

## LOCAL EDITORIAL COMMENT

### Welcome Rishel

The sun shines a little brighter today in Franklin County. The announcement that the J. K. Rishel Furniture Company has elected to locate a plant here adds sunshine to the entire area. Any new industry is always welcome. One of the stature of Rishel is doubly so.

The Industrial Development Commission and the Director plus many others were instrumental in coaxing Rishel to locate here. The announcement shows that the Commission has been busily—if quietly—at work.

Additional payrolls will mean a

more prosperous economy for our area. From this all will benefit. But the other advantages need to be noted as well. New people, new ideas and jobs to keep our people at home are as important as any monetary returns the location might bring.

Alf together today's announcement is a most important one. Franklin people welcome Rishel and stand ready to aid and assist in any way they can to make the decision to locate here pay off.

Welcome Rishel. We're glad to have you.

### Going On To Long

Tobacco may not be a sacred cow as Governor Bob Scott says, but in this section of the state, it is a very important product. It is grossly unfair when the Governor intimates that tobacco has not been willing to carry its fair share of the load. Where, one might ask, does the Governor think the millions paid in taxes each year by the tobacco farmer come from?

A few weeks ago, the Governor's newly appointed Highway Commission chairman, Mr. Lauch Faircloth of Clinton, put his foot in his mouth when he announced that he might be doing something roadwise for the East. The cry from the Piedmont could be heard world wide. Governor Scott immediately came to the rescue. In no uncertain terms, he announced that Mr. Faircloth did not mean what he had said, even if he had said it.

Now, turning to the General Assembly, the pattern becomes somewhat more distinct. Two Mecklenburg County representatives in the House have gotten bills into the hopper quite early for a tax on cigarettes. Maybe Charlotte doesn't share in the tobacco problems which plague the East.

But, most observers know this isn't

the case. Mecklenburg has a one-cent optional sales tax and the county likes that. It is working very well. Mecklenburg doesn't want anybody to rock the boat. It doesn't want a state-wide sales tax with proceeds going to local governments. This could affect their own bonanza. So they send up heavy smoke signals on a cigarette tax to cover the obvious. Mecklenburg has what no other county in the state has—a source of additional revenue.

No one doubts that North Carolina will need more money if the Scott programs are to be carried out. But, some one should take a look at the motives behind the tobacco tax. It should not be designed to protect the large population centers of the state at the expense of the Eastern tobacco growers. This type of thing has been going on for too long already.

If additional taxes must come, there is no more equitable way to raise them than through the sales tax. In this manner, everybody pays according to his ability to pay. Tobacco should not be made a scapegoat for Mecklenburg and Forsyth counties, nor any other special section of the state.

## WHAT OTHERS ARE SAYING

### Children Are The Victims

Mount Olive Tribune

Recently in these columns The Tribune expressed concern over the fact that many children in one eastern North Carolina county were not attending school, as required by state law. Not only were they not in school, they were actively participating in marches and other events seemingly designed to disrupt the normal routine of other citizens.

Why, we asked, had no legal actions been taken to see that parents sent their children to school, in obedience to the law?

Now we have found at least a partial answer to the questions: One reason the State of North Carolina has not pursued a course of action which required Hyde county parents to keep their children in school was because over in Harnett county the State, through one of its truant officers, and school officials, are busy prosecuting one family—Mr. and Mrs. Vernon

McLamb, of Route 2, Dunn, for not sending their little daughter to school. McLamb had been warned that if he did not have his daughter in school by January 15, legal action would be taken against him. He didn't, and they did.

In the meantime Hyde parents are ignored in their obvious disregard of the same law under which the Harnett county parent is prosecuted. This is not to minimize the error of Mr. and Mrs. McLamb, nor to over-emphasize the errors of parents involved in the Hyde county school boycott. But the incidents do serve to illustrate that the law is not being applied to all our citizens alike.

Incidentally, nothing is being said, or done, apparently, about the greatest error of all — the theft of educational opportunities from the children involved. — CB.



'Don't you guys leave anything to imagination any more?'

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### School Situation Correspondence

To the Editor:

I am enclosing three letters that could be of interest to the county and to our schools.

The letters are self-explanatory; and I hope that other interested citizens will join my efforts and "bombard" Mr. Hubbard's office with their views, elaborating on the fact that too much Federal intervention is no good for a democratic government which is supposed to be "for the people and by the people"!!!

Sincerely,  
Lucille M. Romero

President Richard M. Nixon  
The White House  
Washington, D. C. 20000

My Dear Mr. President:

When you were Vice-President, we lived in Bogota, Colombia, where my husband, Major Paul V. Romero 079058, was advisor to the Colombian Army. When you visited Bogota, he was supposed to have been your interpreter if you had needed him. Prior to your visit, we viewed film at the U. S. Embassy of you and Mrs. Nixon visiting other countries... films made by the United States Information Service.

