

A & T Students Rap Seawell In Letter

Official Accused Of Advocating 'No Trespass' Law In Sitdown

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A group of A&T College students yesterday charged that North Carolina Attorney General Malcolm Seawell had failed to realize the "vast devastating effect" that arrests of Negro lunch counter demonstrators on trespass charges could have on the state and the rest of the South.

In Raleigh, Seawell replied that "just because they are members of the Negro race they have no rights which are not the rights of other citizens.

"The trespass law which applies to them applies with equal force to anyone who violates it."

Open Letter

The students, leaders of Negro protest demonstrations over segregation at two local dime store lunch counters, made the charge in an "open letter" to Seawell.

They apparently did not send a copy to Seawell and the attorney general said he had no knowledge of it.

"I prefer in the normal course of things to receive letters addressed to me prior to their being released to the press," he said.

"Since they apparently wanted publicity about the letter in the press, I will answer it in the press, because that is the way I received it."

'No Trespass' Law

The student letter accused Seawell of "strongly" advocating the use of the state's "no trespass" law as a means of combatting the Negro protest demonstrations in a number of North Carolina cities.

The attorney general said, however, that "I have not advocated the arrest of anyone."

He said he had had "many requests from city officials and others as to what laws were applicable in this sit down situation."

The state has no law, he said, which prohibits the owner of any private business to serve or sell to, or to refuse service and sales to any customer for any reason satisfactory to the owner.

"This is without regard to race, creed or color," Seawell said.

Replies To Charge

To the charge in the student letter that he had "failed to realize the vast devastating effect this (application of the trespass law) could have on the state of North Carolina and the other states located here in the South," Seawell said:

"They fail to realize the vast, devastating effect their sit down demonstrations could have on the state of North Carolina.

"They are bringing up race here. I'm not," he said.

The A&T students said that "it is a known fact that industry tend to shy away from those areas where there is racial unrest," and told Seawell that the arrest of Negro students would tend to keep new industry out of the state.

'Serious Detriment'

"I would think that it would be a serious detriment to the bringing of industry to North Carolina if we put up with the violation of any law," Seawell said.

"Any business or industry would want to know if it came here it would be protected when it insisted on its legal rights."

The students said "we would like to make it clear . . . that this mass movement was not be-

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gun to bring economic suffering to the state but to bring to the realization of the citizens of North Carolina that the Negroes, who are also citizens of the state, can no longer remain quiet and complacent and continue to accept such gross injustice from those who desire to see no change in old customs and traditions solely for the purpose of personal gain or because of the warped ideas which have been instilled in the minds of many responsible citizens."

Asks Consideration

The letter said "we are asking that you will give this subject greater consideration in hope that it might bring about the 'awakening' of you and other responsible citizens of our free state."

Seawell said "I shall give no consideration to a letter which is written for the purpose of gaining publicity in the press, but I shall give my consideration to the law of North Carolina which I am sworn to uphold regardless of the persons or the races involved."