

*An Appeal to the Nation for
the Rights of the Negro*

Speech of
Hon. Arthur W. Mitchell
of Illinois
in the
House of Representatives
January 9, 1940



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SPEECH
OF
HON. ARTHUR W. MITCHELL

Mr. MITCHELL. Mr. Chairman, 2 years ago I stood in this well and asked for the passage of this same bill. I am glad on this occasion to again lift my voice and ask this House to enact the bill and make it the law of the land. I agree with the gentleman who has just preceded me, who said that there is more in this bill than the mere stopping of a mob. I say to the House that the future of a large group of our citizens is wrapped up in the bill. We know what this terrible thing that we have met here to condemn has done to my group. We know what rights have been denied us by this so-called democracy, by those in authority, when it comes to administering the laws of this country, if my group is involved. I stand here this afternoon to appeal to you, to those of you who say that we want this to be a democracy in fact, to those of you who blush when we think of what is happening to minority groups in other parts of the world. I ask you to think with seriousness what American citizens here in the name of the law and civilization are doing to a minority group in this country. I have appeared in this well several times since I have been a Member of this House. I have never made a demagogic speech, and I never expect to. I believe that on occasions like this we ought to rise to the stature of real statesmanship and I believe also that there are standing in this country at this very moment fifteen millions of people, as loyal American citizens as this country has produced, waiting to see what this Congress will do with this bill. Mr. Chairman, I represent a group of people who have been disfranchised in a large part of the country in which we live. They cannot go to the ballot boxes and say who shall be sheriff of their counties. They are not permitted to vote and exercise their citizenship rights. Men have stood on this floor and have spoken of my group as a group of rapists unworthy of trust and confidence. I say to the gentlemen who have raised that question here that these people they are calling rapists are the same people who protected their wives and daughters when they were standing at the front in the Civil War, and if we are to believe the story that appears in *Gone With the Wind* they did not betray their trust at that time, and they have not betrayed it

since. They are laboring today under the most tremendous burden that has ever been placed on a group of people. They have been told that because they are colored they cannot hold office. They have been told that because they are colored they cannot sit on juries in this country, although the Supreme Court at a late moment said that must be reversed. They have been told that they cannot vote, that they must leave their destinies in the hands of others who will take care of them.

I heard a Member of this House yesterday recite the words of Thaddeus Stephens, and they were wretched words, but I wonder if that same gentleman would wince if I recited the words of many of the people I have heard in the Southland when talking about the rights and privileges of my own group. I lived in the South for the greater portion of my life, but now live in the Middle West. I was born in Alabama and reared in the cotton fields and the briar patches and the corn-fields of Alabama. Not only was I reared there, but I was largely educated there. It was my privilege to sit at the feet of that great leader, Booker Washington. I taught school in the States of Georgia and Alabama, and not a year has ever passed over my head that I did not spend a considerable portion of my time in that section. I know conditions there and know them as well as does any Member of this House. I know it is there that we have to work out the problems of my group, and I am asking for patience, for tolerance, justice, and equal protection of the law. I have the right and the duty to ask the same treatment for the Negro that is accorded all other groups. I am asking for justice from those people who hold our destinies in their hands, and who pass the laws of this country and are charged with the responsibility of enforcing the laws of the country. And what are we asking for in this bill? We are asking for very little—the full protection of our lives and a fair trial when we are accused of crime. I cannot understand how any American citizen could ask for less. We are asking that when you accuse us of crime and take us into your courts, where your people sit as judges, where your people are the prosecutors, that you protect us from the mobs and let the courts in an impartial manner decide our case. This is accorded all other groups, no matter where they come from. Then why cannot we be tried like anyone else, and if the court condemns us, then let us go to our death or pay a penalty for our crime—a penalty no greater than would be paid by members of other groups? That is all we ask and we are entitled to that. That is all this bill asks. Are you going to cast your vote against it because it is a step to bring about our protection?

Mr. Chairman, I have here some statistics showing the large number of people who have been lynched from time to time.

