

THE PILOT

Southern Pines

North Carolina

"In taking over The Pilot no changes are contemplated. We will try to keep this a good paper. We will try to make a little money for all concerned. Where there seems to be an occasion to use our influence for the public good we will try to do it. And we will treat everybody alike."—James Boyd, May 23, 1941.

An Alternative To The Pearsall Plan

We commend to the attention of Pilot readers the editorial from The Smithfield Herald which is reprinted as a feature on this page.

The Herald, edited and published by native North Carolinians in what might be called a typical Tar Heel agricultural county with a large Negro population, is one of the State's most respected non-daily publications, a newspaper that has won many honors for the competence of its news and editorial pages.

The Herald, it seems to us, provides in the editorial reprinted today, an articulate and impressive voice for those North Carolinians—and we believe there are far more of them than the well-greased Pearsall Plan campaign would have us believe—who have grave doubts as to the effectiveness and the legality of the proposals that will come before the people in the September 8 referendum.

The Herald calls for killing the Pearsall amendments at the polls and places its faith in the Pupil Assignment Act approved by the 1955 General Assembly as, in the end, likely to provoke less litigation for school admissions by Negroes, while at the same time if administered in good faith, opening the door, in a controlled way, to an integration process that The Herald sees as inevitable.

The Pilot is not wholly in agreement with the Smithfield contentions. The Pupil Assignment Act—while it lacks the brazen evasiveness, the threat of school closings and the fantastic state-supported private school provisions of the Pearsall Plan—was also designed to facilitate delay and evasion in compliance with the Supreme Court decision. The Assignment Act, however, unlike the Pearsall Plan, does permit some good faith compliance.

The Herald makes clear, again and again in its editorial, that the Pupil Assignment Act would have to be used in good faith. That is, local school boards would have to make pupil assignments truly on the basis of other considerations than race.

Our misgiving about this proposal is that we doubt if most school boards over the state would use the Act in that manner. The temptation to assign pupils for various semi-valid but possibly trumped-up reasons would be well nigh overwhelming for a school board hard pressed by Negro applications to enter white schools. If they were to succumb to those temptations, they might be provoking as many or more suits as would be provoked under the Pearsall Plan.

There is this much about it: rejection of the Pearsall amendments would not leave the State rudderless, as Pearsall advocates would have us believe. There is danger, of course, that if the Pearsall plan is rejected, the 1957 General Assembly would write into law a plan that would be an even greater threat to the existence of the schools. In this sense, rejection of the Pearsall Plan is a pretty desperate gamble. But would the people really allow their legislators to approve a radical plan that would make possible state-wide closing of schools?

What it all comes back to is the truth that was included in the Pearsall committee's report of last April, a truth that conflicts so paradoxically with what the report recommended be done: "The decision of the Supreme Court of the United States, however much we dislike it, is the declared law and is binding upon us. We must live and act now under the decision of that court. We should not delude ourselves about that."

That is what we have said all along: the Pearsall plan is a form of delusion—"whistling in the dark," as we once termed it. It is a peculiarly dangerous delusion because it ignores and antagonizes Negro opinion and assumes from the start that the Negro is the villain of the piece, who is attempting, if he seeks to exercise the right the Supreme Court has given him, to destroy the public schools.

A wise and just administration of the Pupil Assignment Act, in frank cooperation with Negro leaders in each school district, offers a far more promising outlook in the long run.

Challenging Opportunity In Welfare Work

In line with our continuing interest in the Moore County Welfare Department, we are distressed that the Department has for some time been unable to fill a vacancy for a case work assistant on its staff.

Basic qualifications for the job are not excessively hard to meet: an A. B. college degree and an available automobile. The compensation and conditions are average or better than average for female employment in the area: \$240 per month, two weeks of both annual vacation and sick leave and a seven cents per mile car allowance. But the job has no takers. Why?

Certainly the welfare post poses a challenge—the challenge of social service, the opportunity to give an affirmative answer to the immortal question, "Am I my brother's keeper?" Can it be that such a challenge finds no response in the heart and mind of anyone who might be qualified for this job? Is there no appeal in work that helps humble and often helpless human beings at times when they are unable alone to cope with the misfortunes that have befallen them?