On this background, I hope that I am not being too presumptuous when I say that I feel that you are a friend, the only one that I feel can help us. And, it is in this vein, as well as your being our President, that I would like to ask you to take a personal look into my COUNTY and its educational problem.

My husband was killed in Lima, Peru in 1965. At the time, he was coordinator for the "Conference of American Armies, 1965". My five children and I were living in the Canal Zone, and upon his death we returned to my home, Franklin County, North Carolina to live. Probably we could "move out" in order to settle my own family's problem but I refuse to do that without doing what I can that might help the situation that we have here.

It seems that if something is not done soon, Mr. President, our county school system will be destroyed. The Justice Department and the NAACP have asked the court to imprison the members of our Board of Education for contempt. What more can they ask? Since September our schools are 100% integrated and peacefully. Classes have been de-segregated; divided into groups based on the student's reading ability. I have been pleased with this system, and having five children in the system (2 in higher group, 2 in more or less medium group and 1 in low) I believe that my family could be called average.

For your information, I am enclosing newspapers and in the following paragraphs I will attempt to give you a

resume up to this point:

Until the U. S. Supreme Court ruling in 1954, the Franklin County Board of Education operated a constitutional dual school system. From 1954 until the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the county operated under North Carolina law—the Pupil Assignment Act.

Under the 1964 Act, the Board established a plan to desegregate its school in two years. The plan was approved by the Department of Health, Education and Welfare on August 31, 1965, with full agreement between HEW and the Board to desegregate four grades in the school year 1965-66; followed by desegregating all grades in 1966-67.

With school opening a week away (1965-66), parents of some thirty children applied for schools they had not been attending and without adhering to the criteria for such transfer as set by the Board in the HEW approved plan. These Negro pupils sought to attend grades not being desegregated. In accordance with provisions in the county plan, the requests were denied. In December, 1965, these parents, through the New York office of the NAACP (filed charges of discrimination against the Board. They were joined in the suit in January, 1966, by the U. S. Justice Department.

On February 24, 1966, the District Court denied the plaintiff's plea for an injunction and ruled the Board had acted in good faith.

On July 27, 1966, the District Court upheld the county's Freedom of Choice plan.

On August 18, 1967, the District Court killed the Freedom of Choice plan. Denies Stay. Appealed to Fourth Circuit.

On April 9, 1968, Fourth Circuit upheld lower court and affirmed the decision. A re-hearing was filed and later denied.

The Board operated the schools in full compliance with the directions of the courts.

In 1968, a hearing on the Board's proposed plan for total integration of the schools. The District Court ruled that it had ordered not a plan, but action for the 1968-69 school term. This was directly contrary to the written wording of the order of August 17, 1967.

The Justice Department, the NAACP and the Board were ordered to present plans. Court selected the Justice Department plan and ordered full and total integration of all schools. Efforts by the Board to show that the far-reaching order and the shortage of time before scheduled school opening was not in the interest of sound education fell on deaf ears.

the Board had complied, it said the question was moot.

Overcrowding, teachers out of field, a ratio of near 60-40 Negro, and the abandonment of the school system by some 700 students had played havoc with a once sound educational system.

Even though fully and totally integrated—accomplished in nine days—the Justice Department and the NAACP now claim the system is not being operated to their liking and have asked the court to imprison the Board of Education for contempt.

The charges are denied by the Board and have been labeled a form of harassment.

Since January, 1965, when the Civil Rights Act took effect, the Board of Education has had very little time to work toward the betterment of the school system. Teachers, by the score, have resigned. Children by the hundreds have enrolled in private schools, disrupting homes and bringing hardships to those who can ill afford the expense of private schools.

The question of segregated schools has long been settled here in Franklin County. It has been accepted. However, the continued efforts on the part of the Justice Department to take over total control of the schools has caused a stir unlike any ever witnessed in this county.

WITHOUT ONE SINGLE VISIT TO ANY ONE OF THE MANY SCHOOLS IN THE SYSTEM, the federal government has listened to some unknown disgruntled citizen and condemned a duly elected Board and threatened said Board with imprisonment. The five members of the Board and the Superintendent of Schools are men of outstanding character. All six served with distinction in World War II. One Board member and the Superintendent have been chosen "Man of the Year"; the Board attorney and one Board member have been honored as "Tareel of the Week" and all are devoted citizens, working to better their communities.

These are the men the Justice Department wants jailed because some irresponsible citizens have a beef although no effort has been made to determine the validity of the complaint.

We are integrated, students and parents have accepted it... what else can be expected of our School Board??? If you would just stop and take a personal look at our problems at this moment, it could avert this same type of harassment to other school boards by the Justice Department and NAACP. We need to be heard!!

Maybe our small county isn't a "drop in the bucket" compared to the whole area of the United States, but we are proud to be a part of America, and we feel that our children and their education will have far-reaching effects on the future of our country and their education is at



I went to that there tournament last week. I ain't figured why yet, but when I got in that long line of cars and couldn't get out that's where I ended up. Next thing I knowed I was being shoved against a window and the man was saying how many? "How many?" I asked. "How many does it look like", I said pointing to me.