I shall not read them, but as a part of my remarks I ask unanimous consent that they be inserted in the RECORD at this point.

The CHAIRMAN. The Chair will state that under the rule the gentleman will have to obtain that permission in the House.

Mr. MITCHELL. I understood if it was something I had got together and adopted as a part of my remarks I could get that permission now. I can take the time to read these statements, but I did not want to do that.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman's unanimous-consent request was to include his own personal compilation?

Mr. MITCHELL. Yes.

The CHAIRMAN. Without objection, it is so ordered.

There was no objection.

Mr. MITCHELL. I will put in the RECORD a table which will show the number of lynchings which took place in this country from 1882 to 1936. This document will show the number of white people and the number of Negroes who were lynched. Then I will show the number of people who were lynched by States. My own State of Alabama lynched 47 white people and 296 colored people. All of the States are shown in this compilation which I will insert in the RECORD at this point.

The statement is as follows:

Lynchings, 1882-1936

	Whites	Negroes	Total
1882	64	49	113
1883	77	53	130
1884	160	51	211
1885	110	74	184
1886	64	74	138
1887	50	70	120
1888	68	69	137
1889	76	94	170
1890	11	85	96
1891	71	113	184
1892	69	162	231
1893	34	117	151
1894	58	134	192
1895	66	113	179
1896	45	78	123
1897	55	123	158
1898	19	101	120
1899	21	85	106
1900	9	106	115
1901	25	105	130
1902	7	85	92
1903	15	84	99
1904	7	76	83
1905	5	57	62
1906	3	62	65
1907	2	58	60
1908	8	89	97
1909	13	69	82
1910	9	67	76
1911	7	60	67

Lynchings, 1882-1936—Continued

	Whites	Negroes	Total
1912.....	2	61	63
1913.....	1	51	52
1914.....	3	49	52
1915.....	13	54	67
1916.....	4	50	54
1917.....	4	35	38
1918.....	4	60	64
1919.....	7	76	83
1920.....	8	53	61
1921.....	5	59	64
1922.....	6	51	57
1923.....	4	29	33
1924.....		16	16
1925.....		17	17
1926.....	7	23	30
1927.....		16	16
1928.....	1	10	11
1929.....	3	7	10
1930.....	1	20	21
1931.....	1	12	13
1932.....	2	6	8
1933.....	4	24	28
1934.....		15	15
1935.....	2	18	20
1936.....		8	8
Total.....	1,289	3,383	4,672

LYNCHINGS BY STATES, 1882-1936

Alabama.....	47	296	343
Arizona.....	29		29
Arkansas.....	59	226	285
California.....	41	2	43
Colorado.....	66	2	68
Delaware.....		1	1
Florida.....	24	248	272
Georgia.....	37	478	515
Idaho.....	20		20
Illinois.....	14	17	31
Indiana.....	33	14	47
Iowa.....	17	2	19
Kansas.....	35	19	54
Kentucky.....	64	141	205
Louisiana.....	56	333	389
Maryland.....	2	27	29
Michigan.....	7	1	8
Minnesota.....	5	4	9
Mississippi.....	41	522	563
Missouri.....	51	70	121
Montana.....	82	2	84
Nebraska.....	52	5	57
Nevada.....	6		6
New Jersey.....		1	1
New Mexico.....	33	3	36
New York.....	1	1	2
North Carolina.....	15	83	98
North Dakota.....	13	3	16
Ohio.....	10	16	26
Oklahoma.....	82	41	123
Oregon.....	20	1	21
Pennsylvania.....	2	6	8
South Carolina.....	4	154	158
South Dakota.....	27		27
Tennessee.....	47	200	247
Texas.....	143	345	488
Utah.....	6	2	8

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Lynchings, 1882-1936—Continued
 LYNCHINGS BY STATES, 1882-1936—continued

	Whites	Negroes	Total
Virginia.....	16	83	99
Washington.....	25	1	26
West Virginia.....	21	28	49
Wisconsin.....	6	-----	6
Wyoming.....	30	5	35
Total.....	1,289	3,384	4,673

