

Civil Rights Commission Reveals Voting Abuses

Linden vs. Farmer In B. U. Forum's Scheduled Debate

by Lynne Coffin

Are Negro voting rights abused? As in any question, there are a number of answers ranging from the straight yes or no to the sometimes or "if" answers.

This summer the Civil Rights Commission published a report based on objective investigation on this question. The results are enough to astound even the most pessimistic civil rights advocate. Although the Commission was composed of men from both North and South, the Commission's answer to my lead question was yes.

Several primary causes have been isolated that generally describe why Negro voting rights are abused. In areas of the South where Negroes lack social and economic status to stand up to pressures, voting is frequently restricted to whites. The strongest discriminations are made in areas of the South where the Negroes composed 50% or more of the population. Voting restrictions are also highest in areas where the average number of school years completed is below the national average. Overcrowded housing is another feature found frequently in areas where Negroes are kept from voting.

A few examples should suffice to explain the nature of the pressure used to restrict Negro voting. In one Mississippi county, poll taxes are required before a citizen can vote. Negroes, however, are never allowed to pay this tax. Also in Mississippi, a veteran who attempted to register was turned down and, upon returning home, was met by two white citizens who told him not to try that again.

Alabama requires that "good character" be a quality of voting registrees. This section was proved to be used against Negroes. Interestingly enough, this state has no educational requirements for voting. Another favorite device is gerrymandering: city lines are re-drawn so that Negroes can not vote in city elections or are split apart into separate districts so that they can not vote as a block and elect their favorite candidates. In Macon County, Alabama, separate rooms are used to register Negroes. While whites can register in a matter of minutes, it takes from 3-9 hours for a Negro to register because only two are allowed in the room at once. Often, local laws require that each applicant for registration must have a registered voter vouch for him, and each voter can only vouch for two new voters per year. In many areas, no Negroes are now registered voters, so they have little chance of finding someone to vouch for them.

An investigation of Alabama files also uncovered some startling facts. Among many voting violators was one white applicant who had passed the test even though he had answered a question on plotting to overthrow the U. S. Government by stating "not unless necessary." One area used a picture of a Negro praying as part of a poster encouraging Negroes to vote. The sign painter was immediately arrested for displaying "libelous and obscene" posters.

In Tennessee, not only have Negroes not voted in Haywood County for the past 50 years, but they are not allowed to drink beer, dance or go near the courthouse except on business.

Many more examples of this kind may be found in the information

that is on reserve in the library for the Bucknell Forum.

On the other side, states righters insist that Federal agencies have no right under the Constitution to investigate voting which they consider is a purely state function. Northern civil-righters disagree on this interpretation. The Southerners insist that segregation and subordination of the Negro is a way of life that neither race wishes to break and use this as the reason why Negroes don't turn out to vote. Many also feel that because few people were interviewed to defend present conditions in the South that the Civil Rights Commission is biased.

A much fuller discussion of this issue will be offered at Bucknell on November 2 in the form of a debate sponsored by the Bucknell Forum. An outstanding Southern journalist, Mr. Frank van der Linden, will discuss Negro voting rights with the NAACP's Program Coordinator and lecturer, Mr. James Farmer.

Both men believe strongly that their positions are right, so the discussion should be lively. Time will be allowed for discussion from the floor; material is on reserve in the library. The time is 8 p. m.; the date is Monday, November 2. Bring your friends to this first presentation of Bucknell's group that "dares to think."

SOUND OFF

by Joel Berger

On Monday, November 9, the Bloodmobile makes its annual visit to the Bucknell campus between the hours of 11:00 a. m. and 5:00 p. m. This year however the method of organization is a little different than in years past. For the first time, the Sem is going to be given an active part in the organization and administration of the drive for blood.

The current plan is to offer a prize of \$25 to the group of girls, sorority or independent, which can promote the most donations based upon a percentage of their own membership. In that way, every girl on campus has a chance to help win the prize which is donated by the Officers' Club. She will also want to encourage that special male to donate for her cause.

The procedure will be as follows: When a person arrives at Coleman Hall in the auditorium to donate, he or she will be asked to sign one of ten lists each of which will be headed up with the name of either a sorority or independent women. After all the donations are completed, the lists will be tabulated on the basis of the percentage of members of each organization, and the prize will be announced and awarded.

Anyone over the age of 21 by the date of the Bloodmobile may donate blood, and those between the ages of 18-20 may donate with the permission of their parents. This can be obtained by contacting either Ken Russo, chairman of the Bloodmobile Drive, at the Kappa Sigma house, Joanna Ziegler, president of Panhellenic Council, on Ground Hunt, their sorority president, the Independent women's president, or Joel Berger at 2nd East Wing for the slips which must be signed by a parent for permission to give blood. If anyone has any questions, concerning this drive he is urged to contact one of the people named above.

Blood donations are painless, speedy, and harmless. Please help this to be the biggest year ever in the aid given to the Red Cross and the Bloodmobile sponsored by the Bucknell ROTC and the Officers Club.