

Editorials & Comments

Hope For The School Board

By Hoyle H. Martin Sr.
Post Executive Editor

Almost since its birth in 1960, the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School Board has been in a state of chaos as a result of personality, ideological and philosophical differences. This problem reached the height of absurdity about 16 months ago when two board members allegedly came very close to a physical encounter in the parking lot of the Education Center.

In all fairness to those who served on the board during these nearly 16 years, it quite possibly could be argued that the personalities and management styles of the last three school superintendents (Craig Phillips, William Self and Rolland Jones), the turmoil of the 1960's and the pressure and strain of school desegregation may have contributed to the board's internal problems. Nevertheless, the board's inability to function as a cohesive unit, and its impatience with varying points of view, has left our school system with many problems that have arisen due almost exclusively to board failures.

Comments by some of the recently elected new school board members appear to reflect our views on the tumultuous character of past boards. For example, attorney Ward McKeithen, the leading vote-getter

in the runoff election last week, reportedly said after his 17,544 vote victory "We have a real opportunity to develop an atmosphere of greater harmony on the board...There is a good chance of having a kind of togetherness, or cohesion, that you want to have on a board...(Yet) we have a representation of many different viewpoints."

The other three new board members - Carrie Winters, Pat Lowe and Wade Fox - have echoed McKeithen's sentiments.

The Post sincerely hopes that the five holdovers from the previous board share the views expressed by their new colleagues. In fact, lacking a consensus on open-mindedness, harmony and respect for dissenting points of view, the new board will be hamstrung in its effort to rationally and objectively restore public confidence in the school board, work effectively with the interim four-member administrative team, reorganize its committees, select a new school superintendent and face confidently its many other new challenges.

We wish the new school board much success and we believe that Mr. McKeithen's comments indicate a good starting point toward that success.

Desegregation Works

"Desegregation works." That two word statement sums up the conclusion of a 10-month study of approximately 1,300 school districts across the nation conducted by the U.S. Civil Rights Commission.

It works, the Commission's study said because:

-The overwhelming majority (82 percent) of the desegregated school districts carried out the process peacefully and with little disruption.

-Black and white students have and are adjusting to desegregation "harmoniously" despite opposition in some cases from parents.

-Desegregation has not lowered the quality of education nor led to a massive exodus of white students.

The study points out further that in the over 400 school systems where desegregation was achieved without violence, the majority of the political, business and religious leaders supported the desegregation effort.

On the other hand, the Commission's report, blamed local officials for most of the resistance and disruption that has accompanied legal moves to implement busing in some areas, particularly in such cities as Boston and Louisville.

Under the title, "Fulfilling the Letter and Spirit of the Law," the

Commission's findings severely criticize President Ford's antibusing and antidesegregation efforts. The report argues that the President's plan to reduce busing and reduce the enforcement powers of the federal courts would hinder the legal efforts to end segregation in the nation's public schools.

The report says further that the only way "to bring the nation together on this issue is through a prompt, vigorous implementation of the constitutional right to equal educational opportunity." In conclusion, the Commission notes, "On balance...substantial progress is being made in the desegregation of our (nation's) schools."

The POST is happy to be able to say that despite some difficulties and initial fears by both black and white, the citizens of Mecklenburg County rose to the occasion and recognized the right of every child to an equal educational opportunity, therefore, we are among those in the report where it can be said that "...substantial progress is being made..." "Let us stay on the road to progress by keeping cool heads, a sense of reason and positive attitudes."

The POST wishes to salute our citizens for their recognition of what it means to be an American.

VOTE →

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REPORT FROM Washington

Natural Gas - The Lingering Crisis

By Jim Martin, 9th District Congressman

A recent news report from Washington about natural gas prices may have gone unnoticed by a majority of people in North Carolina. But its impact affects all of us either directly or indirectly; from the way we heat our homes, grow our food or do our jobs.

The report was that the courts have blocked a natural gas rate increase which had been granted by the Federal Power Commission. Natural gas has been in short supply for several years. In the Carolinas, the shortages were critical last year, threatening many jobs and the economy of the region. Fortunately, we had a mild winter requiring less gas for residential use; otherwise it would have been a very cold winter.