LYNCHINGS, WHITES AND BLACKS, BY PERIODS, 1882-1936

	Whites	Negroes	Total
1882 to 1886.....	475	301	776
1887 to 1896.....	548	1,035	1,583
1897 to 1906.....	146	884	1,030
1907 to 1916.....	62	608	670
1917 to 1926.....	44	419	463
1927 to 1936.....	14	186	180
Total.....	1,289	3,383	4,672

Causes of lynchings classified, 1882-1936

Year	Homo- cides	Felonious assault	Rape	At- tempted rape	Robbery and theft	Insult to white persons	All other causes
1882.....	54	0	33	0	16	0	10
1883.....	71	0	24	3	4	0	28
1884.....	62	0	36	0	10	0	103
1885.....	91	2	28	0	1	0	62
1886.....	70	1	32	0	8	0	27
1887.....	54	0	41	0	6	0	19
1888.....	62	0	31	0	3	4	37
1889.....	73	1	34	6	10	1	45
1890.....	35	0	31	2	5	0	23
1891.....	58	14	39	2	12	1	58
1892.....	93	3	49	12	15	1	58
1893.....	60	2	34	4	8	2	41
1894.....	75	1	37	12	5	1	61
1895.....	68	0	34	13	7	0	57
1896.....	39	6	35	6	6	0	31
1897.....	67	2	26	9	14	2	38
1898.....	68	7	15	6	8	2	14
1899.....	43	2	17	9	7	1	27
1900.....	43	5	21	16	7	1	22
1901.....	51	7	17	8	10	0	37
1902.....	37	6	18	12	2	0	17
1903.....	50	7	15	8	0	1	18
1904.....	37	1	15	7	0	2	21
1905.....	3	3	11	7	2	0	7
1906.....	25	7	16	10	2	1	4
1907.....	16	7	12	12	4	1	8
1908.....	35	8	15	14	3	1	21
1909.....	46	5	14	5	3	4	5
1910.....	41	3	18	5	4	2	3
1911.....	36	3	6	3	7	3	4
1912.....	34	2	11	3	4	3	6
1913.....	25	4	7	3	1	1	11
1914.....	30	7	6	1	2	1	5
1915.....	9	11	11	6	9	3	3
1916.....	21	7	3	9	8	2	4
1917.....	7	3	7	6	1	6	8
1918.....	27	3	10	6	5	2	11
1919.....	8	8	9	10	1	7	19
1920.....	23	9	15	3	0	3	8

Causes of lynchings classified, 1882-1936—Continued

Year	Homicides	Felonious assault	Rape	At-tempted rape	Robbery and theft	Insult to white persons	All other causes
1921	19	8	16	3	0	3	15
1922	15	5	14	5	4	2	12
1923	5	5	6	1	1	2	13
1924	4	2	5	2	0	3	0
1925	8	1	4	2	0	1	1
1926	13	3	2	3	1	1	7
1927	7	2	2	3	0	0	2
1928	5	2	3	0	0	0	1
1929	1	3	3	0	0	2	3
1930	5	0	3	2	3	0	3
1931	5	3	0	5	0	0	0
1932	1	2	1	1	0	1	2
1933	8	4	3	3	1	1	8
1934	2	2	2	4	1	3	1
1935	8	1	3	3	0	1	4
1936	1	0	3	3	0	1	0
Total	1,921	198	908	282	227	81	1,055

Lynching and preventions of lynchings compared—Number persons lynched and number prevented being lynched, 1914-36

Year	Number persons lynched	Number persons prevented being lynched	Ratio of persons lynched to number prevented being lynched
1914	52	24	2.17
1915	67	25	2.68
1916	54	25	2.16
1917	38	23	1.65
1918	64	19	3.37
1919	83	43	1.93
1920	61	84	.72
1921	64	108	.59
1922	57	114	.55
1923	35	56	.59
1924	16	61	.26
1925	17	53	.32
1926	30	40	.75
1927	16	68	.24
1928	11	40	.28
1929	10	34	.29
1930	21	60	.35
1931	13	91	.14
1932	8	43	.19
1933	28	48	.58
1934	15	74	.20
1935	20	84	.24
1936	8	79	.10

