

ON RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE  
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL



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Mr. Adams, fellow members and distinguished guests:

I am pleased to have the opportunity to be here this morning.

I bring to you warm and personal greetings from Robert Morgan, Attorney General of North Carolina.

Mr. Morgan regrets his inability to be present. This week he is attending the National Conference of State Attorneys General where he plans to exchange ideas with the Attorneys General of other states on vital problems in such areas as off-shore oil rights, consumer protection, improved law enforcement, crime prevention and detection, legislative services, and inter-agency law enforcement communications. Information gained in these meetings will hopefully provide North Carolina some insights into the prompt and equitable handling of these problems.

Mr. Morgan has asked that I thank you for your splendid cooperation during these first months of his administration and to thank you especially for your individual assistance with your Legislators on behalf of the Department of Justice. Without the continuing support of a vigorous Bar, the progress which we have made thus far would not have been possible and future progress would be stymied.

There are several continuing developments of which you should be made aware.

The newly-created Consumer Protection Division in the Department of Justice is continuing to work in the areas of consumer fraud, unlicensed marketing of securities, price fixing and unfair trade practices in general.

Strengthened by the enactment of the Consumer Protection Act (1969, c. 833) during this session of the General Assembly, the Division will move promptly to enjoin those engaged in Unfair Trade Practices in violation of the Act.

The 1969 General Assembly presented the Department with an opportunity to try additional legislative services. For the first time, the Attorney General maintained an office in the Legislative Building with a full-time administrative secretary and a rotating staff of attorney draftsmen. The results were favorable from almost every viewpoint.

Continuing consultations with representatives of the Michie Company in Charlottesville, Virginia, publishers of the General Statutes, have resulted in several noteworthy items.

First, a completely revised and rewritten Index to the General Statutes is in the process of being prepared. Closer supervision and guidance by the Department of Justice has been initiated to ensure that the new Index is not merely a "re-hash" of the present Index and to ensure that the new Index is responsive to the needs of the Bar.

Second, resulting from the rather pointed interest of the Attorney General, the 1969 Advance Legislative Service is said to be the most promptly issued and most timely statutory publication produced in recent years.

The State Bureau of Investigation is acting now to implement the planned improvements and expansions in service, staff, and facilities made possible by the appropriations of the 1969 General Assembly. A Narcotics Squad is being formed to deal with the burgeoning narcotics traffic in this State. New quarters are being arranged for the Bureau and the physical transfer should be completed within the year.

The relationship of the Superior Court Solicitors and District Court prosecutors to the Attorney General and his staff will receive increased attention in the coming months. The efficient and equitable administration of justice will profit from a closer working relationship between the trial and appellate counsel representing the State.

The Biennial Report of the Attorney General is being revised in scope, composition, and indexing. Our goal is to make available a handy working index to the written

formal opinions of the Attorney General on basic pertinent issues. The text of major opinions will be printed in full. Areas of concern to city, county, and school board attorneys will receive special attention in this undertaking.

In Greensboro this spring, the Attorney General discussed the need for revision of the criminal procedure and criminal law of North Carolina. In the same vein, we are now investigating the best possible methods and techniques for accomplishing a systematic, orderly improvement of our criminal law. The support and assistance of the organized Bar will be required in this revision and in securing its eventual enactment. "Putting our house in order" in the area of criminal law can result in benefits to the State and the public, as well as to the image of the practicing lawyer.

All of these efforts are aimed at our goal of providing the best possible legal representation for the State of North Carolina and for the taxpayers who foot the bill.

Toward this end, improvement of our services, Mr. Morgan has asked that I solicit each of you to call on us or correspond with us with your suggestions, your recommendations, and your constructive criticisms. Your thoughts and observations as successful practitioners will help us in determining the existence and priority of problems and will guide us in selecting the appropriate curative measures.

We extend to each of you a warm invitation to visit us in our offices in Raleigh whenever you are in town.

Thank you.