

MINNESOTA RADIO TAPE FOR WEEK OF JUNE 24, 1964
FOR BROADCAST WEEK OF JUNE 27, 1964

Ladies and gentlemen. . .

This is Hubert Humphrey speaking to you from my office on Capitol Hill
in Washington. . .

Today I wish to take note of the historic action last week in the Senate in
passing the Civil Rights bill. It was a great landmark in advancing the cause
of freedom in America. It was a victory for the cause of morality and justice,
but I do not want to speak so much in terms of "victory". The Civil Rights
legislation, however essential it was, is only the beginning of the job that
needs to be done. We need the help also of all Americans in implementing this
legislation. We need the help of those who honestly opposed the bill or who
are skeptical about it.

The very fact that it has taken one hundred years from the time of the

emancipation of the Negro from slavery to grant him civil rights in law is itself a sign ~~that we are~~ of deeply rooted habits of thinking and behavior that do not yield to sudden change overnight.

The final Senate vote of 73-27 for the Civil Rights bill, following followed a 71-29 vote for cloture--the first time such had ever been invoked on a Civil Rights measure. Debate on the bill in the Senate took 83 days and consumed 736 hours and 10 minutes of time. The generous majorities for the legislation were not won easily. They reflect, I believe, the bi-partisan moral consensus of America that we cannot temporize with this issue any longer. We must acknowledge it and we must set about really solving it. Insofar as there were legal inhibitions which prevented making a start, I believe that the people of America told us in the Congress to get those legal inhibitions out of the way.

But this represents a beginning, not an end of the job to be done. I wish to be most emphatic about this. There will now be required the best efforts of political leaders, public officials, and American citizens in every section of the country to implement this legislation--to make it work.

To this end I ~~have~~ propose that local community and state officials around the nation convene a series of civil rights conferences to study ways of applying and enforcing this legislation. Each local community and state must

seek to evaluate their respective problems and tasks, and develop appropriate community action and support.

^{that}
All the new civil rights legislation does is to provide a framework of law within which problems involved in the abridgement of civil rights or their denial may be solved. The emphasis of the bill is primarily on voluntary compliance, plus local and state law enforcement. Federal intervention is only a last resort.

Problems vary in different states and local communities. They may be quite different in northern cities than they are in southern ones, but they may be no less severe and difficult. The days ahead pose a real test of the maturity of our people, both Negro and White. They pose a test of whether Negro and White can work together to dissolve old barriers, and develop a healthier and more active sense of community.

The Negro must make the most of his opportunities for education and training and not become discouraged because it takes time and because all bars to his advancement do not drop at once. The artificial barriers to the Negro's advancement are falling. The Negro has been called on for much patience. Those who are demonstrating and expressing the frustration of a century must have just a little more.

The simple question for white citizens is whether this nation is ready to guarantee equal rights under the law to every human being, regardless of race, color, or religion. I am confident that Americans can and will find ways to resolve on a peaceable and reasonable basis the problems which made the civil rights legislation necessary.

I find the present moment to be a time of sober rejoicing. We have crossed a big hurdle in the law. We must now overcome barriers in the human heart. I believe we will.

Thank you!



Minnesota Historical Society

Copyright in this digital version belongs to the Minnesota Historical Society and its content may not be copied without the copyright holder's express written permission. Users may print, download, link to, or email content, however, for individual use.

To request permission for commercial or educational use, please contact the Minnesota Historical Society.



www.mnhs.org