Well he gimma a ticket after awhile. 'Course I had to give him all the money I had to get it. But, you only live once... so I decided to go on in and see what all the fuss was about.



No sooner had I found me a seat than I run smack dab into trouble. There I was... minding my own business... studying on how I got there... puffing a way at my little cigar... when this big ole man come up and said, "Can't you read?"

"Well... if its any of yore business I'd say I'm a pretty good reader. Finished the fourth grade and got a certificate to prove it at home." He got red in the face. I could tell I got to him with that little dilly. Some folks just can't stand for nobody else to have a education. I didn't say it to him, but I was thinking I bet he didn't git that high in school.

"You can't smoke in here, buddy," he said. "Well now", I said. "Whose gonna stop me?" I ought'n said that. I could tell he didn't like that little dilly. Not one bit. He got red in the face and he studded something which I didn't quite catch. Guess it was best I didn't.

I finally stomped out my cigar... but it won't that I was afraid or nothing. He won't no teacher. He didn't have no right to yell at me in front of all them people. I didn't care if he was bigger'n me. He didn't scare me none. I put the thing out because of that big gun he was wearing and that black jack he was a totin'. I'm here to tell you... they got some mighty big safety patrol at that school and I ain't overly fond of them blue uniforms them kids wear. And besides they're kinda big for their ages.

I got propped up. I put my feet on the bench in front of me and I was ready for the main show. A bunch of half dressed youngins was running up and down and jumping and yelling chasing after a rubber ball but I didn't pay no attention to all that mess. I kept waiting for the show to start.

Two old men wearing prison stripes kept trying to chase them off the floor. I guessed they was trying to clear the place for the show. They kept blowing little whistles... and the youngins would stop and they'd all walk to the other end of the thing and one would git to show off. He'd stand there all by hisself and throw that ball up in the air. One time one them hit a little fish net somebody had hung up to dry. That sure is a curious place to dry fish nets.

By then one of the heavy weight women decided to sit on my propped up feet. She must a bought two tickets. She took up two seats. I couldn't git my feet up fast enough and the little bitty man with her give me a hard look. I couldn't help it if he couldn't keep his woman off my feet.

After awhile I got tired of all the waiting and left. Never did see the show. But them youngins kept yelling and running and jumping and chasing that rubber ball. I could tell some of them didn't want it after they got it. They kept throwing to somebody else. One of them threw it at me sitting way up there in the stands. I don't think it was anything personal. I didn't even know the boy.

I'm going back one night before long. I'm still curious as to what happened to the show.

Sincerely,  
Lucille M. Romero

Mrs. Lucille M. Romero  
Route 3, Mitchellville  
Louisburg, North Carolina

Dear Mrs. Romero:

I applaud your efforts! And, of course, I wish you every success and pledge my support in every proper way.

It was thoughtful of you to make available to me a copy of your letter to President Nixon. As you may know, I have visited in the Franklin County schools and am fully aware of the serious problems confronting school officials. I shall continue in the future as I have in the past to cooperate with them in every way I can.

Here is one place where the Nixon Administration can demonstrate quickly and clearly its attitude toward control of local affairs. I hope other concerned citizens will likewise express their views to the White House. I'll do all I can.

With kindest regards and best wishes, I am  
Sincerely,  
L. H. Fountain

Dear Mrs. Romero:

President Nixon asked me to thank you and to reply to your letter of January 30, 1969, in which you discussed the Franklin County desegregation situation.

As you indicated, Franklin County is desegregating under a Federal court order. Therefore, complaints regarding this matter fall within the primary jurisdiction of the U. S. Department of Justice.

In view of the above, your letter is being forwarded to Mr. Maceo W. Hubbard, Chief, Eastern Section, Civil Rights Division, Department of Justice, Washington, D. C., 20530, for reply to you.

Sincerely yours,  
Lloyd R. Henderson  
Education Branch Chief  
Office for Civil Rights

### Talks And Deaths

Saigon, South Vietnam - It was reported that about 8,000 United States servicemen were killed in South Vietnam while Americans and Vietnamese were talking in Paris about ways to get the peace talks started. Talks began May 13, 1968.

## The Franklin Times

Established 1870 — Published Tuesdays & Thursdays by

The Franklin Times, Inc.

Bickett Blvd. Dial GY6-3283 Louisburg, N. C.

CLINT FULLER, Managing Editor

ELIZABETH JOHNSON, Business Manager

Advertising Rates  
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NATIONAL EDITORIAL  
ASSOCIATION  
1969  
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SUBSCRIPTION RATES

In North Carolina:  
One Year, \$4.64; Six Months, \$2.83  
Three Months, \$2.06

Out of State:  
One Year, \$5.50; Six Months, \$4.00  
Three Months, \$3.50

Entered as second class mail matter and postage paid at the Post Office at Louisburg, N. C. 27549.