These white women of the South are actively engaged in an effort to wipe out lynching:

SOUTHERN WOMEN AND LYNCHING

Central Council of the Association of Southern Women for the Prevention of Lynching: Mrs. Jessie Daniel Ames, director, Atlanta, Ga.; Mrs. Attwood Martin, chairman, Louisville, Ky.; Mrs. W. A. Newell, secretary, Salisbury, N. C.; Mrs. Una Roberts Lawrence, treasurer, Kansas City, Mo. Members at large: Mrs. Julian Hennig, Columbia, S. C.; Mrs. Arch Trawick, Nashville, Tenn.; Mrs. H. J.

MacMillan, Wilmington, N. C.; Mrs. Julia Collier Harris, Chattanooga, Tenn.; Mrs. John M. Hanna, Dallas, Tex.; Mrs. J. W. Mills, Beaumont, Tex.; Mrs. W. A. Turner, Newman, Ga.; Mrs. Harry Gershon, Atlanta, Ga.; Miss Janie McGaughey, Atlanta, Ga.; Mrs. Emmet Horine, Louisville, Ky.; Mrs. L. O. Turner, Atlanta, Ga.; Mrs. Gerline McDonald Bowman, Richmond, Va. Chairmen of State councils: Alabama, Mrs. J. M. McCoy, Montevallo; Arkansas, Mrs. B. J. Reaves, Little Rock; Florida, Mrs. W. P. Cornell, Jacksonville; Georgia, Mrs. Robert H. McDougall, Atlanta; Kentucky, Mrs. G. W. Hummel, Louisville; Louisiana, Mrs. R. H. Agate, Lafayette; Mississippi, Mrs. L. W. Alford, McComb; North Carolina, Miss Clara I. Cox, High Point; Oklahoma, Mrs. J. D. Lawhorn, Hugo; South Carolina, Mrs. George E. Davis, Orangeburg; Tennessee, Mrs. G. G. McClure, Clarksville; Texas, Mrs. Alex W. Spence, Dallas; Virginia, Mrs. James A. Richardson, Richmond.

ORGANIZATIONS COMMITTED TO A PROGRAM OF EDUCATION TO PREVENT LYNCHING

Disciples of Christ, International Convention.

Disciples of Christ, Florida Convention.

Woman's Missionary Societies, Disciples of Christ of the Florida Convention, Georgia Convention, Kentucky Convention.

General Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church.

Executive board of the Woman's Auxillary to the National Council of the Protestant Episcopal Church.

Woman's Auxillaries, Protestant Episcopal Church.

Woman's Auxillary to the National Council in the Province of Sewanee.

Diocese of Alabama, diocese of Atlanta, diocese of Florida, diocese of Kentucky, diocese of south Florida, diocese of Mississippi, Protestant Episcopal Church.

Woman's Advisory Committee, Presbyterian Church, United States.

Auxillaries to the synods of Georgia and Virginia.

Woman's Missionary Council, Methodist Episcopal Church South.

Woman's Missionary Societies of the Alabama Conference, Central Texas Conference, Florida Conference, Kentucky Conference, Little Rock Conference, Louisiana Conference, Louisville Conference, Memphis Conference, Mississippi Conference, North Alabama Conference, North Carolina Conference, North Georgia Conference, North Mississippi Conference, North Texas Conference, Northwest Texas Conference, Oklahoma Conference, South Carolina Conference, South Georgia Conference, Tennessee Conference, Upper South Carolina Conference, Virginia Conference, Western North Carolina Conference, West Texas Conference.

Methodist Episcopal Church South: Little Rock Conference, Mississippi Conference, North Alabama Conference, North Carolina Conference, North Georgia Conference, North Mississippi Conference, North Mississippi Young People's Conference, South Georgia Conference, Western North Carolina Conference.

Woman's Missionary Union, Southern Baptist Convention.

