

North Carolina Reacts To Student Sit-Down

Cities Can Suppress Such Activities By Passing New Ordinances Says Attorney General Seawell

Excerpts from Remarks by Attorney General Seawell to newsmen: "As a general proposition citizens have the legal right to seek to use the services of retail establishments. But private retail establishments have a legal right to operate their business without being interfered with, and to sell or not to sell to customers as they see fit.

(The strikers) "have posed and continue to pose a serious threat to the peace and good order of the communities in which they occur."

"Municipalities hit by the strike, can pass ordinances to suppress ac-

tivities detrimental to the health, morals, safety convenience and welfare of the people (and to maintain) the peace, good government and welfare of the city. (Cities should) examine their present ordinances and consider whether additional ordinances, are needed. My staff will be glad to advise and assist...with respect to this matter if requested to do so.

"The trustees and officials of colleges and universities stand in the position of parents to students in these institutions, and have the perfect right, and probably the duty through appropriate action to

prohibit any action on the part of students which threaten or is prejudicial to the peace and welfare of the community.

"Officials of the schools involved should consider whether or not the most obligation rest with them.

"It seems apparent that these incidents have been promoted and encouraged and even supervised by persons coming into North Carolina from other states. . . Such trouble makers are irresponsible and their action can only result in irreparable harm being done to racial relations here in North Carolina.



TARGET—This picture, taken at the height of the protest staged in Durham last week by North Carolina College students, shows the front of the Woolworth store on downtown main street. Crowd milling around in front includes some students, onlookers and police. The Woolworth stores throughout the state were the target of protests against refusal of the stores to serve Negroes at the lunch counters.—Photo by Jordan.

State Officials, Press, Negro Groups Respond to Movement

The state-wide student protest against the refusal of downtown variety stores to serve Negroes at the lunch counters drew sharp reactions from many quarters in its wake.

Comments came from highly placed state officials and from the ordinary citizen. They ranged all the way from staunch segregationist attitude which demanded jailing of the students to a silent applause from Negro citizens.

Attorney General Malcolm Seawell set the tone for the state's "get tough" policy which has already resulted in the arrest of some 40 Shaw and St. Augustine's students when he issued a statement suggesting that the movement could be stopped by the enforcement of trespass and passage of other restrictive laws.

The movement may have launched a political campaign for at least one candidate, Dr. I. Beverly Lake, staunch segregationist whose best hope for the governor's race lies in a large anti-Negro support.

Dr. Lake, announced during the midst of the movement last week that he would not make the race for governor, suddenly

found himself near the end of the week with a number of supporters who volunteered to help raise the funds. Dr. Lake says are necessary before he could become a candidate.

At the other end of the pole, the movement received silent but enthusiastic support from Negro residents of the cities affected. In Durham, a woman who had gotten wind of the demonstration asked as she walked in the back door of Woolworth's, "are they here?" When she was answered "yes," she replied, "Praise the Lord."

Most of the organized Negro groups, like the Durham Committee on Negro Affairs, local NAACP branches and local ministerial Alliances, have issued statements in support of the movement, even though it was started without organized help.

Among the more objective analysis of the movement; in the white daily press came from the Greensboro, Charlotte and Raleigh morning dailies.

On this page are reprinted a sample of some of the reactions from the officials, organized groups and the press.

"We Have an Obligation to Support . . ." Says Organized Voice of Durham Negroes

Following is the complete text of a statement by the Durham Committee on Negro Affairs, adopted at its meeting Thursday night, and released to newspapers this week.

The statement was also sent to Governor Hodges, the State Attorney General and to presidents of all Negro colleges, private and state-supported, in North Carolina.

"Although the Durham Committee on Negro Affairs was unaware, officially or unofficially, of plans on the part of North Carolina College students to stage a 'sit-down' protest against discriminatory practices at the lunch counters in Woolworth and Kress stores, certain facts of this matter have caused the committee to take the position that it is entirely appropriate for it to make a statement in support of the orderly and dignified manner in which these students have sought to make our state and nation truly aware of a pattern of discrimination which hinders the development of wholesome relations between the various racial groups which compose the American citizenry.

