

BYRD'S AIMS HARM NEGRO, SOPER SAYS

'Pretense' At Princess Anne Called Threat To Race's Education

Legislators begin checking on what Dr. Byrd told them at three-hour session.....Page 20

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[Annapolis Bureau of The Sun]

Annapolis, March 22—Unless a halt is called on the University of Maryland's program for spending millions on its Princess Anne branch for Negroes, the General Assembly was told today, a crippling blow will be dealt to all higher education for Negro students in this State.

A likely outcome then will be that Negro students will turn to the courts to demand, and get, entry to the University of Maryland at College Park.

Soper Presents Views

Judge Morris A. Soper, member of the United States Circuit Court of Appeals, sketched this prospect at a joint meeting of the appropriations committees of the State Senate and the House of Delegates. Judge Soper is chairman of the board of trustees of Morgan State College, the arts and sciences college for Negroes in Baltimore.

Over the objections of Judge Soper, the session at which he spoke was held behind locked doors. A State police lieutenant guarded the door behind which the committeemen sat and refused admission to all but committee members.

Judge Soper, however, obtained the committee's permission to make public copies of a statement he had prepared for the hearing.

For Independent Survival

In that statement, Judge Soper waged Morgan College's battle for independent survival against the menace of engulfment by the University of Maryland, and a companion battle against the slow starvation that would ensue if funds are diverted to the expansion of Princess Anne College.

Judge Soper went even further in challenging the university. He presented a two-part program recommending that:

1. Morgan State College be designated as the land-grant college for Negroes and work in that field be shifted from Princess Anne, where it is under the supervision of the University of Maryland.

2. Attempts to develop Princess Anne as an institution of higher learning be suspended, and the school be maintained only as a two-year junior college.

Both recommendations flew in

the face of the campaign by Dr. H. C. Byrd, president of the University of Maryland, to launch the State on an ambitious building program at Princess Anne and to win funds for the development of an instructional program comparable to that offered white students at College Park.

Judge Soper was well aware that he was in conflict with the powerful university president. Had he been under any illusions in that respect, the hostility evident in questions put to him by the Byrd backer in the committee room would have dispelled them. The questioner was Delegate Leroy Pumphrey, of Prince Georges county, majority leader in the lower branch of the General Assembly.

Some of the committeemen considered Mr. Pumphrey's questions to be so antagonistic as to constitute discourtesy. Questioned afterward, however, Judge Soper said he had discerned no discourtesy and that he had been pleased at the opportunity to answer questions.

Notes Unsatisfactory State

In the course of a talk of nearly an hour and a half, Judge Soper spoke on the unsatisfactory state of Negro education in Maryland, on the unavoidable competition for funds between Morgan College and Princess Anne so long as both are operated as colleges, on the inferior status of Princess Anne as an institution of higher learning, and on the need for consolidating the State's funds and efforts in a single institution if first-class educational opportunities are to be made available to Negro students.

"Whether we like it or not," said Judge Soper, "Morgan has been brought into competition with Princess Anne."

On that basis, he said, it was imperative that Princess Anne be discussed in any appraisal of Morgan College. He found Princess Anne lacking in every respect. The University of Maryland, he added, has failed in its duty to its subsidiary institution, Princess Anne, he went on, can never hope to attract enough students to its isolated location on the lower Eastern Shore to permit efficient operation.

Characterized As "Pretense"

Statements that Princess Anne can be raised to "equivalence" with College Park in its educational facilities were characterized by Judge Soper as "pretense."

"In view of the complete failure of the University of Maryland to deal fairly with Princess Anne," he said, "it is incomprehensible that the university should have the effrontery to suggest that it should also be given the control and government of Morgan."

Such suggestions have been voiced by Dr. Byrd, president of the university.

"Buildup" To Meet Criticism

Judge Soper was completely candid in his view of the surge of interest in Princess Anne displayed by the University of Maryland immediately following the 1947 criticism of Princess Anne by the Marbury Commission on Higher Education. He described the university's request for millions to be spent at Princess Anne as a "buildup" and said it was "obviously an attempt to meet the devastating criticism of the Marbury report."

He observed that students for Princess Anne were recruited from other states by advertising and commented that this was a "method which no worthy college need employ in view of the prevailing overwhelming demand."

Even the millions now asked for Princess Anne would be only a preliminary to even vaster spending if the State commits itself to the program urged by the University of Maryland, Judge Soper cautioned.

