

# South Boston Rally Draws 2,300 Crowd

## Throng Hears Tuck, Denny

A loudly cheering audience that filled the Halifax County High School auditorium to overflowing was told that Virginia could keep her segregated schools by enactment of a state law prohibiting allocation of funds to integrated schools applicable to localities where a majority vote of the people in a referendum was in favor of such a course of action.

The declarations came from Fifth District Representative William M. Tuck and Collins Denny Jr., counsel for the Defenders of State Sovereignty and Individual Liberties.

Their remarks were heard by a crowd estimated at 2,300 who were attending the first mass meeting called by the county chapter of the Defenders on October 24.

Denny and William E. Maxey Jr. executive director of the state Defenders organization, said later that it was the biggest crowd ever to attend a Defenders meeting.

Later, several hundred persons signed membership certificates in the Defenders.

Locally, the Defenders are headed by W. Wirt Shapard, President of the Bank of Halifax and past president of the Virginia Bankers Association. Vice-President is J. Stebbins Lawson, South Boston textile man, and Secretary is W. M. Lewis, Halifax attorney.

On the mass meeting program with Tuck and Denny was James S. Easley, Halifax attorney, whose address at an organizational meeting ten days earlier was hailed in local circles as a bellweather oration that set the pace for the chapter organization.

In introducing Denny, Tuck reiterated his local option proposal that had appeared in the press two days earlier in a letter from Tuck and Congressman Watkins M. Abbitt to the Virginia Commission on Public Education.

Declaring that, "I am against integration and the mixing of the races," Tuck told the huge audience that interrupted both speakers intermittently:

"We have not integrated the churches, and despite some talk to the contrary, we never will. The white and colored people naturally prefer to worship among themselves and in their own surroundings. Does it not seem strange that we should force upon our children intolerable conditions which we ourselves are unwilling and unable to endure?"

Departing from a prepared text, Tuck once again said he deplored the stand of some ministers on the segregation issue, saying that he was "brought up in the old time religion before some ministers took a cue from the Supreme Court to tell us that it is un-Christian to keep the races separate."

"If that's the kind of religion you have to have to be a Christian these days, then I don't want it," Tuck exclaimed.

He was interrupted here and at several points in his address by loud and sustained applause.

Touching on the heart of his talk, Tuck declared as he had stated last Friday in a letter to the Governor's Commission on Public Education recommending the local option plan:



An overflow crowd of 2,300 packed high school auditorium for Defenders mass meeting

"Integration in the public schools can be prevented by the adoption of a state law forbidding the expenditure of public money in support of any integrated school. As much as I would dislike to see the support withdrawn, I would favor that course rather than see the mixing of our little children. At the very least, such a course should not be followed until it has the approval of the people of the locality affected."

Denny, prominent Richmond attorney and former Assistant Attorney General of the state, and son of the late Bishop Denny of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, drew round after round of applause from the packed audience.

Opening his remarks, Denny referred to the Supreme Court ruling as "a distasteful decision, seeking to beat down our way of life and to regiment us."

He declared that the state was faced with "its most dire emergency in 200 years," and said that he had noted "an alarming lethargy among the people until recently. But that is all changed now. People are aroused today," he declared.

Putting the question to the audience: "Are you going to integrate your public schools?", he was greeted by loud "No's" from the crowd.

"The Supreme Court has not said that the schools of Virginia must be integrated. The court has said only that the state of Virginia cannot spend money in support of schools segregated by law," he continued.

"They can't tell us we must spend our own money to compel children to go to integrated schools," he said.

"In Prince Edward County the court said that Negro children might go to white schools, but the court did not dare tell Prince Edward County to integrate its schools," he said.

Alluding to federal court handling of the Prince Edward school case, Denny said that court delays in implementing the segre-

gation ruling was a "conditioning process."

"These delays are for the purpose of conditioning you to accept integrated schools," he declared.

"Prince Edward was under the gun but Prince Edward rose on her hind feet and said she would appropriate no money for integrated schools. If it had not been for Prince Edward County and Clarendon County, S. C. standing alone at the moment we would have court decrees all over Virginia and the South ordering school integration," Denny said.

"There is no more glorious page in Virginia's history than that written by little Prince Edward County," he declared.

"What I want to know is whether Halifax County has the same courage and determination," he asked.

Here he was greeted by a loud "Yes," from the audience.

Continuing, he stated: "If the 98 localities of Virginia have that courage and determination we will not have school integration. If they don't we will."

Speaking slowly, Denny cautioned.

"People who look for an easy, simple solution will be disappointed. I know of only one way to prevent integration in the schools of Virginia."

"We can do it by enactment of a law prohibiting the spending of one penny of public funds for integrated schools," he said.

"Oh, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People won't like it, and they might get a court order of some kind, but that won't get the NAACP any mixed schools," he declared.

"Are we so weak, so supine, so cowardly that if necessary for a season we can't educate our own children?" he asked.

"Let the NAACP and the USA once learn that Virginia will not pollute the streams of its future and we will soon have the public schools back," he predicted.

"I would hate to see Negroes

lose their educational opportunities," he said, "but I say to you with all candor that if the NAACP makes it impossible to operate segregated schools, we will educate our own and leave the NAACP to educate their own."

The loudest and most sustained applause of the evening greeted Denny at this point.

Turning to a religious note, Denny said that "At no place did the Master try to instruct men on the kind of government that they should adopt, nor did He attempt to instruct men on the economy, on politics and on social conditions. I find nothing in Holy Writ to encourage us to mix the races. I find much to disapprove of it."

"I don't believe that the people of Virginia are going to sign the death warrant of future generations. We know we can win this fight," he exclaimed.

Denny, in closing, said that the state Defenders would seek to speak for the people on the segregation issue before the state legislature.

"This is no longer a legal matter. It is a practical political matter and we invite you to join the Defenders and get in this fight to save our schools", he said in closing.

Many of the audience stopped at tables in the rear of the auditorium to sign up as members of the Defenders.

Here to assist with the membership drive was William E. Maxey Jr., executive director of the state Defenders. He was assisted by W. M. Lewis, local Defenders secretary and treasurer, and others in the sign-up.

Many who tried to get into the school parking lots found them filled and drove away, police officers on duty said. At one time, cars were lined up bumper to bumper on Route 501 as far north as Centerville and as far south as the city limits.

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