Obligated to Support
"The appropriateness of this statement is heightened by the fact that portions of the daily press, certain public officials and other highly placed persons within the state have called upon the responsible Negro leadership (including college presidents) to use its influence to halt activities of Negro students and their white counterparts who have joined the movement. It is our opinion, that instead of expressing disapproval, we have an obligation to support any peaceful movement which seeks to remove from the customs of our beloved southland, those unfair practices based upon race and color which have for so long a time been recognized as a stigma on our way of life and a stumbling block to moral and economic progress of the region.

Protest Necessary

"Approximately two years ago, the Durham Committee on Negro Affairs conducted a survey of the 5 and 10 cents stores located in Durham. This survey indicated that between 80 and 90 per cent of the persons entering the Kress, Silvers and Woolworth stores, were colored people. Obviously, the students' protest is gaining a system which solicits and accepts the trade of Negro patrons while denying them employment opportunities and the use of dining facilities which are usually offered for the exclusive convenience of white and foreign patrons. This protest appears to recognize that although many thoughtful Southerners believe such practices to be morally wrong and economically unsound, the South as a whole, has not achieved sufficient maturity to move voluntarily toward eradicating such injustices as long as any vocal segment of the white population expresses the opposition. This protest also recognizes the historic failure and frustration of numerous efforts by Negro groups to negotiate changes in the present pattern through persuasion and conference. This view is adequately supported by a review of the important advances which have been made in the field of civil rights, almost all of which have occurred against the backdrop of litigation and mass protest.

"Unfortunately, or fortunately, Negro students throughout our land have been taught, in both public and private schools that they hold a citizenship status which is equal in all respects to that of every other American. It is commendable that in the face of obvious attempts to indoctrinate them to the contrary, they now emerge as a vital and strong group of stalwart citizens whose image of themselves is such that they are determined to accept no long-term inferior status which is imposed upon one American citizen by another American citizen who happens, by the will of God, to be of another color and yet belong to the same human race. How long must these injustices continue? How long must our patience be tried? How can a nation who professes to be a great bulwark of Christianity and democracy be so hypocritical on a matter of such gross discrimination as denying the rights of an American citizen while giving the same rights to other Americans.

South still seeks to thrust upon them.

Hope for Negotiations

"The Negro citizens of our community hope for successful negotiations between student leaders and representatives of the various stores affected. We are also hopeful that these negotiations will lead to formation of fair employment practices and an enlightened policy providing for a cordial invitation to all patrons to use the dining facilities without being segregated according to race. It is reasonable to expect that the giant corporations of our country will find themselves in position to furnish leadership in matters of this kind. In like manner, it is reasonable to expect that our State officials will recognize that responsibility for having North Carolina live up to its reputation of being the enlightened, liberal and progressive state which our industry-hunters have been representing it to be. Indeed, it is urgently necessary that we shall prove ourselves to be, in fact, what we have been saying we are when talking to those corporations which we have invited to establish new factories within our borders on grounds that there is in North Carolina a climate of racial tolerance and understanding which will enable personnel coming from other sections of the country to live in an atmosphere consistent with American ideals of freedom and equality for all.

"In conclusion, we commend these students for the dignified manner in which they have demonstrated the kind of poise and maturity which have enabled them to smile while being cursed, showered with eggs, and threatened with physical violence by irresponsible elements of our various N. C. communities who would do well to acquire some of the qualities of good citizenship and understanding which have been shown by those who protest."



PEACEFUL—This picture, taken at the S. H. Kress basement lunch counter, reflects the orderliness which was typical at the beginning of the demonstrations throughout the state. However, as the protests mounted, some instances of violence were reported.—Photo by Jordan.

Press Comments on Movement

Not a Unifying Move

—from the Durham SUN
Durham, as a community and as a region of better than average relation, north or south, has been put "on the spot." Whatever the outcome of the developments of yesterday and today, Durham is not going to be a happier city. Undoubtedly, most of those who participated regard themselves as dedicated. Yet, whatever the logic of their position, it is doubtful if the closings have advanced any cause of the Negroes, have contributed anything constructive to racial relations in North Carolina, have inspired any interracial friendship or have done anything to bring whites and Negroes into any area of greater understanding.

