

Gentlemen, I have the honor, privilege and responsibility of serving as Mayor of the leading Southeastern City of Atlanta, Georgia. Atlanta has a City population of slightly over 500,000 people and a metropolitan population slightly over 1,100,000 people. The 500,000 people that make up the central City of Atlanta consists of 300,000 white citizens and slightly over 200,000 Negro citizens. In general, Atlanta is 60% white and 40% Negro.

Nowhere is the problem of the elimination of discrimination between the races more prevalent than it is to the local elected official who must wrestle with and solve this problem created by circumstances beyond his control and then ignored by the responsible parties who should lend definition to the solution. I speak of the problem as having been brought into focus by Supreme Court decisions and then generally ignored by the President and Congress of the United States.

Faced daily with the almost unsolvable problem of the elimination of discrimination as directed by the Federal Courts, local officials must often wonder where the Congress of the United States stands in offering definition or explanation in the solution of the most difficult national problem that we have ever had.

We cannot help but look with amusement . . . if not suspicion . . . as certain members of the Congress and the Senate denounce the decisions

of the Supreme Court and offer no relief to the dilemma that local officials are confronted with in carrying out these decisions. You gentlemen must be conscious of the fact that whereas President Kennedy has made two appointments to the Court and there are _____ Eisenhower appointments and _____ Truman appointments and _____ Roosevelt appointments, only the Senate of the United States has as an elected body the continuing function over the years of approving all of these appointments. What I am saying, gentlemen is -- This is your Court that has brought into focus this problem and only you could have changed its overall makeup through the years.

Regardless of our convictions, feelings or emotions in the matter of racial discrimination, the time has come when we must face up to simple facts. These facts are either --- we must eliminate racial discrimination or you must provide a legal means for a two-caste system in this country and carry out through legal enactment for local officials to deal with such a system. You cannot continue to say that this is a local problem when it exists in ~~at~~ nearly every city in America -- in nearly every state in America -- and all across the Nation.

You have asked me here to give you the background of Atlanta's local success in dealing with this grave problem. Basically we have only been successful because we accepted the inevitability of the Court's

decisions and attempted to solve them by local cooperation. It should be perfectly plain that the solution in every instance granted to the Negro citizen rights which white American citizens and American business had previously reserved to themselves as special privileges. These privileges have been carried out by a multitude of local and ~~state/white~~ statewide ordinances that provided for segregation in every conceivable form. I make it perfectly plain to you gentlemen that in not a single instance have we enhanced or retained segregated privileges where we have dealt with this matter.

Following a series of reasonable desegregation such as golf courses and busses in the 50's, Atlanta took the following major steps in the early 60's:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Area</u>	<u>Action</u>
9/61	Schools	Court order
10/61	Department & variety stores lunch counters	voluntary action *
1/62	City Facilities	voluntary (city officials)
5/62	Downtown and arts theatres	voluntary *
5/63	Negro firemen hired	voluntary (city officials)
6/63	Swimming pools	Court order - voluntary decision to open pools (city officials)
6/63	18 leading hotels	voluntary *
6/63	Approximately 33 leading restaurants	voluntary *

- * In each instance voluntary action consisted of cooperative action between operators of affected businesses and responsible Negro leadership.

You can readily see that in some instances this has been under Court action and in other instances has been voluntary prior to Court action. In each instance it has resulted in the white citizen giving up special privileges which he enjoyed under a segregated society and has resulted in the Negro citizen being given rights which all other people had and which he did not previously enjoy.

It would be well for me to explain to you how limited this transition has been and how little of it the Negro citizen can participate in even at this time. Out of hundreds of restaurants in Atlanta, the above desegregation affects less than fifty of them. The hotel plan is based on conventions and although prominent Negroes have been accepted in several hotels, the Negro citizen ~~has~~ as a whole seldom shows up. With 200,000 Negro citizens in Atlanta, one of Atlanta's leading restaurants had sixteen of them to dine ^{there} ~~and~~ during the first week of its desegregation and has not had any since this day. All of this, gentlemen, is a question of economics and it should be remembered that the right to use something does not in any way indicate that it will be used ~~of~~ or misused by the lower economic groups.

The above statements concern the actual changes in Atlanta's elimination of discrimination.

May I now submit to you my personal reasons why we think Atlanta has resolved some of these problems whereas in other Southern cities, the solution has seemed to be impossible and strife and conflict have resulted.

It would be best for me to describe a recent visit of an official delegation from a great Eastern city that has a Negro population of over 600,000 consisting of in excess of 20% of their whole population. They came to Atlanta to determine why we had gone further with success and were enjoying a great economic prosperity whereas they were having unlimited racial problems and an unemployment rate of approximately three times of what Atlanta's was. I am not necessarily referring that racial peace brings economic prosperity. However, in Atlanta, the two have gone together.

This delegation simply did not understand and would hardly believe that the business, civic and political interests of Atlanta had intently concerned itself with its Negro population. I do not believe until yet that they are convinced that all of our civic bodies backed by the public interest and carried out by the City Government have daily concerned themselves with an effort to solve our gravest problem -- ~~it~~ and that is

race relations. Gentlemen, Atlanta has not swept this question under the rug at any point. Step by step - sometimes under Court order - sometimes voluntarily moving ahead of pressures - sometimes adroitly - and many times clumsily - we have tried to find a solution through an agreement between the effected white ownership and the Negro leadership to each of these problems.

To do this we have not appointed a huge bi-racial committee that becomes a stop-gap for every conceivable question, but on the other hand each time the problem has come into focus, we have appointed theatre owners to deal with the top Negro leaders - or hotel owners to deal with the top Negro leaders - or voluntarily certain restaurant owners dealt with the top Negro leadership , and by developing the lines of community and respectability, we have been able to reach an amicable solution.

Other cities have worked equally as hard and in many instances have failed and ~~had~~ I would like to explain to you ~~why~~ why I think we have succeeded where they have sometimes failed.

Atlanta is the center of higher Negro education in the world. There are six great Negro Universities and Colleges located inside our City limits. They are Atlanta University, Clark College, Morehouse, Morris Brown College, Spelman College and an interdenominational religious seminary. As a result of higher education being available in the area, ~~the~~ a great number of intelligent, well-trained Negro citizens have chosen to remain in this city. As a result of their training and

higher education they have had the capacity to develop a great Negro business community. In Atlanta it consists of financial institutions like banks - building and loan associations - life insurance companies, like the Atlanta Life Insurance Company - chain drug stores - real estate dealers. In fact, they have developed, I believe, in almost every line of acknowledged American business. Then there is another strong factor. In Atlanta there is a strong daily Negro newspaper - The Atlanta Daily World. Owned and operated by a prominent Negro family - the Scott family - they operate a chain of daily and weeklies throughout the country. But it is the strength of a daily newspaper with vested interests backed by an educated religious and business community that carries its voice to the Negro citizens.

Do not be misled by the word "conservative" as they are as desirous of additional civil and economic and personal rights as any American citizen is. They simply realize that it is more important to obtain these rights than it is to create demonstrations. And it is to the end of obtaining these rights that they constantly address themselves.