

MCKELDIN WARNS NEGROES ON TASK

SUN. SEP 28 1958

Receives Award, Calls Progress Now Critical

Governor McKeldin warned Maryland Negro leaders yesterday that the big question before members of their race "is not how to win full citizenship, but what to do with it now that it is won."

And he added in a speech at Morgan State College:

"For the next generation, the American Negro is going to have to carry a heavier load of responsibility than the American white man.

"His success or failure will affect not only his own destiny but that of his race in every part of the world. . . .

"You people gathered here today are leaders and I counsel you to think long and soberly about this: If the census after this next one, that is the census of 1970, shows no increase in productivity, no decrease in crime, no perceptible rise in the level of intelligence among American Negroes, the effect will be serious and possibly disastrous, not only here, but throughout the world."

The Maryland Governor forged to the front in recent weeks as a leading Southern spokesman for compliance with the 1954 Supreme Court decision calling for desegregation of the nation's public schools with "all deliberate speed."

At yesterday's gathering, at which Carl Murphy, publisher of the Afro-American, presided, Mr. McKeldin was presented the Russwurm Award of the National (Negro) Newspaper Publishers Association for "upholding the ideals of the American way of life."

The Governor said in his speech that the 1954 Supreme Court decision established the principle of "full, not second-class citizenship for all law-abiding Americans."

He conceded that "there have been storms about it, and there may be more. There have been setbacks and defeats, and there may be more."

"But," he added, "a living thing was born and it will not die."

"Battle Is Won"

"Our Negro citizens, therefore, and especially the intellectual leaders among them, may dismiss from their minds the long struggle from the status of slave to full citizenship.

"The battle is won, and nothing remains but mopping up operations.

"The question that faces the Negro today is not how to obtain full citizenship, but what to do with it, now that it is won."

The Governor declared that question is "the hardest that civilized man has to answer."

"The moment that the American Negro obtained the last full measure of freedom, he also had imposed upon him the last full measure of responsibility." Mr. McKeldin counseled.

What Government Can't Give

"The most that the Government can confer on any man is legal freedom. His moral freedom he must obtain for himself, but unless he obtains it, his legal freedom will be nothing but a sham, a delusion and a snare."

The Negro, Mr. McKeldin went on, must become more productive, more intelligent, more law-abiding and "a more vigorous supporter of every effort for the good of the community."

"For if he should fail to do so," the Governor cautioned, "then his enemies would be justified on their contention that his low estate was not due to oppression, but to his native inferiority."

South African Relevance

The Governor pointed out there are "two vast experiments" now in progress—the handling of race relations in the United States and in the Union of South Africa, where suppression is being practiced.

"If our method succeeds, there will remain no vestige of excuse for any other nation ever to try their method," he commented.

Failure of the American Negro to rise in the social and economic scale "will dash the hopes of all Africa and discourage the yellow and brown races as well," Mr. McKeldin declared as he called upon Negro leaders to:

"Set up and rigidly adhere to such standards as will assure success of the American experiment. . . .

"Can Disprove Taunts"

"The Negro and nobody but the Negro can disprove the taunts that have been flung at him and he can disprove them only by doing away as he becomes a full citizen, with those things that were a reproach to him when he was still laboring under legal handicaps.

"Idleness, drunkenness, lawlessness, ignorance are things that no race can well afford to tolerate and the American Negro least of all. . . .

"This is the moment to pull your full weight in the boat, this is the opportunity to prove that you can contribute as much as anybody else to our common task of making America great. . . ."

Following the Governor's speech the 309 delegates present at the Summit Meeting of Maryland's Leadership adopted several resolutions on what they expect of candidates running for office in the November election.

The resolutions read in part:

"Bossism must be repudiated in every form all over the State and especially in the Fourth Legislative district of Baltimore city."

That was a dig at Jack Pollock, the Democratic boss.

"Good Record" Is Pledge

"We must require candidates who ask for Negro support to have a good record on civil rights, desegregation and support of the United States Supreme Court."

The delegates asked that those candidates who never held office before to pledge their full support to civil rights programs.

"We pledge ourselves to vote only for candidates who make public their promises in advance of election," they said.

The convention called for accelerated desegregation of public schools in Maryland's counties and asked a halt to "the existing practice of excluding qualified Negroes from the various municipal, county and State agencies."

The delegates asked further that Federal, State and local legislative bodies pass laws guaranteeing to all persons "free and full access to all places of public accommodation."