

Negro Vote

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FOBEWARNED IS FOREARMED

There is every reason to believe that the Willis Smith forces in the Primary Election on June 24th will stop at nothing in their efforts to win. In order to meet their challenge on that day, the Graham supporters must be prepared for all situations. We must warn our friends what to expect and how to combat the tactics of the Willis Smith crowd.

Below are some of the devices that you may encounter. After each trick or device, you will find what we regard as an effective answer to it.

1. NEGRO VOTERS WILL BE CHALLENGED IN LARGE NUMBERS ON ELECTION DAY. The principal ground for the challenges will probably be inability to read and write the constitution. This ground for challenge will be made regardless of the individual voters education and intelligence.

The purpose of these wholesale challenges will be to discourage negroes from voting. Those doing the challenging will not be concerned with pressing charges in each case. They will merely want those waiting in line to know that they, too, will be challenged. In this way, they hope to intimidate the faint-hearted and to frighten them away from the polls without voting.

ANSWER: Inform the Negroes in your precinct what to expect. Explain to them that the whole procedure will be aimed at scaring them away from the polls. They have nothing to fear if they can read and write reasonably well.

The law provides that any voter may challenge the qualifications of any other voter. The challenge may be made on election day. The person doing the challenging states his reasons to the registrar when the challenged voter appears at the polls. The challenger must then step back and permit the registrar to decide for himself whether the challenge has merit or not. If a voter's ability to read and write the constitution is questioned the registrar asks the challenged voter to read and write a portion of it. Should the registrar decide in favor of the voter, he hands the voter a ballot and requests that the voter sign it before placing it in the box. The challenge is then at an end.

2. NEGROES WILL BE WARNED NOT TO VOTE UPON PAIN OF PROSECUTION FOR FAILURE TO PAY THEIR POLL TAXES AND PERSONAL PROPERTY TAXES. They will be reminded of the arrests and prosecutions that occurred ten or twelve years ago after Negroes had voted heavily in a local election.

Here again the object of the Smith forces will be to discourage the Negroes from voting. They may even go so far as to send out cards or other so-called notices of taxes due to those who voted on May 27th. These "notices" will clearly convey the idea that those who vote in the second primary will get into trouble over their taxes.

ANSWER: The law requires people to pay their taxes regardless of whether they vote or not. Also, a person may vote even though he has failed to pay taxes or even to list his property for taxes.

It is not a crime to fail to pay one's taxes, however, it is a crime to fail to list one's property for taxes.

The law provides criminal penalties, including fines and jail sentences, for those who fail to list their personal property for taxes. All males between the ages of 21 and 50 are required to pay a County Poll or head tax of two dollars (\$2.00) without regard to whether they have voted or not. Women are not required to pay this tax.

Several years ago, Raleigh Negroes who had failed to list their personal taxes and to list themselves for Poll Taxes were prosecuted. The names of those who were prosecuted were drawn largely from the list of voters in the Negro precincts.

There was nothing illegal about such a procedure, though it was unfair. The unfairness arose from the fact that no effort was made to collect back taxes from those who did not vote. The tax law should have been enforced without regard to whether a person voted or not.

If a person has listed his personal property for taxes, he has nothing to fear from threats of this kind. Those who have not listed their property and have not listed themselves for Poll taxes should do so before June 24th. They should go to the tax offices at the Wake County Courthouse and at the City Hall and straighten out their tax records. Once a voter's tax records are straight, he has nothing to fear from having voted on May 27th or from voting on June 24th.

3. THOSE WHO SIGNED PETITIONS FOR THE PROGRESSIVE PARTY IN 1948 MAY BE CHALLENGED AT THE POLLS ON ELECTION DAY. The reason for the challenge will be that the voter is not a true member of the Democratic Party and, therefore, should not be allowed to vote in a Democratic Party Primary.

ANSWER: This, again, is a phony ground for challenge. All that matters is whether a person is registered as a Democrat. If his name so appears in the registration books, he is entitled to vote in the Democratic Party Primary on June 24th. A registered Democrat can sign petitions for another party without losing his standing as a Democrat.

The only difficulty that may arise comes from those who actually changed their party registration from Democratic to Progressive. Those who now appear on the books as Progressive cannot vote in the Democratic Primary. They should have changed their registration when the books were open.