

Deadlock In Pittsylvania

Voluntary Segregation Is Rejected By Citizens

By MISS HAZEL A. CARTER

DANVILLE, Va. — Negro citizens of Pittsylvania county last week rejected school officials' voluntary school segregation plan at a mass meeting attended by more than 300 people. Instead the group recommended that representatives meet with the school board to discuss integration and a possible date for beginning integrated classes.

The group's action produced a stalemate on the controversial integration issue. School officials have gone on record for maintaining segregation in the schools or closing them rather than having mixed schools. Negro parents at the meeting were just as determined to continue their efforts for integrated schools.

MEETING AT Southside high school, the group not only endorsed the desegregation decision of the U. S. Supreme Court, but proposed that the school board and superintendent build more elementary schools for all of the children rather than for any particular race, that consolidated elementary schools be built for all children, and that the Citizens Committee meet with the school board and superintendent to discuss integration of schools in the county, and decide on a starting date for integration.

Irvin C. Burton is president of the committee. Other members are James P. Fitz-

gerald, Harvey; Jesse Clark and Clyde Banks, Chatham, president of the local NAACP branch; L. L. Irby, and David Logan of East New Hope.

AMONG THOSE who spoke for integration were the Rev. Walter G. Anderson, pastor of Holbrook Street Presbyterian Church; the Rev. W. P. Smith, John Cunningham, president of the Public Civic League in Danville; the Rev. W. P. Keene, pastor of Oak Grove Baptist Church; Attorney Gregory Swanson of Danville and Martinsville, and the Rev. E. H. Stewart.

A. G. Tippet, principal of Northside High School, was the other speaker for continued segregation in return for improved county schools for Negroes.

MR. TIPPETT recommended that the citizens go on record as endorsing the school board's voluntary plan. He asked that "we stay out of the segregation-integration fight until such time that both sides have reached a mutual understanding."

Attorney Gregory Swanson, who was a student at the University of Virginia declared, "I am moved to see that we have some Negroes who have not sold their birth rights for a mess of porridge." This thing is going like a snowball down hill. Nobody can stop it. But you can't sit idly by. Stay with it. I was crippled, from lack of opportunities. Most of you have been crippled. But stay with it. The people of Alabama are still walking, not riding those buses," he asserted.

REV. MR. Anderson asserted that "We've known from the beginning that our schools have been separate but not equal. We could go for 66 more years and still not be equal," he said, adding, "their

philosophy now is to keep us separate so it will never be equal."

Chairman Burton stated, "We want to meet this problem with a moderate approach, but we back up the Supreme Court decision as the law. We don't mean to ask that our children go into white schools next week or next month. We say sit down and let's see why we are being denied our right, for what reason other than the color of our skin."

"WITHOUT exception, the white patrons have voted in favor of closing schools rather than integrate. The Negro citizens were just as determined to bring integration or close the schools.