

SENATOR SAM ERVIN SAYS



MORGANTON—Anticrime legislation is sure to get more attention in the 90th Congress. Crime rates have continued to soar in recent months, and the National Crime Commission, which is conducting a study on the problem, reports that a great proportion of crime is not even reported in these rates.

Recommendations to curb crime often get bogged down in controversy. Congress has faced the situation for some time. The hope that the President expressed at the first meeting of the National Crime Commission in September, 1965, that crime will be banished has come to grips with the problem more recently. Congress came up with a long studied crime bill for the District of Columbia at the last session and passed it. It suffered a Presidential veto. Few now look for any easy solutions to crime.

Two Presidential commissions, one to study national and one to study District of

Columbia problems, have been working on anticrime recommendations for months. The recommendations of these commissions are certain to get much attention, but it is well to remember that almost everyone has an opinion about how to curtail crime. Congress, the President, and the Courts have been having a say about the subject since it became a national issue.

There is an overriding concern which it would be well to emphasize again. The truth is that recent Supreme Court rulings have been ruling out reliable evidence because the majority of the Court has disagreed with the way the police have gathered it. The latest step which the Court took in this direction came last June when the Miranda decision reversed state court convictions for kidnapping, rape, and robbery, and a federal court conviction for robbery. The majority opinion was on the ground that the convictions were based upon voluntary confessions made by the accused while they were being questioned by law enforcement officers who had them in custody.

As a result, law enforcement officers and the trial courts are experiencing more difficulty and oftentimes the impossibility of getting convictions against confessed criminals. Justice Harlan appraised a right the majority decision in the Miranda case when he declared in his dissenting opinion that "the decision of the court represents poor constitutional law and entails harmful consequences of the county at large."

The court decisions cannot be overlooked in any appraisal of the crime situation. They have erected artificial rules to protect the

accused on the theory that society needs little protection from criminals. Overridden is the fundamental purpose of criminal law which is to protect society against criminals. True, the law desires to avoid conviction of any innocent person, and establishes the legal presumption of innocence in favor of the accused at every stage of his trial. From time to time the law has erected many safeguards to insure that the accused has a fair trial. Until recently, however, it has not sought to erect barriers to the truth.

Formerly the courts relied on the judgment of the trial judge who performed the task of ruling on the admissibility of voluntary confessions. The artificial barriers set by the Supreme Court have imposed unnecessary burdens on law enforcement officers, the trial

courts and society. Law abiding citizens have rights, too, and I think it is time to secure those rights.

For this reason, I plan to reintroduce my proposed constitutional amendment to restore society's right to have greater protection from criminals who confess their guilt voluntarily in federal and state courts.

HONORED ON BIRTHDAY

Mrs. Mary B. Keaton was recently honored on her 79th birthday at a party given by her children at the home of her daughter and son-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. Fred Mathews of Windsor, Va.

The house was beautifully decorated in keeping with the Christmas season.

The table was lovely with a cut work cloth, candles and decorations. The centerpiece was a beautiful red and white four-tiered birthday cake.

Those enjoying the celebration were Mrs. Mary Keaton, the honoree, of Hertford; Mr. and Mrs. Fred Mathews, Sr., Windsor, Va.; Mr. and Mrs. Fred Mathews, Jr., and children, Kay, Betty, Fred and Marty, Suffolk, Va.; Mr. and Mrs. Tommy Mathews and son, John, of Suffolk, Va.; Mr. and Mrs. Ed Benton, Mr. and Mrs. Floyd Benton and sons, Doug and Greg, Mr. and Mrs. John White and sons, John and Mike, Mr. and Mrs. Howard Mathews, Mr. and Mrs. Dick Long and daughter, Judy, Bob Keaton and children, Don and Bobbie, Mr. and Mrs. Elmer Wood and Lee Brabble, all of Hertford; Miss Blenda Epley; Valdes, N. C.; Mr. and Mrs. J. W. Paul and children, Jimmy and Cathy and Mrs. Lottie Paul of Amelia, Va.; Mr. and Mrs. Seth Spivey, Richmond, Va., and Mr. and Mrs. E. E. Britt and daughters, Linda and Patsy, Suffolk, Va.

CIRCLES MEET

The Irabelle Coleman Circle of the Hertford Baptist Church will meet Monday night, January 9, at the home of Mrs. J. H. Towle, Sr., with Mrs. C. E. Pritchard as hostess.

The Bessie Pritchard Circle will meet Monday night, January 9, with Mrs. Carroll Williams.

CARD OF THANKS

I wish to express my thanks and appreciation to all who kindly remembered me with their prayers, visits, flowers, gifts and cards while I was in the hospital. May the Lord bless each one for their kindness. I will always be grateful.

Sincerely,
MRS. W. M. BYRUM.



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