

Letters To The Editor

Group Denounces Castration

Dear Sir:

The incidents of incompetence and carelessness requiring the amputation of inmate Alphas Hill's penis are typical of the N.C. Prison system which is staffed and run by inhumane and barbaric individuals who care nothing for the lives and welfare of the prisoners who have been entrusted to their care.

We hold the State of North Carolina and the Department of Corrections responsible for the incompetence of Dr. John Rhodes (the attending physician who did so little attending) for this is just one more instance of the criminally negligent medical treatment in the prisons.

Last June 18 William McLaughlin, inmate at Wagram Prison camp, collapsed and died after being refused medical treatment for three weeks. Only after he was in a coma did the prison system see fit to transfer him to the Central Prison Hospital Unit. Joe Wright and the Rev. Ben Chavis of the Wilmington 10 have been subjected to denials of treatment by private

physicians in the last year.

These incidents typify the sort of 'medical care' the Department of Corrections provides. Denial or the threat of denial of medical treatment is used as a form of intimidation of inmates in order to harass and frighten them into submission.

We demand a thorough investigation of the Alphas Hill incident by a Citizens Committee selected by the inmates themselves. Further, proper medical facilities must be established at every camp in the N.C. prison system. The state must cease to cut corners at the expense of inmates' health and lives. We demand that inmates be allowed access to private physicians if they wish to see them in order to avoid the John Rhodes of this world. Finally we demand that Dr. Rhodes, the physician whose incompetence and brutality led to the castration of Alphas Hill, be fired for his actions.

**N.C. Alliance Against
Racist and Political
Repression**

What About Ms. Ward

Dear Sir:

Were we so spent by "Roots" and "the Joan Little Case" that we failed to take proper note of what was happening to Charlene Ward? I believe that we were, and that there is a great need for someone to take an impartial look at her case and to right any wrong which this child suffered.

It took an all white jury which was selected in about an hour's time, less than 55 minutes to free L.C. Jester, Jr., a white, former Yadkin County Deputy Sheriff, charged with raping the 16 year old black girl in her jail cell.

The trial, recessed twice for the convenience of the court, was allowed to proceed without the presence of four key witnesses, inmates at the time of the incident, who had been subpoenaed, but failed to appear to testify. Nonetheless, Miss Ward's testimony demonstrated that she could not have known many points she related on the stand if the incidents had not taken place the way she claimed. A wet spot on the front of the defendant's pants shortly after the attack and the presence of seminal fluid in Miss Ward's sex organs corroborated her testimony.

It appears that the deciding factor in the case was Miss

Ward's reputation. Other factors emphasized by the defense were Miss Ward's inability to pin point the exact time of the attack (she had no watch or calendar), the introduction of some "altered" and "manufactured" correspondence, and the shocking surprise testimony that Mr. Jester is sexually impotent.

The jury was told: "you do not have to believe the evidence" but "consider the demeanor of the witness and the interests of the witnesses in the case." Also, to "find the defendant not guilty to paint white the black marks of the trial" and "to show that the community does not approve of such behavior as Miss Ward's."

Miss Ward was unable to afford private counsel and the district attorney appeared to apologize to the jury for his having to prosecute the case. No community group came to Miss Ward's defense.

An impartial investigation of this case will do much to dispell the notion which many hold that the justice one receives in the courts of our land is a measure of the number of dollars that one can muster.

**Very sincerely yours,
Charlie B. Hauser**

To Be Equal by Vernon E. Jordan Jr.

Sunbelt Vs. Snowbelt

There are the first glimmers of a new war between the states, this one an economic war. Voices are being raised about the way states in the south and west are growing fast while those in the east and central part of the country are growing slowly or slipping into decline.

The economic resurgence of the south illustrates this. Between 1970 and 1975 population there increased by 4.6 percent compared to a one percent rise in the north, while non-farm jobs increased by 16.7 percent compared to a measly 1.3 percent rise in the north.

Much of the new business boom in those states is due to cheap power, weak unions, tax concessions from state and local governments, and favorable weather.

But many people claim that the boom is encouraged by other forces too, especially federal favoritism in policies that take tax dollars from the north and speed them southward in the form of federal spending.

Many northern states are in "deficit," while sunbelt states

enjoy a high "surplus." The Great Lakes states, for example, sent \$62 billion to Washington in taxes, but got back only about \$43 billion in total federal spending there. Southern states, on the other hand, got back \$11.5 billion more in federal spending than they paid in taxes.

Those figures had tremendous impact in places like New York, Boston and Detroit, where fiscal problems have caused cutbacks in public services. And the impact was deepened when it became clear that much of the inflow of federal dollars to the Sunbelt is for defense spending -- army bases, shipyards, electronics and others.

The defense share of the total of all wages and salaries in the South and West is 15.6 percent, but in the Northeast and Midwest, it is 5.7 percent. Other sources of disparity include disproportionate federal funds going to public works projects like highways, and social security payments to northerners who migrated south.

So it's all shaping up as a

new economic war between the states, and that's a big mistake, for the sunbelt is not as rich as some would make out, while the north is not as poor. The facile assumptions that one region is getting fat while another is dying are with out basis.

The South, for example, is still behind other regions in per capita income. Yes, it is growing a lot faster than the rest of the country, but it starts from so far behind that current arguments on regional favoritism are flawed. A larger proportion of the nation's poor still lives in the South and there's little indication that the dramatic economic expansion has cut their numbers. The regional economic boom has not reached southern blacks, who still lag far behind other Americans in income and jobs.

Instead of arguing about where federal funds are spent it would be more fruitful to concentrate on who gets them and for what purpose.

With the exception of a handful of states, most of the country shares a need for

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