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If you want to remain on good terms with New Bern Mayor Ethridge S. Ricks, don't remind him that he failed to show up at City Hall during several hours of widespread local rioting on the night of Dr. Martin Luther King's assassination.

Elsewhere in North Carolina, in cities where violence erupted, the Mayor lost little time in hurrying to his office. There were up to the minute conferences with law enforcement authorities, as constant reports on fast moving events came in by police radio, as they did here.

Realizing the importance of keeping the public informed, city officials throughout the State not only cooperated with the press in the performance of its duty, but enlisted the services of newsmen to dispel wild rumor and let citizens know the facts.

Raleigh's Mayor, who has won plaudits for the way he handled the matter in the Capital City, saw to it that reporters reached the scene of disturbances in order that an accurate picture could be given a worried and frightened public that had a right and a need to know how things stood.

Any information that New Bern's Mayor might have furnished the press or anyone else on this grim occasion would have been limited to what he possibly learned by calling City Hall now and then.

As a matter of fact, the following afternoon at a special meeting of the Mayor and New Bern's Board of Aldermen, which the press was not alerted to cover, Mr. Ricks clearly displayed his line of reasoning.

Obviously irritated at the presence of this editor, who got wind of the unannounced meeting and showed up uninvited, Mr. Ricks took personal affront when we mentioned that some of those present were safe at home the previous night, and were still not aware of the seriousness of the situation.

Bristling with indignation, the Mayor said, "I didn't have any business being out, and I don't think you had any business being out either." To which we replied in phrases less than gentle that as a member of the news media we most certainly had business, in the public's interest, to keep tab on what was happening.

Mr. Ricks also said that the City administration had detailed plans, formulated weeks in advance, to handle the sort of situation that confronted New Bern policemen and firemen.

Without questioning the existence of such plans, it is interesting to note that they did not include advance passage of an ordinance authorizing the Mayor to call a curfew.

Mimeographed copies of a proposed ordinance were handed out at the meeting following Thursday night's first rioting, and as we understood it from the City Attorney, the proposed ordinance was a duplicate of the Raleigh ordinance, as was the wording of the proposed curfew. It was our understanding that both were obtained from Raleigh authorities the morning after the first night's rioting.

If this tardy action was a

(Continued on page 8)



J. Layne

**WITH A CAMERA**—Believe it or not, what you see here isn't a drawing of New Bern's beautiful First Presbyterian Church, but a photograph of the impressive white frame edifice. Or to be exact, it is the final result of repeated photographing of the original photograph and subsequent ones. Our good friend and subscriber, Jack Layne, a talented local photographer

who recently set up business here, went to great pains to come up with this remarkable picture of a familiar landmark. It just goes to show you what a creative cameraman with the sensitivity of a true artist can do, when he is in the mood to try something different. Look closely and you'll see an automobile in the lower right corner.