

Expressed by Our Contemporaries

The New Negro in The New South

(From the Herald-Tribune.)

Is it too much to hope that the withdrawal of challenges against 330 Negroes who registered to vote in the Democratic party primaries in Raleigh, N. C., is indicative of a changing disposition toward the Negro in the South? It at least marks an unusual attitude: Josephus Daniels's newspaper referred to the mere registration of black men in the Democratic party as "a dagger at the heart" of the party. And now Senator Simmons's supporters—most of the registrants appear to have been Bailey men—have decided to withdraw their protest.

It was in the course of a fight for school improvement that most of these Raleigh Negroes first registered as Democratic voters. The fight was then local, and little attention was paid to the race issue. A large proportion of those who registered were college graduates, lawyers and physicians; they were men of substance, whose judgment, apart from the color of their skin, had obvious significance. And it is likely that, with the increasing economic importance of the Negro in the South, there will be more and more occasions on which local interests will lead even Democratic politicians to think of the colored citizens as what the Fourteenth Amendment intended them to be—voters.

Most of the Southern states today bar Negroes from the Democratic party primaries. A Texas state law barring them was declared unconstitutional by the United States Supreme Court; the substitute law, promptly passed, which without outlawing them by state act explicitly permitted party committees to debar them, was upheld by the Federal District Court and is now pending before the Circuit Court of Appeals. A similar Virginia law was held invalid by the district court and is also pending before the higher tribunal. In Florida and Arkansas the state courts are apparently waiting Federal adjudication before committing themselves in cases

which have long been pending. But in the border states Negroes today vote freely—in Baltimore, Louisville, Memphis, St. Louis and in most Oklahoma cities; and perhaps the Raleigh action indicates a tendency for North Carolina too to act as a border state.

Even in the deep South attitudes are changing. It was an extraordinary editorial from "The Albany (Ga.) Herald" that Mr. Raymond cited in yesterday's Herald-Tribune in discussing changes in the old Southeast. The paper was discussing the sale of the old Phil Cook plantation, a 1,400-acre estate, which had belonged to a Confederate general, to a Negro who had been a tenant on the plantation for eighteen years. And "The Albany Herald," referring to a plantation which had been the pride of Lee County, respectfully referred to the son of a slave who bought it in at auction for \$16,000 cash as "a practical and successful farmer, who is highly thought of in this community."

New times, new attitudes.