

STATEMENT

State of Mississippi
County of Sunflower

August 3rd, 1964

Mrs. Earline King 118 Front Street, Ruleville, Mississippi
29 years old Restaurant operator 756-4947

I have been living in Ruleville for 10 years and have five boys. Four of my boys go to Ruleville Central High. My eldest child is in the 5th grade this year; one is in the 4th grade, one in the 2nd and one in the 1st.

Since 1959 I have been aware that there are many fund raising devices that go on in both the High School and the grammar school of Ruleville Central High. The "negro" teachers would come around and ask for money (\$4 or \$5 usually). They said it was for boys basketball suits. It was called the Queen Drive. Students would also come around and ask for money. They would sell garbage cans, \$4 each; I don't remember where the money went. The best I can remember the children would be out all 8 months of the school year, asking for many for one thing or another and they would be from all of the classes. There was a fund raising drive for a cat-walk, inter-com system and other things. Last year the 12th grade bought a water cooler and paid for the installation. They paid \$8 a piece. Every year the graduating class buys something for the children or for the school. Last year I think the class put up a monument of some kind in front of the school with lights in it. Each year the class leaves an amount of money in the Senior Class treasury. Last year it was \$200 and other years there has always been something left. The money stays with the principal, Mr. Smith, and his assistant principal, Mrs. Mitchell. The next year the students are told that there is no money in the treasury, that it's been spent.

From the grammar school to the high school all year long the kids are selling something or another. The teachers tell them that they have to sell these things to raise money, but the kids don't know for what. They just tell me "the teacher tells me to sell it."

Two or three girls told me they couldn't go back to school unless they sold what they were selling. They told me they wouldn't make their grade. The young children have tickets most every night for winning cakes and other things. They come home and just beg for money. They say, "Mama, we just got to have this money." They just sell everything. Cedar chest, hams, cakes, groceries etc. And they have to pick cotton every year; not just one year, but every year. Two years ago my eldest son came home and told us, "Mether, we have to go pick cotton tomorrow. If we don't go we have to pay \$1." I said, "No, I won't let you go to the field, I don't remember if I paid the \$1 that time, but I knew I didn't pay it once and I did pay it once."

I have seen young girls in the streets begging for money and I told them to stop that because anything could be said to young girls begging for money. They were begging around the local cafes. They said to me that they had to have the money so they could go back to school.

My son told me (and one teacher I talked to told me) that teachers and students would be selling food during class hours and that would distract much of the class work.

I have heard the older boys say that if they pay Mrs. Mitchell \$5, she will pass them. We also have some rough men teachers - they get out to drinking and feel these little teen age girls.