Welfare departments, with the help of case workers, make arrangements so that mothers can remain in their homes with their children after homes are broken by death, illness, divorce or other causes. Case workers counsel

with parents who seem to want to separate their family units, and can often thereby prevent the breaking up of a home.

Case workers have a wonderful opportunity to work effectively in preventing juvenile delinquency by helping parents and children understand each other. One of the welfare worker's deepest satisfactions, we are told, is helping aged persons feel that they "belong" again by placing them in one of the several boarding homes now being operated in this county. Here, if the aged persons are indigent, they can pay their own way and retain a measure of pride and normal life, with old age assistance funds provided by the county, state and federal governments.

The vacancy arises for the case worker in Moore County, because a former case worker is now serving as a child welfare worker. Having advocated for a number of years the appointment of a child welfare worker, The Pilot is pleased and gratified that such a worker is now active. But we are concerned that the case worker vacancy remains. Already short staffed, the Welfare Department is placed by this vacancy under an added burden. We hope that some one who reads this will step forward or bring it to the attention of a qualified person who might be willing to serve.

Negro Policemen: A Reasonable Request

Appointment of one of more Negro policemen to serve in West Southern Pines, as requested by Councilman T. T. Morse last week, strikes us as a sensible idea, although it appears that, with a new budget just recently adopted, it will not be possible to get started on such a venture for nearly another year.

Negro policemen have worked out well in a number of North Carolina communities. Not only do they have a more detailed and deeper knowledge of their own communities than do white policemen, but there is something salutary, it seems, in investing a Negro with police authority. The action negates the supposedly widely held conviction on the part of Negroes that the law, particularly enforcement of the law, is the white man's business and that, for this very reason, enforcement of the law often results in unduly harsh treatment of the Negro under the white man's domination of all phases of the process.

Whether or not this point of view is fact or fiction—and we suspect that instances of both fair and unfair treatment of Negroes by police officers could be cited—it is a very healthy situation when a Negro, given all the responsibility of any police officer, is the means of law enforcement in his own community. It is then at once apparent to a Negro offender that the law is the law, with its own power and reason for existence and that the validity of the law has nothing to do with the color of the arresting officer.

Meanwhile, what of the teenagers in West

Southern Pines who, said Councilman Morse, constitute an acute problem—hanging around night spots, evidently ripe for delinquency, and staying out of school?

We go along with City Manager Cunningham in discouraging the use of "volunteer" officers from among West Southern Pines men who are concerned about the youth problem. With police work, amateurs seldom do much good and often provoke situations that get out of hand.

It appears to us that West Southern Pines, as has been stated innumerable times by leaders in that community, is faced more with a recreation problem than a police problem. And amateurs are free and welcome to approach the youth situation from that angle.

The ex-servicemen mentioned by Councilman Morse as worried about the youth of West Southern Pines could indeed render a service to their community if they took the lead in providing recreation facilities. What about boxing bouts, for instance, for boys who are teetering on the edge of trouble with the law? Perhaps the town recreation budget could provide some small sums for athletic equipment. It wouldn't have to be an elaborate program.

Councilman Morse did well to bring into public discussion a problem besetting his part of town. We feel sure that the town officials and private individuals will do what they can to help. And we think much could be done now, without waiting a year for a Negro policeman to be appointed.

EDITORIAL FROM THE SMITHFIELD HERALD SAYS:

Kill Amendment, Use Assignment Act In Good Faith

We have said in these columns that the Pearsall Plan is not the answer to the problems created by the Supreme Court decision against segregation. It is our opinion that the Pearsall Plan is more likely to increase racial tension and bring on court actions to force integration than it is to discourage the mixing of the races in the schools; and it is more likely to destroy the public school system than it is to save that system.

Whatever the white majority may think of the Pearsall Plan, we may be certain that the Negro leadership regards the plan as an attempt to evade the decision of the Supreme Court. And we may expect that the Negro reaction to court action after another to compel admission of Negro pupils to schools attended by white pupils. The law stands on the side of the integrationists. A flood of suits, then, logically could be expected to hasten integration and usher in more integration than we might reasonably expect without the Pearsall Plan.

