

A STATEMENT TO PRESIDENT DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER

The process of peaceful advancement toward equality of citizenship for all Americans has reached a critical turn.

New economic and cultural forces in our nation's life are changing the pattern of Negro-white relations. Any effort to impede this process will affect unfavorably all American society. Frequently tension is an inherent element of basic social change. Thus it is not a matter of choice between an unjust status quo with social peace, and integration with tension. The nation can adopt forthrightly a bold program which moves through tension to a democratic solution; or it can depend upon evasion and compromise which purport to avoid tension, but which in reality lead the entire society toward economic, social and moral frustration.

Years of educational, legislative and legal effort to bring the status of Negro Americans in line with the guarantees of the Constitution have led, inevitably, to the determination by our highest court that enforced racial segregation and its attendant discrimination in publicly-owned facilities is morally and legally indefensible.

At every intermediate stop along the way to this conclusion bitter opposition was encountered, but justice and common sense have heretofore prevailed; the unity of the nation has been strengthened; its moral fibre has been renewed.

Today, however, the last-ditch resistance to the application of