The natural gas shortage is worsening, and will continue to worsen with each passing year unless a major increase in gas prices is granted. I think the Federal Power Commission recognized this as a fact of life in a decision that was in the best interest of the consumer.

their actions in hearings before Congressional committees. Here it's ironic that while Members of Congress are critical of the FPC action, the majority in Congress is working not to solve the natural gas shortage, but to make it worse.

Those in Congress who oppose deregulation of natural gas are kidding the American people. They want you to think we can get more gas without paying more. It is well past the time to be realistic about the problem. When Congress keeps prices down for 20 years in an artificial manner, the reality is tough when it hits.

Those who cling to out of date prices ought to consider that drilling costs are up. In 1961, it cost \$17.60 per foot to drill for natural gas; today it costs \$34.11, or twice as much. As Commissioner Graham has pointed out in his letter to my office, "the farmer is already burdened with controls and regulations which discourage and hamper his food and fiber production." The farmer suffers from the same problems that plague other American businesses, too much regulation and government interference with an individual's right to make a living. It is not a surprise that

farmers feel pressed to abandon their operations.

I am sure a recent statement from OSHA telling farmers that wet manure is slippery was cause for chuckling on the part of those engaged in farming. The most recent proposal suggesting strategically placed privies around farms is anything but funny. What's more, to require that drinking water taps be separated from handwashing areas would, if extended to the house, make your kitchen sink illegal, on the farm or in the city. It is a shocking illustration of big brotherism at work.

There is also some good news in the works for farmers and other families with closely held businesses. A bill to increase the estate tax exemption has just been reported out of my committee on Ways and Means. In 1974, the estate tax law allowed an exemption of \$60,000 tax-free for any estate transfer at death. At the time, \$60,000 represented the land value of a modest sized family farm or the equity in a small family business. This encouraged keeping the business in the family. Today that value is closer to \$300,000.

TO BE EQUAL

Vernon E. Jordan Jr.

Kissinger's African Negotiations

Secretary of State Henry Kissinger's delicate negotiations with South Africa may help decide the future of Southern Africa - whether it reverts to majority rule peacefully, or is plunged into prolonged and bitter warfare.

As of this writing, Dr. Kissinger is trying to get South Africa's Prime Minister Vorster's aid in pressuring the minority white government of Rhodesia to grant majority rule, and to bring about majority rule in Namibia, currently illegally controlled by South Africa.

Vorster is faced with a tough situation. He's got black governments in bordering countries and his own government is facing serious black resistance.

The Kissinger visit to South Africa gives the Vorster regime a big boost, and the Secretary should demand that, as the price of his visit, South Africa's rulers release black political and union leaders and journalists now imprisoned. And he definitely should not leave South Africa without conducting extensive talks with blacks there, and he should visit the black township of Soweto if only to demonstrate America's concern with the plight of South Africa's blacks.

In his negotiations, Dr. Kissinger ought to be consulting closely with black African leaders and should enter into no agreement with South Africa that does not have their concurrence.

Dr. Kissinger should be commended for the political risks he's taking in trying to turn America's African policy around. His tilt to black Africa and to majority rule has led to strong attacks from right wingers still mourning the end of colonial rule.

To get a new, sounder African policy through, he's turning to black Americans for support.

This is a startling reversal of past practice. Before, nobody cared what blacks thought about foreign policy - our job was to die in foreign wars, not to be consulted about framing policies that led to those wars.

But before black people jump into the bandwagon, they'll want some assurances that they're not being taken for a ride. They'll need guarantees that America's African policy is genuinely based on friendship toward the emerging black nations, is designed to assist them to economic self-sufficiency, is geared to achieving majority rule in Southern Africa, and is aimed at ultimate undermining of apartheid.

Blacks aren't going to like such proposals as having their tax dollars go to Rhodesian whites in compensation for losing control of a government they never had a right to run in the first place. Why wave money at exploiters when it should be used to help the exploited?

And black support for foreign policy initiatives is directly dependent on how fast the State Department opens its ranks to black personnel. This most elitist of our federal institutions needs to hire many more blacks at all levels - and fast - if it expects black support for policy we haven't been allowed to help formulate.

