

SL TRIBUNE

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—Associated Press Wirephoto
Ivan Allen Jr. . . . Calls
for accommodations action.

Atlanta Chief Asks Okeh For 'Rights'

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WASHINGTON, July 26 — The mayor of Atlanta told Congress Friday it must enact a public accommodations law or southern cities like Atlanta that have tried to ban discrimination may slip back into segregated patterns.

MAYOR IVAN ALLEN JR. broke the solid line of southern opposition to civil rights legislation as he injected this new note into the hearing of the Senate Commerce Committee.

"Failure to pass this bill," said Allen, "would amount, by inference, to an endorsement of private business setting up an entirely new status of discrimination throughout the nation.

"Cities like Atlanta might slip backwards."

Hotels and restaurants that have already taken this issue upon themselves and opened their doors might find it convenient to go back to the old status . . . in my opinion, it would start the game all over

of squabbles and demonstrations that we have had in the past."

"IF I HAD YOUR problem, armed with the local experience I have had, I would pass a public accommodations bill," said Allen.

He asked that southern communities be given time to make the adjustment voluntarily before being hauled into court.

In response to questions, he suggested a two-year grace period for cities, and more for small communities.

"But the point I want to emphasize again," he said, "is that now is the time for legislative action. We cannot dodge the issue."

"WE MUST take action now to assure a greater future for our citizens and our country . . . the elimination of segregation, which is slavery's stepchild, is a challenge to all of us to make every American free in fact as well as in theory."

This strong statement in behalf of equal rights from a 52-year-old native of Georgia deeply moved liberal members of the committee.

"I THINK," SAID Acting Chairman John O. Pastore (D-R.I.), "that when President Kennedy wrote his book 'Profiles in Courage' he was thinking of you."

It also led to a sharp exchange between Pastore and Sen. Strom Thurmond (D-S.C.), all-out opponent of any civil rights legislation.

WHEN THURMOND asked Allen if he would favor the legislation even if it meant closing every restaurant in Georgia, Pastore cut him off, calling it a "loaded" question of the have-you-stopped-beating-your-wife? type.

Pastore said he wouldn't permit questions asked to embarrass witnesses and to "catch tomorrow morning's headlines."

"I DON'T WANT the mayor to go home and be known as the man who wants to close all the little restaurants in Georgia," said Pastore.

Thurmond called Pastore's action "improper" and said he resented the "insinuation" that he had asked an unfair question. He said he was trying only to get the truth to the American people.

"Your truth is not my truth," snapped Pastore.

When the audience applauded, Thurmond called them "leftwingers" and said he was "surprised" that Pastore permitted the audience reaction.