



The NEW BERN

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New Bern's busiest telephone for weeks now has been, as almost everyone knows, 637-3159. Dial day or night, and the odds are overwhelming that you'll get a busy signal.

If you manage to complete your call, you'll hear a "Let Freedom Ring" message criticizing the nation's anti-poverty program. Since the taped remarks can easily be traced to the mailing address given, those who object to such a crusade can't halt it.

So long as there's no obscenity, no profanity and no threats, use of the telephone in this manner is legal. False statements could bring court action against the promoters of the venture, but it's a pretty good bet all material is documented, as claimed.

It's certainly no secret that The Mirror has, from time to time, pointed to flaws in the local anti-poverty program, Craven Operation Progress. However, for the sake of the record, we are in no way connected with "Let Freedom Ring."

Like the rest of you, we didn't know it was being inaugurated here, and didn't hear the first message until several days after it was heard by hundreds of other New Bernians. And in case you may wonder, the small "Let Freedom Ring" ads appearing in this issue of The Mirror have been bought and paid for.

We are telling you these things as a prelude to the remainder of what we've got to say on this matter. In our considered opinion, the sponsors of the program are telling the truth, or a fairly accurate "half truth" when they claim that more than 5,000 calls were made during the early weeks of the crusade.

And if anyone doubts that the interest is far from temporary, they can alter their opinion by trying to reach the number. In our own case, we dialed more than twenty times this week before our call went through. The messages, taped locally by New Bern citizens who obviously aren't professional broadcasters, could be more polished. It's debatable, however, whether a smoother presentation would be more effective.

Rest assured that those who are reaping a financial bonanza from the administration of Craven Operation Progress don't regard "Let Freedom Ring" with enthusiasm. Whatever the impact of the tapes may be, they aren't calculated to bring joy to the inner sanatorium of COP on George Street.

Inevitably, one might wonder whether some of the thousands of calls being made to 637-3159 are efforts of those who find the gimmick distasteful to jam the line. The possibility exists, of course, but real or imagined, there hasn't been a tie-up sufficient to discourage persistent callers.

In our opinion, the great majority of those making bonafide calls don't have to be sold on what "Let Freedom Ring" is trying to put across. Like New Bern's aldermen (four out of five) and the board of education of New Bern's Public Schools, a tremendously high percentage of the citizens in New Bern and Craven County can't go along

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IN PENSIVE MOOD—"Once in love with Amy, always in love with Amy." That's the theme song of ageless Ray Bolger, who starred as the Scarecrow in "The Wizard Of Oz" many years before Amy Lawrence, daughter of Russell and Ruby Lawrence, was born. Amy is much too young to be in love with anyone, but certainly Ray Bolger would recognize her charm if he chanced to meet her. Easter has come and gone,

leaving the young lady somewhat wistful, but no feminine heart can remain sad very long when its owner has an outfit as fetching as this to wear. Spring is here, and every sun caressed street extends an invitation not only to Amy but to those of us who look older, feel older and are older. Thumb your nose at Father Time, join a robin in a duet, and be glad it's April again.—Photo by Wray Studio.