

segregation cases before it. Progress in recent years has been so rapid in improving the Negro schools that now in many of our counties and cities they are superior to the white schools.

Our modern public school system has been developed on a racially segregated basis and advancement of the Negro race has been a direct result of such a system. Without segregation, the white children would still be largely taught in private academies as they were in the early days in Virginia. Public schools would have made no progress and Negro children would have received little or no public education. Future judicial pronouncements and the attitudes of the Negroes themselves will largely determine whether in many parts of Virginia the clock will be turned back a century.

It is now judicially asserted that Negro children lose something by being compelled to attend separate schools. The Supreme Court of the United States, however, gave no consideration to the adverse effect of integration upon white children, although this was expressly called to the attention of the Court. This Commission believes that separate facilities in our public schools are in the best interest of both races, educationally and otherwise, and that compulsory integration should be resisted by all proper means in our power.

The racial problem in Virginia varies radically in different localities; in thirty-one counties in the North, West, and Southwest the Negro school population is less than 10% of the whole; in twenty-four of the Southeastern, Piedmont, and Tidewater counties it exceeds 50%, and in one it is nearly 80%.

In some localities where there are few Negroes the problem of adjustment is not so serious as it is in localities with large Negro populations. In the latter, it is believed that the people will abandon public schools rather than accept any integration. Our school properties, representing an investment of nearly half a billion dollars, are owned by the localities, and the money for their operation is raised in great part from local taxes. Obviously, the schools cannot continue without the support of the people, and we must leave a large measure of autonomy to the localities even though that may result in the closing of public schools.

Thus the local school boards must be given wide discretion to meet their peculiar local problems. The employment of teachers; the assignment of pupils; the regulation or abandonment of transportation; the operation or abandonment of cafeterias; the continuation or abandonment of athletics, societies of various kinds, and other extra-curricular activities; the maintenance of existing social practices or the entire elimination from the schools of every activity but bare instruction; the maintenance of co-education or separation by sex;—all of these things must be in the hands of local people who know their own communities and whose children will profit or suffer by their decisions.

This will call for unselfish service on the part of the best people of each community. But this is not new in Virginia; in the years that preceded our Revolution, times of stress and danger, our best men contributed unselfishly and without compensation their thoughts and energies to local government, even while playing their parts on a larger stage. As county magistrates they legislated, adjudicated, and administered the laws of their people. George Mason, who wrote our Bill of Rights, was a magistrate of Fairfax County; Edmund Pendleton, who presided over the Virginia Revolutionary Convention and drafted the resolution calling upon Congress to declare Independence, was a magistrate of Caroline