Woman's Missionary Unions of the Florida Baptist Convention, Georgia Baptist Convention, Kentucky Baptist Convention, North Carolina Baptist Convention, South Carolina Baptist Convention, Tennessee Baptist Convention, Texas Baptist Convention.

The National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods.

National Young Women's Christian Association.

National Council of Jewish Women.

Southern Interstate Conference of the National Council of Jewish Women.

General Federation of Women's Clubs.

Federation of Women's Clubs of Arkansas, Florida, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, Southeastern Regional Conference of the National Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs.

State organizations: Arkansas Democratic Women's Clubs; Georgia Council, Federated Church Workmen; Georgia Woman's Christian Temperance Union; Louisiana Association of Peace Officers; Mississippi Woman's Christian Temperance Union; North Carolina Society of Friends.

Mr. MITCHELL. The causes of lynching are classified here also. It is a great travesty on truth for anyone to try to show that it is rape only that people are lynched for. This statement will show the causes of lynching. Among them are homicide, felonious assault, rape, attempted rape, robbery and theft, and insult to white persons. For that charge alone 81 people have been lynched, and all of them were colored people. Eighty-one colored people during the years that I have named have had their lives snuffed out by mobs because they were accused of being impudent to white persons. I say to you that there are places in this country, and I was in some of them last year, where, when a Negro is addressed by a white person he dare not say "Yes" or "No," as you can do here. He must say, "Yes, sir," or "No, sir," and if he speaks otherwise, his life is in danger.

This bill that we have brought here seeks to protect the lives of those people who have absolutely no means of protection. Just the other day I received a letter from the county of Oglethorpe, Ga., in which a large number of Negroes had joined and asked me to go to the Department of Justice and ask that conditions of peonage in that county be investigated. They said, "Please don't use our names. If you do, our lives will be taken by mobs." They said more than that. They said, "Don't attempt to write us. If you do it will become known that we have made this complaint and we will either be driven away or we will become the victims of the mob."

I do not know what the conditions are in Oglethorpe, Ga., except that that letter came to me, which I passed on to the Department of Justice. The Department of Justice promised me an investigation. I am mentioning some of the things which this bill means, more than stopping the mob killing of people. We want to start in some way not only to protect the lives of my people, but we want to protect them in their rights, if they have any rights here as American citizens. [Applause.] In that connection, let me say this: I have never subscribed to that doctrine that this is a white man's country. I have been down to Jamestown, Va., the spot where Capt. John Smith made the first permanent English settlement in 1607, and do you know, my friends, that just 12 years later the first permanent Negro settlement was made at that same spot at Jamestown? When I asked the guide to point out the spot where this Dutch trading vessel which brought the first 19 Negro slaves to America landed, he pointed out the very same spot where Capt. John Smith's vessel, 12 years earlier, had anchored, and his group had landed. I say to

you white men that this is our country. We have sweated for it like you have. We have given our lives on every battlefield where we have been called upon to face smoking rifles and pealing cannons. By your sides we have fought those battles. By what authority do you tell me that we are not entitled to the full protection of this law?

I said a moment ago that while you were engaged in battle, many of you, especially the group that will vote against this bill—while your ancestors, your fathers were engaged in the battle to keep us slaves, we were loyal to you then. We are loyal to you now. I am not discouraged as I paint this picture. I travel through the South. I bought a farm down in the South the other day, and I expect to live in the South again. I love the South. Some day when I get through toiling here, and toiling as a lawyer in Chicago, I am going down on that farm and work at the type of work that I did as a boy. I love it. I am going south to speak in North Carolina on next Sunday. I am trying to help the group. I do not have a single word to offer that will bring bitterness to anybody, but I think it is time for us to be frank. It is time for us to be honest. I want to say to the gentlemen on my side of the House, when you accuse the Republicans on the left of playing politics—I have no word to offer for them. I know many of them are playing politics.