Normal Peak Of 159 Students

"Prior to the current school year," the judge asserted "Princess Anne College never attained an enrollment as high as 200 students. It reached its normal peak in 1940-41 when it had 159 students."

"A normal enrollment for Princess Anne is about 150 students. It might look forward to a legitimate enrollment of twice this number if its program is developed to the extent recommended by the University of Maryland."

Morgan College has a current enrollment in excess of 1,500.

The costly nature of a college with a student body as limited as that of Princess Anne was emphasized by Judge Soper.

Had 38 During 1943-44

"Were members of the General Assembly ever advised that only 38 students were in attendance at Princess Anne during 1943-44?" he asked. "While the total appropria-

tion during that year, \$43,121, was pitifully meager, it amounted to more than \$1,100 per student. During the same year, Morgan's appropriation amount to about \$200 per student.

"The small number of graduates from Princess Anne is also noteworthy in terms of cost to the State."

"To take an extreme example, there were three graduates in 1946. Each of these graduates cost the State approximately \$17,000. While it is not altogether sound to confine the calculation to the number of graduates, the figures do indicate the absurdly high costs inherent in any institution which has an extremely small enrollment."

Marbury Figures Cited

From the Marbury report, Judge Soper cited cost-per-student figures for the school year 1945-46 as follows: College Park, \$434; Princess Anne, \$526; Morgan College, \$197.

"If only the Maryland students now enrolled at Princess Anne are considered," he continued, "current operating costs at that institution reach the astronomical figure of \$3,300 per in-State student."

Judge Soper also directed attention to the swelling size of appropriations for Princess Anne, noting that for 1946-47 the sum allotted was \$36,445, for 1947-48 it was up to \$115,983, in the current year it is \$118,694, and for next year the university is trying to get \$429,768.

1,120 P.C. Over 4 Years

"These figures show an increase of 1,120 per cent over the four-year period," he noted. "Moreover, this is not the whole story. Vastly greater appropriations will be needed if a sincere attempt is made to bring Princess Anne up to the standard of College Park."

Local housing conditions at Princess Anne, Judge Soper pointed out, require dormitory facilities to be built by the State for virtually the entire student body at that school.

Only about one third of the Morgan students need dormitory rooms, he added, because off-campus lodgings are available in Baltimore. Also vital, he told the committeemen, is the opportunity for part-time employment open in Baltimore and absent in Princess Anne, since most Negro college students must support themselves.

Control Since 1919

"From 1919," Judge Soper related, "the University of Maryland has had complete control and responsibility for the maintenance and management of Princess Anne."

"How completely it failed to perform its duty to give the students at Princess Anne an equivalent in agricultural education to that furnished students at College Park is known to all. In the survey by the American Council of Education it was described as without question the weakest land-grant college anywhere in the United States."

"No one in the University of Maryland has attempted to deny this sweeping condemnation. It has been somewhat faintly suggested by the university that it was unable to obtain State funds to develop the institution, but this is obviously an excuse rather than a justification."

Regents Could Act

"Funds were forthcoming for the university and a greater share could have been assigned to Princess Anne if the regents had seen fit. There were substantial Federal funds of which Princess Anne received only a pittance."

"In Federal funds during the years 1938-1947 the university got \$6,353,020 and Princess Anne got \$153,241. No one can defend the allocation."

Judge Soper said everyone must denounce the "pretense" that Negro students at Princess Anne got an education equivalent to that available to white students at College Park. He said that Morgan College was determined against falling victim to the same mismanagement, and added:

Will Not Submit

"In view of the complete failure of the university to deal fairly with Princess Anne, it is incomprehensible that the university should have had the effrontery to suggest that it should also be given control of Morgan. We shall not willingly submit to any sort of control by the University of Maryland and we have no fear that any such control will be forced upon us."

Surveying the acquisition by the State of Morgan College, which was formerly owned by the Methodist Church, Judge Soper said:

"The bald truth is that the State has been actuated in large part by the fear that if it did not provide a college in some way worthy of the name for colored students, they would break down the barriers at College Park and put an end to the practice of segregation."

Law School Decision

"There was firm ground for this fear."

He cited a decision by the Court of Appeals in 1936 which opened the law school of the University of Maryland to Negro students.

