

Carolina Expert Explains Why Dixie Resents Meddling in Racial Question

BY BEM PRICE

CHAPEL HILL, N. C., June 14.—(AP)—Nothing baffles the Yankee so much as Southern resentment over "meddling" in the race issue. Why? Dr. Howard W. Odum, a big, friendly and rumped professor at the University of North Carolina, has been giving the matter some thought for the better part of 50 years.

As a result Dr. Odum has come to be recognized generally as the

foremost authority on the South and its problems.

DR. ODUM PUTS IT this way: "A Protestant might go to a Catholic and say, 'Look here, you are doing more to hurt Christianity than anyone else.' The Catholic, quite naturally, would be resentful.

"The same thing applies here," Dr. Odum continued. "The Yankee might say to the Southerner, 'You are doing more to hurt democracy than anyone else.' Now he

might be right, but there would be resentment."

For those extremists, North and South, Dr. Odum has this message: "It is provincial to argue segregation when the nation outside the South has decided it will not even negotiate on any basis but the elimination of segregation, and the South insists the matter isn't even a subject for debate.

"The Southern Dixiecrats reflected immaturity when they set up as a standard of voting for a president how you felt about segregation.

"Some of the nation's intellectuals are so immature as to assume that age-old race prejudice and religious folk conflicts have been put on purposely like a garment—and that a simple edict from Congress will cast off the garment and make the people over.

"MANY SOUTHERNERS are so naive as to assume the South can continue in an isolation which takes place in its segregation economy in a changing world.

The doctor concluded there were hot-headed folk who retarded progress and that these often were matched by those who "crying peace and brotherhood," set the stage for class conflict.

It would be best, said Dr. Odum, if these folk would settle down and approach the whole task of finding a solution in a spirit of giving up something.

As for the rest of the picture, the author of the exhaustive "Southern Regions of the United States" explained that back in the decade 1920-30, there was every evidence that the South was being reintegrated into the nation.

But then, he continued, a strange thing happened. There was a re-



DR. HOWARD ODUM exhibits a prize Jersey bull

vival of the old sectional conflict during the depression and again during World War II.

"The revival of the term 'The South' came about in two ways. One was typified in the now noted slogan that the South was the nation's economic problem number one. The South was 'Tobacco Road.' It was again missionary territory.

"In the second place, 'The South' came to be synonymous with conservatism, or reactionary policies due to the opposition of many southern congressmen and state governors to New Deal policies."

These sectional divisions were intensified, Dr. Odum went on, with the coming of war.

"The nation realized suddenly that its ideas of the American dream guaranteed to all its citizens equal rights and opportunities. And that, while it had gone to war for global democracy, there was no such democracy practiced in the South.

"There is another factor. There may be no new South, nor new North, but there is a new Negro of great force and vitality.

"The Negro has changed tremendously. It is not only that he has developed an important upper and middle class; it is not only that he has developed a magnificent leadership and thousands have received higher educational opportunities.

"IT IS NOT ONLY THAT the Negro youth, sensing change, is minded to experiment with every type of equal opportunity. It is all this and more.

"It is as if some universal message has come through to the great mass of Negroes, urging them to dream new dreams and to protest against the old order.

"The net result is a new Negro facing the old white man and joining with the 'North' against the 'south.'"

(Next: The Dixiecrat)