

Time And Trouble

Turning aside momentarily from the more serious aspects of the sit-down demands of Negroes for service at downtown store luncheon counters, it strikes us that a lot of valuable time is being idled away.

The explanation about the presence of the A. and T. students at the counters during school hours is that they are spending free time. In other words, they are not supposed to be having classes when they are staging their demonstration. It has also been reported that at least some of the students brought along their textbooks and studied at the counters. Maybe so, but the students must have rare power of concentration to absorb information from textbooks under any such abnormal circumstances.

Then, there have been the white youths, described as students from several county schools, close to Greensboro, gathering around the lunch counters in increasing numbers from day to day. How could they be away from school unless they were cutting classes? Maybe they remembered that the county school system has no attendance officer to round them up. The General Assembly has not thought money for attendance officers was needed.

Furthermore, it has been necessary for the Police Department to detail uniformed and plainclothes officers to see that things did not get out of hand at the lunch counters. We do not know exactly how many man-hours this has taken away from normal police activities, but we do know that Greensboro's force isn't so large that it can afford the risk of having too many officers pinned down in case an emergency elsewhere. Police authorities have no alternative to assigning men to keep an eye on the lunch counter scenes.

How much better it would be if the time idled away at the counters was being used in consultation and discussion of the matter by responsible persons. We can see nothing but possible trouble resulting from the sitdown tactics being employed by the Negro students. What has been made into a grim sort of "fruit basket" game is not only time-wasting, but it is potentially dangerous and expensive.