I remember how they played politics 2 years ago and how the distinguished gentleman to my left, Hon HAMILTON FISH, of New York, made the fight and defeated my bill after the Judiciary Committee of the House had conducted hearings on the bill and favorably reported the bill. It was for him, playing politics, as I charge that he is doing today, to offer a motion and fight it through the House to deny me consideration of my measure, notwithstanding it had been favorably reported as heretofore stated. He stood on this floor yesterday and told the House that you had more Republicans who signed the petition to bring this bill out than you had Democrats, and he told you that we were going to have more Republican votes to pass the bill than Democratic votes. I know what the gentleman had in mind. I charge that the Republicans are trying to buy back the Negro votes with this bill. I want us to lay aside politics on that side when it comes to this legislation, and then I want us to lay aside politics on this side.

There are men on my side of the House who will speak against this bill, perhaps—at least it is my opinion—and who will expect to use that speech in their districts for reelection; but I wish we all could approach it as I am trying to. It is my racial group that has furnished the victims for this vicious thing. You represent the group that has furnished the mobs. Let me speak as I see it, the voice of those who have suffered this thing. I am asking you to let us pass this

bill—let us pass it without any change except the changes that have been asked for by the author of the bill, Mr. GAVAGAN. Let us not emasculate it, because the bill is too important to this large minority group in this country that has always been loyal to the American Government, that has never raised its hand to strike down the representatives of this Government, and who have carried without complaining and without grumbling every burden that has been placed upon them.

I hear many of my friends on my side of the House speak of how they loved their black mammies. The thing does not, of course, sound so good to me, but it brings to my mind a certain man who talked to me in Jacksonville, Fla., last year. He said to me at a banquet where I was entertained: "I am tired of those people who 'love my mammy,' but who won't give me my rights, and I am her son." We want this love to reach beyond the black mammy; we want it to come down to us who are carrying the burden. If you love us, give us an opportunity to be citizens like anybody else.

I have in my hand a speech I put in the RECORD some time ago. This speech contains a letter that was written to me by the late-lamented Kelley Miller. We were discussing in this speech the cause of Negro migration from the South, the effect, and the remedy. Dr. Miller said this to me in his letter:

After all has been said and done, the farm holds out to the Negro not only his best chance but his only chance in face of prevailing conditions.

I said in reply to him:

I know why we are leaving the South. The more than 6,000 lynchings which have taken place in the South during the past 50 years, the disfranchisement of Negroes in the Southern States, the injustice suffered by Negroes in the courts of the South, and the unfair and inequitable distribution of educational opportunities, along with the despicable sharecropper system, have tended to drive the Negro from the farm. All of this has been said in no effort to deny or dispute anything set up in your letter.

I am merely pointing out the truth as I know it; and I will say to you that I cannot understand how you can argue the virtues of a democracy that bases its treatment of its citizens upon their color. In reply I said:

I believe that once the Negro feels that his life is safe in the South, that he will be given the same consideration in the courts as is given all people, that he will be given the same economic opportunities to work, whether in the North or in the South, the problem will be solved.

I say to this group over here: You will not let us vote and do the same things all other citizens do in the South.

I say to this group over here: You will not let us work in your shops and in your factories; you will not give us an opportunity in the economic world; yet you come up and want to kiss us and hug us and claim us as your friends. We are

not unmindful of all of this hypocrisy; and it is my duty, however unpleasant and painful, to recite it here this afternoon; it is my duty to tell you the truth as God has given me the courage and the wisdom to know it and to speak it.

I want to see Negroes have the same opportunity that anybody else has. We do not ask for any more; we will not be satisfied with any less. I am saying that just as surely as we stand here and you allow these iniquities or suffer them to be visited upon us, the same thing is bound to come back to you. May I relate this story which I think quite applicable at this point: It is said that once a little child noticed its father with a foot adz and a block of wood hewing and chopping, making a rough trough. The child asked the father what he was doing. The father said: "Your old grandfather does not know how to behave at the table and I am going to feed him in this trough." It was not more than a few days later when the father noticed the little child trying to make a trough the same as he had seen his father do, and he asked the child what he was doing. The child said: "I am making a trough to feed you out of when you get old like grandfather." I want to say to you what Booker Washington said 25 or 30 years ago: That if these injustices are permitted to be visited upon us—and I am not only talking about lynching; I am talking also about the group that keeps us from all of our citizenship rights—if you permit it, you will in some way have to pay the penalty, I know not how. Providence takes care of these things.