Either that result, or a wave of school closings across the state. For if it is true, as the Governor and other sponsors of the Pearsall Plan contend, that the people of North Carolina will not accept mixed schools, the abolition of schools would not be confined to a few isolated communities. Abolition would be widespread—just as widespread as the integration forced through numerous actions brought by Negroes who look upon the Pearsall Plan as an evasion of the law.

The Pearsall Plan thus would lead North Carolina into an unwelcome "either, or" situation. Either we would have a flood of integration in North Carolina. Or we would have widespread closing of the schools. Most North Carolinians want neither result.

What Is Answer?

If the Pearsall Plan is not the answer to the problems confronting us, what is the answer?

Nobody can be sure he has the right answer, but it is our opinion that the following course offers greater hope of saving the public schools and maintaining racial peace than the Pearsall Plan:

(1) Accept the Supreme Court decision as the supreme law of the land. This is in line with part of the Pearsall Committee's report of April 5, 1956. For in that report the committee declared: "The decision of the Supreme Court of the United States, however we dislike it, is the declared law and is binding upon us. . . . We must live and act now under the decision of that court. We should not delude ourselves about that."

(2) Move toward compliance with the law in the "good faith" required by the Supreme Court.

(3) In compliance with the law, use to the fullest possible advantage the Pupil Assignment Law enacted by the Legislature in 1955. The Pearsall Committee, while it doesn't advocate reliance solely upon that law, has recommended that local school units make maximum use of the authority granted by the assignment act. The committee has advised local boards of education to "declare that initial assignment to schools will be made in accordance with what the assigning unit (or officer) considers to



"Gee Whiz—What Am I, Anyway?"

be for the best interest of the child assigned, including in its consideration, residence, school attended during the preceding year, availability of facilities, and all other local conditions bearing upon the welfare of the child and the prospective effectiveness of his school." This advice of the Pearsall Committee ought to be followed in good faith.

Many Negro Schools

No assignment of pupils could be based upon color, but that does not mean that every school would have to be a mixed school. Assignments could be based on place of residence. The practical effect of such assignment in many areas of the state would be the maintenance of all-Negro schools. Negro pupils living in residential districts inhabited exclusively by Negroes would attend schools provided in those districts.

It is reasonable to expect that the parents of many Negro pupils living outside of strictly Negro residential areas would choose to send their children to schools with 100 per cent Negro enrollment. Thus what Governor Hodges calls "voluntary segregation" would come into play to

relieve much of the tension accompanying the educational transition. And in the absence of a threat such as would be hanging over the head of the Negro in the form of the Pearsall Plan's "escape" provisions, there would be reason to expect a more extensive practice of voluntary segregation than if the state were pursuing what the Negro regarded as a policy of evasion or "compulsory voluntary segregation."

Moreover, county and city boards of education, acting in good faith without evading the law against color discrimination, could make assignments of pupils on the basis of factors other than residence or parent preference, as suggested by the Pearsall Committee, and such assignments further would reduce the mixing of the races and the tension.

The strong probability is that the integration occurring under such a course as we have outlined would be relatively light. Tension would not be great. Adjustment could be made without disruption of either educational or community life.

The 'Safety Valve'

And the course we have outlined would not be without its

"safety valve." The safety valve would be an appeal to the courts for relief from real hardship or any demonstrated intolerable situation. The Supreme Court has called for good faith in compliance with the segregation ruling, and it has called for a prompt and reasonable start toward compliance. But it has recognized that in some areas compliance might encounter serious difficulty and could not be rushed. In its follow-up decision of May 31, 1955, the Supreme Court declared that once a prompt and reasonable start has been made toward freeing a school system from racial discrimination, "the courts may find that additional time is necessary" for carrying out the segregation decision but "the burden rests upon the defendants to establish that such time is necessary in the public interest and is consistent with good faith compliance at the earliest practicable date."

From that decision, it may be judged that the basis of a request for relief in cases involving hardship or intolerable condition would be good faith. A major weakness of the Pearsall Plan is that the Supreme Court likely would not interpret a plan providing for resistance of integration by abolishing schools as a plan conceived in good faith.