From the community standpoint whatever may be said for the militant approach, it is unlikely that civic unity is being served. Perhaps those most concerned with the performance may regard it as beside the point, but if any of them are of Durham and have any stake in Durham they can reflect that Durham's reputation will not be brightened.

A COMPLICATED CUSTOM

—from the Raleigh NEWS AND OBSERVER
Nothing is so clear as the interwoven place of the South in America. Some regret that. It is a fact. And nothing has so emphasized that in recent days as the wave of sit-down of Negro students at the lunch counters of chain stores.

The situation which may result in simple angers is highly complex. The Woolworth stores, against which the first moves were made to undertake to follow "local customs," ye Woolworth is a name which makes its mercantile appeal in every section of America, in New York as well as North Carolina. It has 2,000 stores across the nation, 200 of which are in the South. Also, it is a chain of stores which by the very nature of it appeals to the patronage of limited means all over America, many of whom are Negroes.

The "local custom" which has been followed by these and other stores in North Carolina eagerly welcomes Negro trade at all counters but one. Furthermore, at that counter where food is served, Negroes have been served

standing up, but not sitting down. The distinction may make sense in "custom."

Perhaps the supposition was that the Negro who purchased standing up was bringing the food to take to others. That gave clearance to his presence as a servant. But the Negro, sitting down and eating where he sat, assumed the position of a guest.

But an odd "guest." In effect, he was cordially invited to the house but definitely not to the table. And to say the least, this was complicated hospitality. As a very natural result, the action of the Negroes has been embarrassing to the stores which are not merely ready but eager to serve Negroes in most stores but not in southern ones. Serving Negroes, sitting down, in the South will offend some white trade; not serving them may result in the loss of Negro trade elsewhere. Indeed, in stores which are southern in ownership and operation, this furore in one department raises the question as to whether they want the business of Negroes in others.

The whole business is an unhappy one, but it's basic question is one of mercantile policy, not public policy. There is no law in North Carolina ordering the segregation of lunch counters. In the past the courts have held in this state that a man in business could serve what customers he pleased, but in this case the embarrassing customers were invited to the stores. And that presents a different situation from that of a restaurant which sets itself up to serve only one race or another making clear its choice.

This business is causing headaches in New York and irritations in North Carolina. And somehow it resolves around the old saying that you can't have your chocolate cake and eat it too.

A WARNING IN THE SIT-DOWN

—from the Durham MORNING HERALD
Race relations in Durham reached a dangerous low in the sit-down protest against the practice of some stores not to serve Negroes at their lunch counters. Undoubtedly alert watchfulness by the city police prevented a degeneration into violence.

That possibility should arouse Durham out of any complacency it may have in the area of race relations. It is particularly disturbing in the light of the acceptance of desegregation on the urban buses. It is likewise disturbing in the light of the voluntary move by the City Board of Education in desegregating the hitherto white senior and junior high schools and the public acceptance of the move.

And difficult as is the assignment, racial issues ought to be resolved in good will, or the community in which both races must live will be unnecessarily torn and divided. The good of the whole, which includes both races, ought to be put uppermost.

A Problem For the Stores To Decide

—from the Charlotte OBSERVER
Although no question of public policy or individual legal rights is involved, the issue posed by Negro college students at a number of lunch counters in the Carolinas is full of both irony and illogic.

In the absence of laws on the subject proprietors of private eating establishments in North Carolina are free to serve or not to serve anyone who presents himself.

Many North Carolinians undoubtedly regret that Negro col-

"We endorse and accept the offer of the Human Relations Committee, made public on February 10, 1960, to establish communication between the opposing parties." The agency that will act for North Carolina College in this matter is a joint committee of members of the Student Welfare Committee, Mr. D. G. Sampson, Chairman; and the Student Government, Mr. Robert Kornegay, President."