Judge Soper went into detail in upholding Morgan's petition to be named the land-grant college for the training of Negro students in agricultural and mechanic arts. It is legally possible, he said, and entirely practical. It would also be advisable, he continued, because

and grant colleges necessarily maintain arts and science branches and there is duplication in these fields at Princess Anne and Morgan College.

Additional Expenditures

Looking to the future, Judge Soper said:

"It is clear that Maryland will be obliged to make very heavy additional expenditures to develop a college for Negroes separate and apart from, but equivalent to, the undergraduate school at College Park."

"Morgan has requested \$4,976,216 for capital improvements. There is not a single item in the list which is not imperatively needed, whether we confine our attention to the deficiencies of Morgan itself or compare it with the superior establishment at College Park—as, under the Constitution of the United States, Maryland is obliged to do."

Sum Not Questioned

"Princess Anne has asked \$3,755,000 for capital improvements. We do not question that this sum is required if Princess Anne is to be made the equivalent of College Park in the field of agricultural and mechanical arts."

"Indeed, this is only a preliminary expenditure."

"It is not a pleasant task for us to argue that needed appropriations should be denied to a sister institution. We do think, however, that it is absolutely certain that Maryland cannot establish and maintain two separate colleges for Negroes, each equivalent to College Park, and that if a choice must be made Morgan must obviously be selected, not only because of the greater facilities which have already been established but because it serves ten times the number of students at Princess Anne."

Plan To Overcome Deficiency

There can be no disputing that Maryland is failing to provide equal educational opportunity to Negro students, Judge Soper declared. He then outlined a program for overcoming the deficiency.

"We believe that the State should proceed at once to develop a single first-class institution for the undergraduate education of its Negro citizens," he said. "We do not believe that the State can afford to develop two first-class colleges for Negroes, nor do we believe it necessary that this be done."

"A single center of Morgan State College will serve the best interests of the Negro population and conserve the financial resources of the State."

Advantage In Location

"Morgan is located in Baltimore at the center of Negro population. Approximately two thirds of the total Negro population lives in the Baltimore area, and approximately four fifths of the Negro students attending Maryland colleges are from the Baltimore area."

"A college center to serve the State by increasing the general educational level of the people should certainly be located where the people live."

"Morgan State College already has the basic structure for a good institution. Its graduates are recognized by most American institutions of higher learning. It is in process of developing a strong and suitable faculty. It has a core of excellent library and science facilities."

Most Economical Plan

"For relatively modest sums these facilities can be put on a first-class level within a reasonable time. The college has in operation an ROTC, a facility which no other Negro institution in the State is now in a position possibly to secure."

"Centralization at Morgan is the most economical plan for the State both from the standpoint of current operating expenses and capital expenditures."

"College students all take a basic core of similar work. Whether the student is in education, liberal arts, agriculture, or mechanical arts, he must have courses in English, physics, chemistry, biology, social sciences, and the like."

Facilities And Teachers

"It is apparent that if these curricula are all offered at the same institution, the students would all use the same facilities and teachers for these core subjects. If the work is offered at different institutions there must be a duplication of teachers and facilities for these core subjects. This duplication would cost the State considerable money for capital and current expenditures."

"A capital expenditure of approximately \$2,000,000 would provide the farmland and additional structures to operate a basic program of agriculture and mechanic arts at Morgan College. This is appreciably less than estimates already presented for preliminary development of Princess Anne College."

Without mention of Dr. Byrd by name, Judge Soper jabbed deftly at the university head on two occasions. He said that Dr. Byrd had been maintaining that the university is under legislative mandate to provide Negro education in Maryland. The truth is, said Judge Soper, that the mandate merely required the university to share Federal land-grant allowances with a Negro educational institution.

Out-Of-State Scholarships

Judge Soper also referred to the fund to provide out-of-State scholarships for Negro students who would otherwise have to be admitted to graduate departments of the University of Maryland. The fund was established in 1935 with \$10,000, has now grown to \$100,000 a year and is dispensed by Morgan's trustees. Observed Judge Soper:

"The sum involved has reached such a substantial size that it has attracted the attention of the president of the university. He now suggests that in the future the fund be administered jointly by the president of Morgan and the president of Princess Anne."

One of the committeemen reported after the hearing that Judge Soper was heard more attentively than any witness at Annapolis during the present session of the General Assembly. Judge Soper was accompanied by most of the Morgan trustees, Howard H. Murphy, chairman of the Maryland Committee of Equal Educational Opportunities, also appeared.