, but the more we asked, the more we realized that the one incident, involving Margaret Nelson, was part of a whole stream of trouble. We have tried, in this issue, by telling several small stories, to give a picture of what the air is like around Highland and High Streets, and to talk about what kind of responses this trouble will bring.

The basic fact is simple: one member of the police department of the City of Oakland saw fit to hit a young girl across the neck with a heavy billy club. That is the matter of most concern.

The cost is not so simple. There were many witnesses to the incident, adults and students. FLATLANDS has talked to several people and pieced together the following story:

After school that Wednesday, several groups of students were standing around talking in small groups - not an unusual thing. There were white groups and Negro groups as no unusual. For some reason, the police were trying to break the Negro groups up and send the children home. Tension was high in the neighborhood; many rumors had been circulating about a fight that school had called the juvenile authorities the previous Friday. Trolls of several persons were going around. At any rate, the police must have expected something - they had two paddy wagons there.

"One officer walking down the street told a group of boys something like, 'You go or I'll bust your butts'" according to one witness.

The officer came to a group of girls, which included Margaret Nelson, and said, "I want to see that Negro girl right now!"

For some reason, he picked Margaret out, according to witnesses, and said, "You go home or I'll...". The officer walked to the sidewalk, Margaret was somehow separated from the group. The officer, we are told, came up behind Margaret and said, "I want you to come home." Said Margaret, "I said something threatening about someone. He then grabbed her arm. Margaret evidently answered that she could walk by herself.

At this point, according to several witnesses, the police man span Margaret around the neck with his ugly club, then pushed her by the throat. This apparently stunned the girl and sheremembered little or nothing after that point. Witnesses report that she hit the officer on the back of her arm, kicked her about the legs. She then kicked her about the legs. She then grabbed her about the legs. She then grabbed her.

"A scratch on her neck"

"Mrs. Nelson first heard of the incident from her was, Claudius. "He came home and told me," he said, "Margaret got beat up by the police." I didn't believe him. A cop hit her; they put her in a paddy wagon and took her downtown - she's in jail.

"I asked, 'What was she doing?' He said, 'Nothing, she was just standing there.'"

"Different kids came home talking about it. I called the hospital - they said try the Juvenile Hall or the school. Information said to listing at 85th and Feather, only 400 telephone. This was around 5: I called and they said, 'Yes, we have your daughter. We're going to send her to Highland, she's got a scratch on her neck.'"

"You mean she's been-arrested?"

"I said, 'I want to get her home. The doctor there said she couldn't see anything - take her to a private doctor if her neck was sore. Next morning her neck was so swollen she could hardly turn it.'"

"I was told she was going to get arrested."

"Police are supposed to be trained!"

Margaret received medical attention for some hours after her arrest. Mrs. Nelson told us that her daughter had been to a private doctor for a complete series of tests and X-rays. They had been to a hearing with the probation officer that day. Margaret is charged with disturbing the peace and resisting arrest.

"Mrs. Nelson summed things up: "It's wrong to resist arrest. Still, a policeman shouldn't hit a child. Police are supposed to be trained! - not supposed to let their emotions take over."