

# WINSTON-SALEM CHRONICLE

NDUBSI EGEMONYE  
Publisher

CHARLES T. BYRD, JR.  
Business Editor

ISAAC CARREE, II  
Advertising Manager

ERNEST H. PITT  
Editor-in-Chief

Winston-Salem, N.C.

Saturday Jan. 22, 1977

## The Prison Problem

A top corrections official in Oregon and Florida has accepted the Secretary of Corrections post given him by Gov. James Hunt.

Amos Reed, 61, described his duties as being in "a most difficult arena" citing overcrowding as the most pressing problem facing his tenure. North Carolina's prison system was built to hold only 10,000 inmates but today houses well over 13,000. This, however, is but one problem.

Another problem area that should be of particular interest to blacks, and one that we hope the new secretary will address himself to, is the



Amos Reed

soaring rate of imprisonment of blacks, particularly black men in the state prison system.

A study recently released by the North Carolina Social Research Corporation in Raleigh, N.C. provided some very interesting statistics on imprisonment trends of blacks in this state.

The study indicates that:

4% of North Carolina's black men between 26 and 30 are in state prisons. Rates of imprisonment for black men in North Carolina peak at this age interval, although the rates of imprisonment suffered by black men over virtually the entire adult life span are very much higher than rates of imprisonment suffered by white men in North Carolina.

Rates of imprisonment for black male North Carolinians were found to be over 5 times as high as rates for white males, in general. Rates of imprisonment for black men from the age of 17 until the age of 45 were found to be higher than even the peak rate for white men. The peak rate

of imprisonment for white men was found to be about 1%. The peak rate for white men appears to be at the age of 20, after which the rate gradually declines.

The rate of imprisonment for black men does not begin to decline until about the age of 30 -- in contrast to the white rate.

The study suggests there is a need for legislatively mandated research into the question of whether blacks and whites receive equal justice in North Carolina. The study also suggests there is a need for legislatively mandated research into the question of whether North Carolina's rates of imprisonment are unnecessarily high -- for blacks and whites.

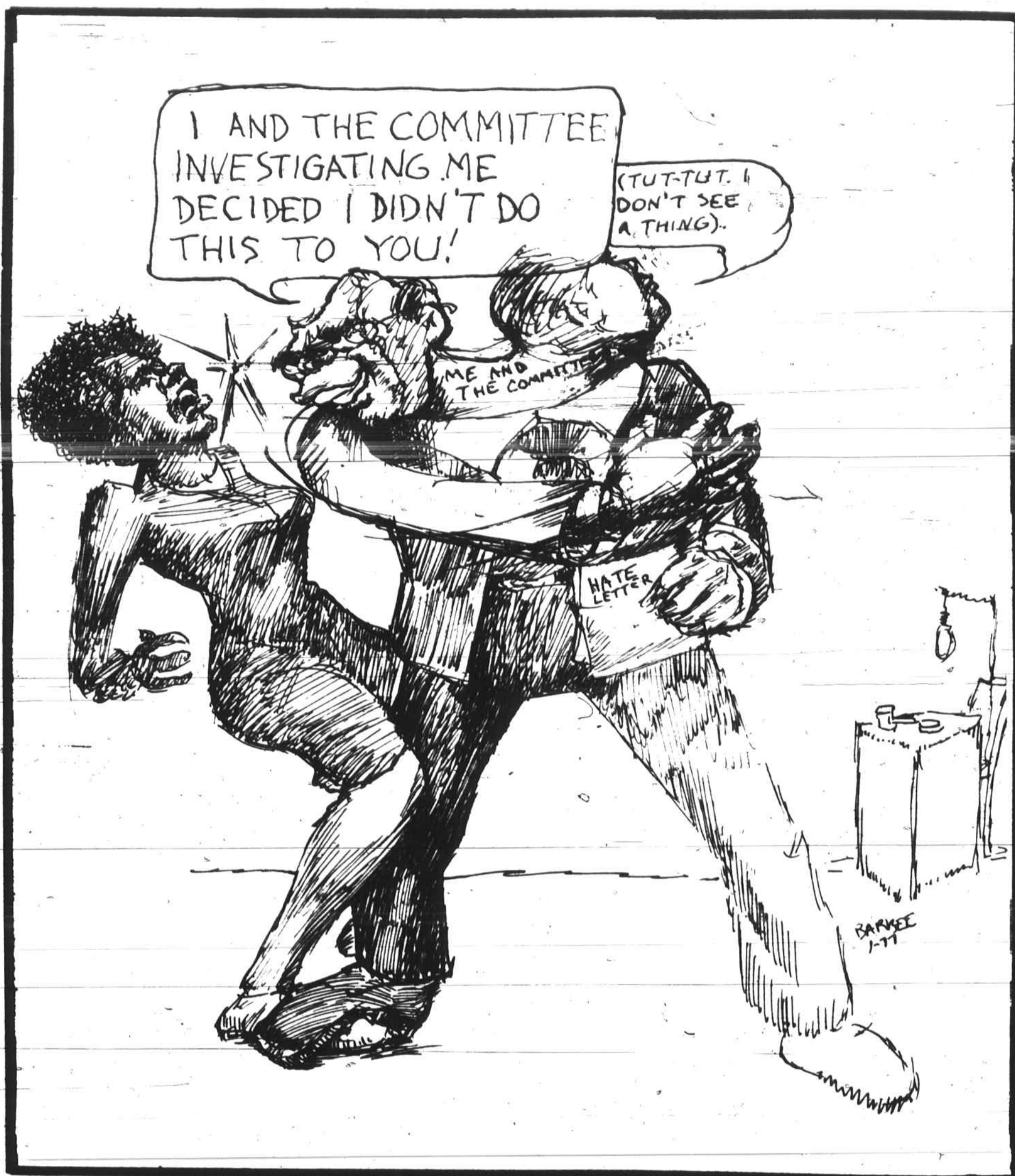
Here in Forsyth County, according to Correction Superintendent J.V. Turlington, the black/white breakdown of the prison population from the county contributed to the overall prison population is about 60% black and 40% white. He said Forsyth has so far contributed about 500 people to the prison population.

