PRESS STATEMENT:

MALCOLM FRASER REPORTS FROM WASHINGTON

CIVIL RIGHTS:

The Civil Rights Bill has at last passed the United States Senate. It endured for 83 days of debate. It was finally passed on the anniversary of the day in which President Kennedy, the late President, sent a message to Congress requesting legislation on these matters. This legislation had become necessary because some States in particular had erected barriers which prevented full equality between the negro and the white people in the United States. Let me give one example, and this is perhaps one of the most controversial examples. There are some hotels in some areas that would not accept negro people as residents in the hotels. Under the new law such rules will be illegal.

It is unfortunate that the press of the world reports and highlights every conflict, every argument of note that occurs between negro and white people in this country. This tends to give people from afar a completely false impression of the situation. When riots in Alabama, or racial disharmony in Mississippi are reported we might tend to think that this is the natural order of events. This is not so. These things are the exception, they are not the rule.

I have not been into the deep south of this country, but in the parts where I have been I have not seen one example of discrimination. In all the restaurants or hotels where I have been all people have been fully welcome. While there is a great problem that this country before the eyes of the world is trying to solve we should not exaggerate it too much, we should not think that the reports we hear of disturbances are typical because they are not. The United States is, in fact, acting in many respects as the conscience of the world over this matter of race relations. The United States is trying hard, even desperately, to solve these great problems of human relationships. It is doing it in public, in the full light of day. When this is contrasted with some other countries that make no attempt to solve these problems but only divide people and races further from each other we realize how the United States deserves our respect for what she is trying to do.
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