

# ***Exodus Seen as Threat to the System on Eve of Integration Move***

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**JACKSON, Miss., Jan. 4—**On the eve of widespread classroom desegregation, a mass exodus of white students to private schools is posing a serious threat to Mississippi's public education system.

"What we're going to wind up with eventually," a state legislator said here today, "is private schools for the white kids and a state-subsidized system for the niggers."

The increased emphasis on private schools results from orders of the United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit, implementing a Supreme Court ruling, requiring that 222 schools in 30 districts be integrated by last Saturday. The deadline's effect will be felt tomorrow, when pupils return from the Christmas-New Year holiday.

Tensions in many of the districts are great. Because of this, those who were willing to discuss integration problems asked that they not be identified.

Local and state officials, in-

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**WATCHING SCHOOL ADDRESS:** A Mississippi family listening as Gov. John Bell Williams discussed school desegregation on television Saturday night. More than 200 public schools have been ordered to desegregate when they reopen after the Christmas holidays.

# Whites Fleeing Mississippi Schools

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cluding Gov. John Bell Williams and the Mississippi School Superintendent, Garvis Johnston, have made public appeals to white parents, asking them to cooperate in the transition from generations of segregation to a unitary school system. But the private school business is booming and will probably improve in the coming months.

Confronted with Federal court orders for immediate integration in every public school in the state, thousands of white parents are making a final attempt to avoid integration by enrolling their children in segregated and privately operated institutions.

Some of schools recently ordered by the Supreme Court to integrate immediately "may have nothing but Negro students," a lawyer for the Department of Justice speculated last week. Many local educators and other officials agree with this view.

## Enrollment Explodes

Here in Jackson, whose system was not part of the Supreme Court decision of Oct. 29 that erased "all deliberate speed" from compliance with the desegregation ruling, enrollment in private schools operated by the White Citizens' Council exploded last month from slightly less than 500 students to substantially more than 3,000.

In Amite County, one of the districts ordered to integrate immediately, nearly all of the 900 white students at one school have registered, in a newly founded private school or in an older but similar institution in nearby Louisiana.

In Hattiesburg, an organization called Citizens for Local Control of Education is organizing a boycott of the public schools in Forrest County when they open on Wednesday and promoting enrollment in the private school, which is completely filled, according to a spokesman, and "overenrolled" with about 1,000 students.

The Governor's appeal for an absence of violence has been quietly joined by leaders of the state's business community, who have started a campaign of phone calls and letters to civic and business figures in various communities, warning that violence will bring economic ruin to Mississippi's commerce and industry.

"We're pretty well convinced that there won't be any violence," a prominent Jackson banker said today. "Everybody's hurt by violence, including the banks. And besides, the private schools are solving that problem."

His opinion is shared by many others who believe that white parents are choosing the private schools as an alternative to violence.

## Police Protection

But law enforcement agencies and officers are not so confident. Federal marshals and agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation will be on hand tomorrow when nine of the districts begin their second semester, and the Mississippi Highway Patrol will be on alert in those areas.

Schools in Kemper, Madison, Noxubee, Wilkinson, Lawrence, Marion, Quitman and Enterprise Counties will open tomorrow, as well as those in the consolidated system in North Pike and South Pike Counties.

Schools in four other districts begin Wednesday, in two others on Thursday and in three others on Friday. Schools in the remaining districts are scheduled to open next week.

According to some sources, there are private schools already in operation or about to begin classes in all of the counties included in the Supreme Court decision.

But nowhere in the state has the impact of resistance been greater than in nearby Canton, Miss., where Negro students outnumber white students by nearly 3 to 1 and more than 93 per cent of the 1,300 white students have enrolled in a private school.

For the last week, parents and students have been sawing, hammering and cleaning in an old factory once used to produce tents and now destined to serve as classrooms for more than 1,000 young white students.

The white people of Canton, a teacher there said, "have decided that the battle with the

Federal Government is over and that there is nothing left to do but either let their kids go to school with the coloreds or pay tuition to keep them apart."

Their solution is not one readily available to all white citizens in the state who oppose integration. Many of them are poor and they "probably will just keep their kids out of school," the teacher said. "They can't afford whatever it costs to put them in a private one."

Since the Legislature, which convenes here Tuesday, has already repealed the compulsory school attendance law — a requisite for closing public schools to avoid desegregation — the parents who keep their children out of school will not be pressed by the authorities and truancy laws.

"These are the folks I'm worried about," said the teacher. "They have no alternative except no school or integrated school—and they're just the ones who might start trouble."