The study also shows that Forsyth ranks eighth in the top ten counties in North Carolina with the highest rate of imprisonment for black men in the state.

Jeff Williams, Director of Research and Evaluation for the State Department of Corrections, said the study was accurate and "nothing new" to the personnel in his office. He said also that while the study is accurate and complies generally with the findings of his department, it does not give any real indication of why imprisonment trends appear as they do.

He said anyone reading the study may draw conclusions that may not be necessarily accurate. "From the study," he said, "one may assume that blacks are being discriminated against, or commit serious crimes and more of them than whites." He said he does not believe that reverse discrimination may be at work where blacks

See Prison, Page 13



## BLACK EMPOWERMENT

By Dr. Nathaniel Wright, Jr.

the death rate for black professionals is almost twice as great from heart diseases or hypertension as for whites.

This stems from the fact that, if a black man is 58, he is really much older because the white world puts twice as many pressures -- or even more -- upon those of us who are black. Black people, for example, in our American society are defined as to who they are and what roles they are to play by every white person in whose presence we stand.

Thus, if we meet 1000 white people in a day, in a week or in a month, we have had to be 1000 or more different role-players or different people. That's

like playing a perpetual game of hop-scotch; it's simply too much jumping.

Recently there came across my desk a beautifully written biography of a quietly humble and capable black man named Edward Frasier Kennell.

There was nothing extraordinary about his life; that is, there was little that many young people could not aspire to. The highest office he ever held was that of Commissioner of Urban Housing in the adopted city of his adult life. The particular title he bore was high-sounding since he was denied being Public Housing director, simply because he was black.

Edward Kennell died at the age of 58, also not out of the ordinary, since

It makes us sick with all kinds of things. Listen to this partial listing below.

It gives us heartache . . . since we can't "be ourselves" like we would like to be. It raises our high blood pressure, which makes our insurance rates higher or makes many of us . . . like myself . . . completely unmeasurable through normal means. It increases our death rates, jail rates, murder rates, suicide rates . . . and our unemployment rates.

Being black means bearing an awesomely heavy load. We can't escape that. But we can set some all-too-modest limits upon what white America does to us . . . and to our black sisters and brothers.

Edward Kennell spent practically all his life doing just that.

Edward Frasier Kennell was born in the Back Bay section of Boston in 1916; and he had a relative who was a drug store owner whom everyone knew as "Shag" Taylor. "Shag" thought the world of his lively little relative; and because he was so active, always jumping about, Shag gave him a nickname which stuck with Edward Kennell for the rest of his life. Shag called him "Feets." So he became known as "old Feets Kennell."

### WINSTON-SALEM CHRONICLE

The Winston-Salem Chronicle is published every Thursday by the Winston-Salem Publishing Company, Inc. Suite 603 Pepper Building - 102 W. 4th St. Mailing Address: P.O. Box 3154, Winston-Salem, N.C. 27102. Phone: 722-8624. Second Class postage paid at Winston-Salem, N.C. 27102.

Subscription: \$8.32 per year payable in advance (N.C. sales tax included).

Opinions expressed by columnist in this newspaper do not necessarily represent the policy of this Paper