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8/13/63

Barnett Says Delay Degree To Meredith

By CHARLES M. HILLS
Clarion-Ledger Staff Writer

Gov. Ross Barnett told the State College Board and officials at the University of Mississippi here Monday that the first Negro to enter the school should not be given a diploma, pending investigations.

The state's chief executive, in a prepared statement, "strongly urged" that the presentation of a diploma to James H. Meredith be deferred.

He spoke on behalf of the State Sovereignty Commission, of which Barnett is chairman, stating that the commission is awaiting a report as to whether Meredith violated a directive from the University banning press releases or statements by students.

The governor submitted information on incidents in which he said, Meredith has repeatedly made derogatory statements about the state and officials.

Gov. Barnett said that the Board of Trustees for the State Institutions of Higher Learning has not reported on the investigation and urged that the board speed its report. He said the Sovereignty Commission and the people are entitled to know.

The governor's full statement follows:

"On January 31, 1963, Chancellor Williams of the University of Mississippi, issued a directive against students and faculty giving out press releases, statement, radio and TV interviews likely to create disorder or do harm to our educational program stating that they would be regarded as unacceptable behavior.

"Student James H. Meredith has repeatedly made public statements which, in my opinion, clearly and unmistakably violate the terms of this directive.

"I have called the attention of Chancellor Williams and members of the College Board to Meredith's flagrant disregard of school discipline in making the following statements:

"I, James H. Meredith, call for a general boycott or "everything possible" by all Negroes within the boundaries of the State of Mississippi." We all know that a boycott is a strict violation of the laws of the State of Mississippi.

"Other inflammatory remarks of James Meredith which appeared in print are:

"I want this non-cooperation by Negroes with the System of White Supremacy to last until the system is changed."

"A Negro's life is not worth the air it takes to keep it alive in Mississippi."

"This system under which we live in Mississippi and through-

out the South must be changed at any cost."

"There is nothing provided under this system for the Negro which is worth having."

"He publicly criticized the courts of Mississippi, the juries and the public officials, and added, 'All this behind the scene trickery is adding nothing but encouragement to the lawlessness of the White Supremacists.'"

"The Sovereignty Commission unanimously adopted a Resolution at its June meeting recommending that the College Board investigate student James Meredith's remarks and determine if they violated the directive of the Chancellor. The Sovereignty Commission recommended that if the directive had been violated, punitive action be taken against Meredith.

"I have been advised that a sub-committee of the College Board was appointed and began an investigation of these derogatory, harmful and vicious statements of James Meredith in not less than three news releases. As of this date, the sub-committee has made no official report of its findings insofar as the records of the Sovereignty Commission are concerned. Today, I have called on the College Board to speed up this investigation because the Sovereignty Commission is entitled to a report and the people of Mississippi are entitled to know their decision.

"In keeping with the Resolution of the Sovereignty Commission, I strongly urge the members of the Board of Trustees for the Institutions of Higher Learning, Chancellor Williams, the Dean and all others that the issuance of a diploma to James H. Meredith be deferred until such time as the investigation of the College Board subcommittee can be completed and a report made by personal representative before the Sovereignty Commission on Thursday, Aug. 15 at 2:30 p.m., the time of its regular monthly meeting."