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as i see it

"Campaign '76 - A Minority Report"

Editor's Note - Gerald O. Johnson's As I See It Column will not appear in the Post this week. Mr. Johnson is ill. His popular column will return when he returns to work.

The Democrats attacked President Ford for an "anti-Black, anti-people administration." The Republicans claim that Jimmy Carter is insensitive to the needs of Blacks, and that his now-famous "ethnic purity" statement was evidence of racism.

The Republicans attacked busing as a means of achieving integration in the schools. The Democrats supported it, and called Ford's opposition to busing a "blatant disregard" of the civil rights struggles of past years.

The Democrats called for the use of government as an employer of last resort. The Republicans attacked the idea as "spendthrift."

Eight Black and Hispanic leaders of the Republican and Democratic Parties talk about this year's campaign and the issues in two free-wheeling panel discussions on CAMPAIGN '76: A MINORITY REPORT, one-hour special produced by WNET-13, New York. Hosted by BLACK JOURNAL Executive Producer Tony Brown, CAMPAIGN '76: A MINORITY REPORT will be distributed nationally by the Public Broadcasting Service to its member stations, Sunday, October 3, 1976, 10:00 p.m. ET (Editors: Please check your local PBS station for correct area broadcast time).

Democratic participants in the program are: New York Democratic Congressman Herman Badillo, the only Puerto Rican member of Congress; Pennsylvania Secretary of State C. D'elores Tucker; Miriam Cruz, advisor to Chicago Mayor Richard Daley for Spanish-speaking affairs; and Bunky Clark, director of personnel for the Jimmy Carter campaign.

Republican participants are: Robert Brown, former special assistant to President Nixon; Reynaldo Maduro, deputy special assistant to President Ford; Stephanie Lee Miller, who was a Reagan delegate from California at the Kansas City Republican National Convention; and John Calhoun, special assistant to President Ford.

Democratic Congressman Badillo thinks Ford is going to "lose the election because President Ford believes that government shouldn't interfere...He doesn't belong in the 20th century, because if we're going to have a strong America, if we're going to have equality...it's not going to happen passively, it's going to happen because all of us work together." He attacked Ford's use of his veto power on social legislation.

Republican John Calhoun disagreed, and said that, "Blacks, as I travel around the country, are telling me that they haven't bought Jimmy Carter. There are some things about him that they just can't buy...for example, the ethnic purity statement." Calhoun said that Carter's record as a Georgia state legislator and Governor of that state proved that he was insensitive to Black needs and issues.

While both the Republicans and Democrats emphasized the need for a better quality of education in all schools, the Democrats were more favorable toward the use of busing as a last resort to gain integration. The Republicans attacked it, Calhoun stating that the idea of busing Blacks to white schools was "ridiculous. That's saying that Black's bad. That's saying that we're incapable of doing or learning by ourselves."

Asked by host Tony Brown whether Texas Senator John Tower's statement about Nelson Rockefeller - "At least he shot up those guys in Attica, which most of us agree with" - reflected Republican policy, Robert Brown said, "He's not a spokesman for the party, and he's certainly not a spokesman for Black people in this regard. I think Attica is an unfortunate thing that happened. I think that the Vice President has said that himself. I think what the Senator said doesn't have anything to do with the philosophy of the Republican Party."

Ms. Miller explained her support of former California Governor Reagan, saying, "I don't feel that the words conservatism and racism are synonymous...He admitted that he is not as prone to developing programs that he calls publicity seekers that give us very few substantial gains, but he was honest in admitting it. And I felt that based on his honesty, I could support him..."

Also discussed on the program are Kissinger's African policy (including an explanation of why Kissinger was recently booted during a speech before the National Urban League), welfare, unemployment, and debates, the Catholic vote, crime, the urban crisis, abortion, and "the Ugly Atlantian" phenomenon - Blacks in Atlanta, Georgia, who support Carter, calling other Blacks, as did Walter Young, brother of Congressman Andrew Young, "backward, unsophisticated and uncultured."

Executive producer and director, CAMPAIGN '76: A MINORITY REPORT: Tony Brown. Associate Producer: Carolyn Weidman. Consultant: Emma Bowen.

If you sometimes find yourself not in agreement with us, or think you have something to add to what you read, write us. We would like to give you a hearing.

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