The course we have outlined avoids that weakness. Acceptance of the Supreme Court decision against segregation, movement toward compliance with the law of the land, honest use of the Pupil Assignment Law, and rejection of evasive procedures like tuition grants and local option elections on whether to retain schools would constitute a plan likely to pass the Supreme Court's good-faith test.

But above all, it is a plan that avoids opening the door to destruction of the public school system and also is a law-abiding plan under which there would be no flood of integration. The first step in adopting such a plan would be to kill the Pearsall amendments at the polls on September 8.

The Public Speaking

Tribute to Mrs. Cox

To The Editor: A lovely lady has passed, ending an era that some of us knew and loved so much here in the South.

Mrs. W. E. Cox was 82 years young and had a most beautiful spirit. She radiated love. Her sincere faith was a splendid example to all of us. Her charity was always.

I came back to Southern Pines about five years ago as a resident. I had often been here at the Pine Needles Hotel when Mr. Boone had it, but was seldom in the city of Southern Pines. I had met the Rev. C. V. Covell, the rector at that time, but did not know any other members of Emmanuel Church.

The first Sunday I attended morning service, Mrs. Cox greeted me so pleasantly, as did quite a few others, and Mrs. Cox really gave me such a warm and friendly welcome, saying she was so glad I had come here to live and that she hoped I liked Southern Pines and would grow to love Emmanuel Church as she did.

In a very short while, Mrs. Cox came to call, bringing other friends with her. She was charming and most helpful in giving—at first it was general information on the church's activities and the life in general in Southern Pines. She was so interested to know my desires—what I liked to do and so forth. When I mentioned bridge, her eyes lighted up. We had mutual interests.

She said she would see that I met some of the bridge players—this she did. Not only did I meet friends in her home, but also at clubs, for she really wanted me

to be happy. She was most solicitous of me and I appreciated it so much.

As time went on, I found that Mrs. Cox was just as solicitous about each and every newcomer to Emmanuel parish and welcomed others just as she had welcomed me. Although I was almost two score years her junior, I do not get nearly as much as she did out of the 24-hours we are allotted each day.

She never complained of being tired—she didn't take a rest or siesta in the middle of the day like most elderly people. Her bridge parties usually started at 2 p. m. and she was just as fresh at 5 or 5:30.

Mrs. Cox had a remarkable memory. Several weeks before her death, she and I were partners in a foursome and had unusual hands with which we bid and made seven no trump. About 10 days later, the same foursome was together again and Mrs. Cox brought with her in her own duplicate case the four hands we had been dealt 10 days previously. She was so cute in putting the hands on the table and we three friends were amazed at her ability to remember the exact distribution of the cards.

She is not gone; she is just away, with a wave of her hand, she said good-bye.

Was there anyone here in Southern Pines who knew Mrs. Cox and who was not her friend? As a memorial to her, let's not build something of cold stone, but let us—we of her friends who are here—carry on and keep her as a symbol of fine Southern charm and Christianity.

ISABEL FISHER COLLIER
Southern Pines

Grains of Sand

Slips That Pass

There have been a number of slips of the tongue or of grammar by speakers at the Democratic convention in Chicago this week.

At the very height of his lambasting of the Republicans in his keynote address, Governor Clement was pointing with horror at Secretary Wilson's having belittled the Suez Canal crisis. . . . Only trouble was the speaker called it, shouting at the top of his voice, Sual Canel!

Then there was the mayor of Chicago in his welcome address, waxing more and more fulsome about the glories of his city. "It's the most largest. . ." (in some respect that we don't recall), he bragged. That really pinned it down.

He's Qualified

Dr. A. Palmer Hudson, Kenan professor of English at UNC, plans to write a book on North Carolina humor.

Dr. Hudson, although he is not a native of the state thinks he has lived here long enough now to tackle such a book. He has been in North Carolina since 1929.

Among other things, he said that he has "eaten ramp and shad, hog jowl and peas, and drunk (in moderate quantities) scuppernon wine and East Lake white lightning, and smoked (temperately) Camels, Chesterfields, Luckies, Salems, and Bull Durham."

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