

1/31/34

Letter Box

To the Editor:

We have a strange situation here in Durham county. We have a splendid farm agent here in the person of Mr. Smith, out of a job, nothing to do, and wants a job. The state of North Carolina and the federal government who pay the salary, or most of it, say that he is satisfactory to them; the farmers for whom he was appointed to serve, are demanding that he be reappointed; at this particularly time he is sorely needed; yet the board of county commissioners say, "Let the whole works be damned."

That Caesar-like attitude on the part of the commissioners would be sufferable if there was any reason for it. The minutes of the meeting that discharged Mr. Smith, without the right to be heard, as read by Mr. Newsom, as I understood them, said the motion to discharge Smith was made by Commissioner Harris and seconded by Mr. Hurst. Mr. Harris does not say that any delegation of farmers came before the board demanding the discharge of Smith, so we will presume that he acted on his own knowledge as to the qualifications a farm agent should have. But what knowledge does Mr. Harris have of the qualifications that a farm agent should have? The only experience that I can think of just now was when he cured several hundred pounds of meat for the county home, and every piece of it rotted. Yet, he knows all about the needs of the farmers of Durham county.

But Mr. Hurst said in substance at our meeting, "There came before us a delegation of farmers demanding that we discharge Mr. Smith, but don't ask me who they were for I don't know." A darkey caught with a jug of whisky always says that the whisky was given to him for "camphire" but when proded as to who gave it to him says, "It was a long yellow fellow." Now, don't you think Mr. Hurst should be as specific as the darkey with the jug? Doesn't it look like that when a fellowman's reputation is at stake, when his whole prospect in life is at stake, when the welfare of his wife and family are hanging in the balance, that he would have inquired if they were from Durham county, and if they were white or colored, and have asked them what their names were and let them reduce their charges to writing, as is the custom among civilized peoples, and let Mr. Smith answer these charges if he could?

But Mr. Hurst, with all his Christian charity, did not choose to proceed that way. He took those anonymous charges, not even backed by a name, and proceeded to judgment against his fellowman. One naturally wonders if Mr. Hurst brings to each question that comes before the board, that wisdom, that spirit of fairness, that discretion, that care, that judicial mind that he employed in the firing of Mr. Smith. However, it may be that, as no one of the county commissioners saw this delegation but Mr. Hurst, it was a heavenly vision, and if it was, no one could blame him for "being obedient unto that heavenly vision."

J. A. PERRY.

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