

On October 10, 1956, Assistant Attorney General Warren Olney III testified concerning the facts regarding Ouachita Parish before the Senate Subcommittee on Privileges and Elections and recommended that the Subcommittee hold public hearings in advance of the general election. The Subcommittee took no action with respect to the situation. Had the Administration's program been in effect the Department would have been able to initiate a civil action for the purpose of restoring the Negro voters to the rolls of registered voters in time to vote in the November election.

Our investigation has revealed similar situations in several other Louisiana parishes. Related problems have developed in other states. For example, our investigations disclosed the following situations in North Carolina just prior to the North Carolina primary elections of May 1956.

The North Carolina Constitution (Article VI, Section 4) and statutes (Gen. Stats. 1943, Ch. 163, Art. 6, Sec. 28) provide that a person, to become a registered voter, must be able to read and write any section of the North Carolina Constitution to the satisfaction of the Registrar. The Constitution and Statute also contain a "grandfather clause" exempting any male person (or his lineal descendent), entitled to vote January 1, 1867, from this requirement if such person registered prior to December 1908.

1. Camden County, (Courthouse Township Precinct). In this precinct, the Registrar gave the reading and writing tests to Negro applicants, but not to white applicants. The latter were permitted to register upon showing the necessary residence etc.

In giving the reading and writing tests to Negroes, the Registrar demanded that they write the preamble to the Constitution from her dictation. She required in this connection that all spelling, punctuation and capitalization be correct. The complainants, 4 Negro high school graduates, failed the test, although 2 later memorized the preamble and passed another test.

