

Five Minutes Vs. Six Years

How efficient is the North Carolina judicial system? Six years ago it was the sense of the State of North Carolina that the uneven distribution of court work among the 21 judicial districts of the state seriously hampered the administration of justice. Certain glaring inequities were pointed out. A number of cases tried in some districts tripled the annual total in others. Even a cursory study of court records made it obvious that the state of criminal business in the larger counties justified the establishment of certain separate districts, including one for Mecklenburg.

All of this was regarded as sufficient to justify a reorganization of the judicial districts. But such a reorganization is a highly complicated business. So, as directed by the Legislature, the Governor appointed a special commission and emphasized the need for the reorganization. Headed by H. I. McDougie of Charlotte, the Commission set to work to determine a fair and equitable basis for redistributing court records after ten years' period. The geographical and economic unity of existing districts was taken into consideration. Court and Bar Association officials were consulted.

After two years of study the Commission prepared its recommendations. It proposed a general regrouping of counties so that every solicitor in the state would handle about the same number of cases each year. It found that the number of districts could be reduced from 21 to 19. And it recommended that the solicitor's job be made full-time, and that the pay be increased to justify a ban against part-time practice. This week the Commission laid the results of its six years of hard labor before the Senate Committee on Courts and Judicial Districts. Mr. McDougie explained the basis of the recommendations. There might be flaws in the redistricting plan, he said, but the Commission felt that it would accomplish the desired end. The committee, after ten minutes of deliberation, voted unanimously to give the Commission's recommendations, now incorporated into two bills, an unfavorable report. That, barring a miracle, closes the matter.

"The bills," said Senator Sheldon M. Roper of Lincoln, "propose a program which does not seem to be acceptable. I do not think they are good. Have they been consulted? A good many of them, we believe, are seriously concerned over the degeneration of the courts in North Carolina. A good many people, one thing would like to see something done about it. They might, if they were asked, find the Commission's report completely acceptable; at least they would have to recognize it as the only reasonable proposal for court reform now in sight."

"We have given considerable study to it," said Senator O. L. Richardson of Monroe, "and the quick unfavorable report does not mean that the Commission acted hastily." Considerable study? Enough to justify undoing in five minutes six years of work by a group of experts?

Actually, the Committee did not vote on the merits or demerits of the redistricting plan. It was under no obligation to accept or reject it in its entirety; it might properly have rewritten the bill if it found parts of the objectionable.

What the Committee did vote against was the need for redistricting. Yet that need was apparent in 1941 when the study was ordered. And the data compiled so painstakingly by the Commission certainly confirm it.

There was opposition to redistricting, as there is opposition to any proposal for change. But it came, not from the people, but from 17 of the present solicitors, including Basil Whitfield of Charlotte. Some of them opposed it because it would have forbidden them the private practice of law. Some said the need now is for more solicitors, not less. One, whether he said so or not, most of them were primarily concerned because regrouping of counties would have altered all the old political arrangements they and their predecessors had established over the years. This consideration clearly impressed the Senators far more than the detailed, painstaking work of Mr. McDougie and his colleagues.

The Commission approached the problem from the standpoint of increased judicial efficiency. The Senate Committee approached it from the standpoint of political expediency. Never, it appears, the twain shall meet.



HEAVENLY POWER
BRIEF THE LAWYERS' FOOT

The American family is connected with some church or other. We are centering efforts on promoting common education. To this end The Fund is now supporting American Council on Race Relations, Bureau for Interracial Education and Roosevelt College in Chicago. Last year The Fund spent \$106,833.00 for fellowships, \$41,522.00 on race relations, \$12,000.00 on Negro health.

People's Platform The Foot-Walker's Lament

CHARLOTTE
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WASHINGTON
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LIFE OF SURPRISES
But what was his experience when he returned to the office? He was greeted by the new Republican chairman, Senator William Langer of North Carolina, because he had not met anyone in the office since his anti-trust days. For the bureau's life is always full of surprises.

YET LANGER PERISHED. This is a sample of the cross-examination: Langer: Your section has a nut... that is being tried right now. Langer: Those people are buying that at \$24 a head... Langer: And it cost \$24, and not a single living soul was hurt... Langer: The case is being tried now. I know they will probably not be sent to the penitentiary.

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Taxi Service Is A Local Matter

It must be said for the taxicab operators that when they asked the State to recognize them as a monopoly they also asked for rigid State control. This sets them apart from the undertakers, the barbers, the beauticians and the various other groups which have persuaded, or seek to persuade, the State to regulate their business through licensing boards.

The service rendered by taxis is primarily local and we see no particular need for standards in every city in the state. Moreover, operators in one city are in accordance with their size. Charlotte, for instance, has ordered the installation of meters, a requirement that would be absurd in, say, Pineville.

Experience here has demonstrated that control of the taxi business is not an easy task. It is a complex one, involving the placement of a special section of the Police Department, and it has given City Council some of its biggest headaches. Nevertheless, said City Manager Yankee points out, an efficient taxi service is essential to a fair profit and the public reasonably adequate service has finally been worked out. We share his doubt that taxi operation under the expense of a statewide inspection service.

All of this, we think, indicates good faith. We still doubt the wisdom of removing taxi operation from the control of the municipalities.

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Religion And The Shoe Business

ONE night, while lying awake in a Pullman berth, William M. Smith of Providence felt to brooding over the futurity of a highly successful business career. "Business," he thought, "is a selfish institution. Is there anything we can do that is unselfish?"

He took the matter up with his brother, Maurice, president of the Bristol Manufacturing Company. Maurice was impressed, and after some months of deliberation the Smiths had decided to open a shoe factory. The operators even wrote into their bill a provision that would tax them three per cent of their gross receipts in order to underwrite the expense of a statewide inspection service.

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Rosenwald Fund

CONCORD
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Senator Soaper Says:

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Drew Pearson's Vandenberg Can Have Gubernatorial Nomination

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Another Voice

Is There No Other Answer?
might armistice? The answer is in the histories and in today's headlines. Except in times of war America has never committed itself to a policy of militarism. As a policy it is wholly at variance with all that the generations that we mean by America. There must be some answer to the world's need and history will measure the greatness of Secretary Marshall—and of this generation of Americans—and by his willingness to accept the challenge that it has before him. —Elizabeth City Daily Advance.

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History In Reverse

FARGO, N.D.
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Wherry's Small Undertakings

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Brandes And Lilienthal

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