

HERE IS WHAT THE LEGISLATURE MUST CONSIDER NEXT WEEK

To Run the Schools, or Not Run Them May Call For Vote in September

Governor Hodges made public the steps he and his Advisory Committee plan to recommend that the Legislature and the people take in order to "preserve public schools and help preserve the public peace." Representatives and Senators from all counties will go to Raleigh next week to hold a special session of the Legislature.

The Governor and Tom Pearsall, Chairman of the N. C. Advisory Committee on Education, held statewide news conferences simultaneously here and in Asheville. There they and their associates first presented copies of suggested bills to be submitted to the Legislature in special session July 23. Then they answered questions.

The gist of the school preservation plan would simply provide attendance expense grants, formerly referred to as tuition grants, to citizens who do not want their children to go to school with a member of the opposite race, and allow a local school unit to suspend operation of its schools, upon majority public vote, if the situation is considered intolerable.

If the Legislature approves, the people of North Carolina may vote on these questions, probably in September. The State Supreme Court has been asked whether a general election in September would be lawful.

Holding of the big news conference followed a second round of conferences with legislators. In April, most of them visited the mansion for discussions. During this week, the Governor, Pearsall, Attorney General William B. Rodman, Dr. Charles Carroll, State Superintendent of Public Instruction, and their associates met with legislators in four convenient places in the State. These sessions were harmonious and led to several changes in the proposed legislation.

The Governor maintained the position that after legislators had had opportunities to freely discuss these bills, then the results should immediately be made available to the public. Today he hurried back to Raleigh to preside over the news conference. Pearsall outlined the bills for members of the N. C. Press Association meeting in Asheville.

Five bills were released. Here briefly is what the suggested bills would do:

1. Provide for a public vote on the question of amending the State Constitution to permit the General Assembly to provide local option and education expense grants. A local option unit is defined as "Any county or city school administrative units, or any convenient and reasonable territorial subdivision within an administrative unit which includes within its boundaries one or more public schools." The statewide vote would decide whether permission would be given the General Assembly to authorize upon majority vote of its voters, to suspend or authorize the

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suspension of the operation of one or more of the public schools in that particular unit. The education expense grant, if such a plan is approved by the Legislature and the people, would be available only for education in a nonsectarian school. Such a grant also would not be available if the child can reasonably be assigned to a school not attended by a child of another race. Strict regulations are provided for the allotment of these expense grants.

2. Provide for the setting up of machinery for regulating the local option plan, which, of course, would depend upon the people's approval of the constitutional changes. In the preamble to this measure, it is recommended that the Legislature affirm "that schools and the means of education ought forever to be encouraged. The value and importance of our public schools is 'known and acknowledged by all our people. It is further recognized that our public schools are so intimately related to the customs and feelings of the people of each community that their effective operation is impossible except in conformity with community attitudes. Our people in each community need to have a full and meaningful choice as to whether a public school, which may have some enforced mixing of the races, shall continue to be maintained and supported in that community." Elections to decide whether a school or schools in a local option unit will be closed may be called upon petition of at least 15 percent of the registered voters within that local option unit. A like number of petitioners may call for

reopening the school or schools. Any teacher, principal or supervisor under contract with a school closed under such a plan will be entitled to all salaries and benefits during the life of the contract provided a similar job cannot be found elsewhere. Nor would the closing of a school affect the current contract of the superintendent of the city or county administrative unit.

3. Set up machinery for education expense grants, if the people approve the idea. These grants would amount to the proportionate expense of state funds needed to educate the child. That is currently figured at about \$135 a year out of State funds. Local units might award more if they choose. An applicant denied what he terms proper relief by his local board may appeal. Private schools must be approved to make grants available. Rigid control is set up over the expenditure of these funds, an applicant who commits fraud would be treated as a felon with imprisonment of not more than five years and/or a fine of not more than \$5,000. Funds from which to pay these grants will come from a special appropriation or from the State's Emergency and Contingency Fund. Money earmarked for the school year would be exempted.

4. Amend the Compulsory School Attendance law to care for children who don't want to go to school with members of another race and who cannot find a proper private nonsectarian school. Otherwise, the present law would hold. That law directs that children between seven and sixteen years of age shall go to school.

5. Set the date for the September general election. This purely is a matter for legislative determination if the State Supreme Court finds such an election is all right. The Court is expected to render its opinion before the July 23 session.

Those five steps constitute part of the administration's answer to the May 17, 1954, decision. The 1955 Legislature revised many school laws, including those on assignment of pupils, and bespoke its vigorous protest to the decision. It asked the Advisory Committee to continue its study, one that even then had been going on for several months under Pearsall, himself a

NEW DIRECTORY LISTS N.C. GUEST FACILITIES

The new North Carolina Travelbook for 1956-57, listing tourist accommodations from the beaches to the Great Smoky and Blue Ridge Mountains, is just off the press and available free on request from the State Advertising Division, Department of Conservation and Development, Raleigh.

Rates and descriptions of over 1,000 hotels, inns, motor courts, guest homes, dude ranches and lodges are included in the 104-page book. The new directory list 34-145 rooms for visitors. Room rates per person range from \$2 per day double occupancy to \$20 per day double occupancy, the higher prices applying at luxury resorts where rates include both rooms and meals.

State and National Parks, scenic attractions, outdoor dramas, summer camps and religious assembly grounds are also described in the Travelbook.

A State map opens out of the center of the directory, which is pocketbook size for convenient carrying on trips.

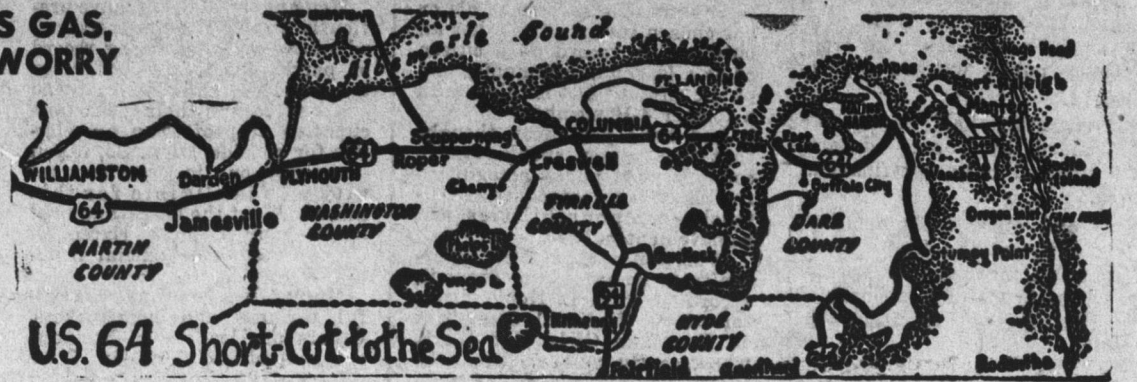
Population and altitude are listed for each city or town offering guest accommodations.

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