Three Tarheels To Attend N. Y. College Talks

Three delegates from North Carolina will attend the UNCF Alumni Conference in Detroit, Feb. 27 and 28. They are Harlee H. Little, president, General Alumni Association, Livingstone College (Salisbury); Enoch P. Rochester, Livingstone student and president, UNCF National Pre-Alumni Council; and Moses S. Belton, alumni secretary, Johnson C. Smith University (Charlotte).

Martin S. Hayden, executive editor of The Detroit News, will be the principal speaker at the Conference meeting, Sunday afternoon, Feb. 28. Walter Washington, president, UNCF National Alumni Council, announced.

The 14th annual UNCF Alumni Conference will be held in Detroit, Feb. 27 and 28 at the Veteran's Memorial Building.

Hayden is noted as a Washington political analyst and also has a distinguished record as a foreign correspondent.

lege students have forced this issue in several Tar Heel cities at this particular period in the state's history of amicable race relations.

But there is nothing that the state or the municipalities can do should do about it, except to preserve order.

For this is essentially a matter between individual stores and their customers. And each store will have to work out its policy as it chooses, with due regard to the tinkle of the cash register.

We Ask Your Company to Eliminate Bias, A&T College Students Request Woolworth Stores

Following is a text of the letter sent to the Woolworth stores by the Greensboro students who started the wave of sit-down strikes in that city on Feb. 2. The letter is signed by the "Students Committee for Justice," an organization which sprang from the spontaneous demonstration by A&T College, Bennett and Women's College students.

Dear Mr. President:
We the undersigned are students at the Negro College in the city of Greensboro. Time and time again we have gone into Woolworth's Stores of Greensboro, N. C. We have bought thousands of items at hundreds of the counters in your store. Our money being accepted without rancor or discrimination and with politeness towards us. When at a long counter just three feet away our money is not acceptable because of the color of our skins. This letter is no being written with resentment toward your company, but with a hope of understanding of the

gross inequality and discrimination placed upon one American against another American who happens, by the will of God, to be of another color and yet belong to the same human race. How long must these injustices continue? How long must our patience be tried? How can a nation who professes to be a great bulwark of Christianity and democracy be so hypocritical on a matter of such gross discrimination as denying the rights of an American citizen while giving the same rights to other Americans.

All we are trying to convey to you is that we have arrived at the crossroads of world affairs being brought closer and closer to home because of our nation being on trial in the eyes of the world. We are enlisting students of all races and creeds in our country to a passive resistance movement to show that we as Americans must arise to this crisis and eliminate this gross miscarriage of justice. We are asking that your company take a firm stand to eliminate this discrimination. We firmly believe that God will give courage and guidance in the solving of this

problem.
Sincerely yours,
STUDENTS EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
Ezell Blair, Jr.
David Price
Joseph McNeill
David Richmond
Franklin McCain

Technique Condemned

The president of the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History and an outstanding scholar in American history, Dr. Wesley scored the stereotype of the Negro which has been formulated and maintained to justify keeping him in an inferior position.

As means of combatting the concept of Negro inferiority, Dr. Wesley urged protests both organized and individual to the concept, or a high standard of achievement for the individual Negro.

WHAT FOOLS WE MORTALS BE

—from the Greensboro DAILY NEWS
North Carolina is fast approaching a major tizzy over stand up and sit-down lunches in the five-and-dime stores.

The issue, of course, is serious. But isn't it also a trifle ludicrous? If some Man from Mars came winging down and observed the human race inflamed because certain customers in dime stores could get food sitting down and others could get it only standing up, he would think we were stark loony. North Carolina has too much common sense 'oo get hot and bothered about such fool lishness.

Just consider, for a moment what fools we mortals be!

Until all the current hurrah dies down, why don't the variety stores simply serve everybody standing up and then gradually provide five or 10 minute sitting down periods, if somebody gets tired? Or, why not removable rope between certain sections, with a little curtain on it to start things off, and later, when all customers find they really aren't harmed quietly remove it?

The sad truth about all this turmoil is apparent: It could have been avoided. If the management had welcomed the handful (only three or four) on the first day and given them double portions of everything, they would have departed happy. Their friends might have come but not en masse.