

# Only Two Alternatives

Everything that Attorney General Malcolm Seawell says about the rights of five-and-dime stores to eject or arrest Negro lunch counter patrons is true.

Under the law a business establishment may pick and choose its own clientele. Private real estate is still private real estate in North Carolina.

But that hardly answers the unanswered question from the very beginning: How can variety stores, which cater to low income clientele including Negroes, expect to attract business at one counter and then kick it in the pants at another?

As of now the problem is non-existent in restaurants and cafes which do not sell other merchandise. But Woolworth and Kress are national five-and-dime stores.

They cater to white and Negro business inside and outside the South. No business wants to alienate customers. The prospect of arresting patrons anxious to buy is anathema to all businessmen.

Contrary to Attorney General Malcolm Seawell's alternatives (which call for new municipal ordinances, arrests and discipline for students by college officials), we think there are only two real choices.

One is to close the lunch counters entirely.

The other is to open them up to all customers on an equal basis.

The stores must make the decision. The Raleigh News and Observer certainly offered the sensible punch line when it said, "You can't have your chocolate cake and eat it too."