

8-22-1962

Manning Resumes Office As Celebration Is Slated

MONROE MORNING WORLD

Cecil Manning has resumed his duties as registrar of voters for East Carroll Parish, and the U. S. Justice Department has withdrawn civil and criminal contempt charges against him.

The federal - state compromise was reached here Wednesday in the chambers of U. S. District Judge Ben C. Dawkins Jr.

Manning, who had resigned the post June 14 which resulted in the charges, was reappointed earlier this week by the State Board of Registration and was sworn in shortly before the hearing slated here Wednesday.

FILES APPEAL

In another move Wednesday, State Attorney General Jack P. F. Gremillion filed an appeal in Shreveport to the Supreme Court on the dismissal by a three-judge court of his challenge of the constitutionality of a portion of the 1960 civil rights act which permits a judge to act as registrar. He challenged it on the grounds that it violated the doctrine of separation of powers.

Also while the compromise was being worked out here, The East Carroll Police Jury announced in Lake Providence special plans for a Cecil Manning Day to be held Sept. 1.

It will feature a parade through Lake Providence, sponsored by the police jury, town council, various civic groups and the

"Freedom 40 Club." A special invitation will be sent to U. S. Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy.

The compromise action here was called a forward step in amicable relations between the state and federal government by Judge Dawkins. He added that both had tried to be reasonable.

Judge Dawkins said Manning was technically guilty of criminal contempt because of his earlier resignation but that the court had no desire to be vindictive.

Manning had resigned as East Carroll voter registrar two weeks after Judge Dawkins issued an injunction forbidding him to discriminate against Negroes who tried to vote. The contempt action charged Manning had discriminated by quitting his post before a successor was named.

In the absence of a registrar, 43 Negroes were registered in East Carroll by U. S. District Judge Edwin F. Hunter Jr. of Lake Charles and Judge Dawkins. The 26 approved by Judge Hunter voted in the July 23 Democratic primary and were the first Negroes to vote in East Carroll Parish in 40 years.

USE NEW TEST

In resuming his duties, Manning will be using the state's new registration test which was drawn up by the State Sovereignty Commission and reportedly is acceptable to the federal government.

Charges against Manning were dismissed after attorneys for the Civil Rights Division of the Justice Department moved for the action. Judge Dawkins said the civil matter had become moot with the appointment of Manning.

Manning was defended by Gremillion, Assistant State Attorney General Harry J. Kron, District Attorney Thompson L. Clarke of St. Joseph, and members of the bar group of East Carroll Parish.

After charges were dismissed, Gremillion issued a statement in which he declared that Manning "was not and never was guilty of any contempt of any kind and the dismissal of the citations vindicates this judgment. I consider it a tremendous victory for the people of East Carroll Parish."

He also declared that "as far as the State of Louisiana is concerned, we consider the efforts in Mr. Manning's behalf successful."

Manning also issued a statement pointing out that he would "apply the examinations to all applicants fairly, strictly and impartially."

"Certain rules and tests were recently adopted by the Louisiana Legislature in 1962 which all registrars in the state will administer to all applicants," he continued. "As a result of this new law, I feel I can now perform the duties of the office without fear that every act performed by me could be the basis of a criminal contempt, pro-

edings against me by the Justice Department."