

Mr. Granger recalled to the President that, in his lifetime, he has seen three different phases of Negro activity in the field of civil rights: during his World War I days, during the time of the depression, and today. He said he had not known a period when the bitterness of the Negro showed "more signs of congealing" than today. Mr. Granger continued, saying the Negro had been led to believe that there was hope and that progress was being made when, suddenly, it appears stopped. He said this was the reason for the reaction by the Negroes at last month's Summit meeting to the President's remarks, and because of which he assumed the President might be disappointed. He referred to Agnes Meyer's recent article in the Atlantic Monthly, calling her a person of "goodwill, even though not always of good judgment." He said that in this article she had "misquoted" (meaning misstated, I believe) the New York City School Board efforts. He said this type of article only brings about more confusion by well-meaning white people. He commended the kind of leadership exhibited by Dr. King in the South, who, he said, "kept alive a free spirit."



The Attorney General commented that the reason, in his mind, for any bitterness which might exist, is the very fact that progress is being made today, pointing out that in prior years speeches were made but progress did not follow, and so hope never really built up. Now, with the progress of the past recent years, some of the hopes have become realized; occasional setbacks or delays should be regarded only as temporary. Mr. Rogers said that we are defending the laws by aggressive court action whenever and wherever it appears that the legal facts are sufficient to bring them to a successful conclusion. He emphasized that it would be extremely unwise and damaging to institute court action in every individual complaint situation. He then said that he thought the statement lacked a written preface of the type which Mr. Randolph had just made orally (commending the accomplishments of this Administration) and gave no appearance of appreciation for the gains of recent years. He also recalled Mr. Wilkins' willingness to abandon Part III of the proposed Civil Rights Bill during the heat of last year's debate.

The President then spoke, saying that he was extremely dismayed to hear that after 5 1/2 years of effort and action in this field these gentlemen were saying that bitterness on the part of the Negro people was at its height. He wondered if further constructive action in this field would not only result in more bitterness.