It has well been said:

The law of changeless justice
 Binds the oppressor with the oppressed,
 And as close as sin and suffering are joined,
 They march to fate abreast.

Now, my dear friends, I want to see this bill become law. I want to see my group not discriminated against anywhere because of its color.

I want my people to be given the rights of Americans, because we are willing to do every duty that you enjoin upon us. We have done it without grumbling. How long are you going to withhold from us those rights?

I know it is a long struggle. I am conversant with the history of suffrage for the women of this country. I know that the white women stood at your doors and knocked and begged for the right to vote for a period of almost a hundred years before you permitted them to come in. Those were your wives, your daughters, and your sisters. I know that our struggle in this country is going to be a long, hard one, but what I am asking everyone to have is patience, courage, honesty, and forbearance. I want you to have the tolerance with us that you are asking groups in other parts of the world to have toward other groups. My final word is this: You have

it within your power to offer encouragement to a group of 15,000,000 people who do not ask for a single special favor, but simply ask to be treated like all other American citizens. They ask that they be given the opportunity to work and make this the democracy that we all want it to be.

Mr. FISH. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. MITCHELL. I yield for a question.

Mr. FISH. Mr. Chairman, I agree very largely with what the gentleman said.

Mr. MITCHELL. I understood I yielded for a question.

Mr. FISH. It is a question, but I would rather preface it in this way for your own interest. I agree with what the gentleman has said. He has stated it in a very able, sincere way. There is one point in his speech I would like to ask the gentleman about. The gentleman inferred that those of us on this side who advocate the bill and who were going to vote for the bill were doing so to buy back the Negro vote.

Mr. MITCHELL. Now, the question.

Mr. FISH. I want to know whether the gentleman believes that the Negro vote is for sale?

Mr. MITCHELL. I may say to the gentleman that every vote in the United States is for sale, not for money but for rights and for privileges. [Applause.]

Mr. FISH. Mr. Chairman, I know something about colored people myself. I want to go on record—

Mr. MITCHELL. Mr. Chairman, I do not yield any further. He can go on record any time he wants to.

Mr. Chairman, I want to resent the insinuation that has been offered that I said anything about the Negroes' votes being for sale. They have not been for sale, but the Republican Party has tried to use them in that way. The Republicans have been making all sorts of promises to them for 75 years. I do not know whether they called that sale, or what, but they have promised many things to us. They used us almost as chattels in our helpless condition immediately after slavery, and the gentleman knows that as well as I do. We are not for sale in the sense that he is thinking of it, and may I say to him that every man who has a vote wishes to use that vote to his advantage. That is what the Negro wants to do. The Republican Party, which he represents, has been very busy during the last 3 or 4 months trying to find some approach by which they can bring the Negro vote back to their party. I am glad he asked that question. They pretended to be very friendly to the Negro on that side of the aisle. They have had charge of the Government for many, many decades, with few exceptions. They did not send Negroes to West Point, not even the distinguished gentleman, Mr. Fish, who wishes to be a candidate for President of the United States. What has kept him from doing that if he is so friendly toward us? Why all of this interest in the Negroes

at this particular time? After I came here on the Democratic side the Negroes said to the Republican Party: "You have fooled us long enough. We are going somewhere else, where we can at least work with a group that has not fooled us." You have a distinguished Negro here in the city of Washington at this very moment whose whole duty it is—and he has been employed by the Republican National Committee—to bring the Negro vote back into the Republican fold. I want to serve notice on you that he is just as much discredited with us as is the Republican Party and he has no chance. [Applause.]

I am glad you asked that question. The day has come when you cannot fool the Negro like you used to. There are some of us who have the courage to tell the truth. We know who our friends are and we are going to stand by them. [Applause.]

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