

Mr. Granger, seconded by Mr. Randolph and Mr. Wilkins, hastily assured the President that the bitterness they referred to was not directed to the President or the Administration but only to the communities in which apparent though slow progress was being made and then stopped; that the bitterness consisted of individual reactions to obstacles met.

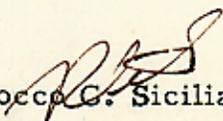
The President spoke forcefully about the need for diligent and careful perusal by the Federal Government of any actions in this field. He did not comment in any way on the Judge Lemley decision or the Little Rock affair. He said he did not propose to comment - and knew they did not expect him to - on the recommendations which he had before him, but said that he would obviously be glad to consider them. He then said that there might be at first blush some value in convoking a White House conference, but added that he was doubtful if it would be productive of anything.

Mr. Randolph answered this last observation by saying he thought the President might give it a high moral tone, to which the President replied there was only so much any President could do in opening such a meeting. Mr. Rogers agreed with the President and said this could only serve as a sounding board for the reaffirmation of previously announced positions by spokesmen (acknowledged and otherwise) in this area. Mr. Rogers emphasized again that the President had directed him to take aggressive actions in all matters affecting the Federal authority. The President agreed and then emphasized the importance of voting rights.



The meeting concluded with the President indicating his appreciation of meeting with the group.

In the press conference which followed the meeting, it appeared to me that the positions taken by the four leaders were basically very honest and favorable recitals of what had occurred at the meeting. The news accounts speak for themselves, but I took note of one significant question asked by Louis Lautier (only Negro member of the National Press Club Association) of Mr. Wilkins: he asked what had occurred in the meeting which had changed his attitude. He repeated this to mean Mr. Wilkins' attitude toward the President from the position taken a month ago by him. Mr. Wilkins was very indignant and didn't really respond to the question. Efforts were made to bait Wilkins in the press conference inasmuch as he seems to be the most militant of the group, but I would say that he held himself under control.


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