

900 From 35 States At Rights Meet

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WASHINGTON — Registering determination to wage a relentless civil rights fight in the nation's 400-odd election districts, delegates attending the Civil Rights Leadership conference here pledged they will consent to no "cease fire" until this vital battle is won.

The 900 delegates from 35 states representing 52 national, church, labor, fraternal, civil and minority groups urged the United States Senate to revise its present filibuster rule which the conference said stands as the principal roadblock to the enactment of such pressing civil rights bills as Federal anti-lynching, anti-poll tax and fair employment practices legislation.

The conference, called by the NAACP in cooperation with the 52 national organizations, called upon both the Republicans and Democrats to include in their party platforms a plank advocating a rule which will make it possible to curb filibusters by a simple majority vote of those Senators present and voting.

The Senate's present cloture rule requires the affirmative vote of 64 Senators before a filibuster can be halted.

A group of delegates authorized

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to represent the conference, together with their spokesman, Walter White, executive secretary of the NAACP, spent two hours each with Mrs. India Edwards, vice chairman of the Democratic National committee and Abner Herman, assistant to the chairman of the Republican National Committee, in a frank discussion of the entire civil rights issue.

Senator Leverett Saltonstall (R., Mass.), considered a liberal, told a delegation from his state that he felt anti-lynching legislation and repeal of the poll tax were issues which should be settled by the States themselves without Federal interference. A similar position was taken by several other Republican senators.

The Ohio delegation was given what they termed "the round-around" by Senator Robert Taft (R., Ohio), announced candidate for the Republican Presidential nomination.

Delegates reported that they made several attempts to see Senator Taft in his office and when they finally snared him off of the Senate floor, he gave them a brusque brush-off.

The West Virginia delegation in Congress, both in the Senate and the House, was the only congressional group which to a man gave their unequivocal support to the conference's entire civil rights platform.

The Georgia delegation reported the shock which Senator Walter George (D., Ga.) received when he saw that the delegation from his state was interracial in membership.

A decided change in the attitude of Senator Tom Connally (D., Texas), who is up for reelection next year in a heavily populated Negro district, also was reported by the Texas delegation who said they were cordially received.

Asked to take a position on majority vote cloture, abolition of the poll tax and anti-lynching and FEPC legislation, as well as the inclusion of a party platform pledge to support majority vote cloture, Senator Connally told the delegation, "I will vote the way I feel is best for all the people."

This was a marked departure from the majority of Southern members of Congress who gave their state delegations a cold "No" on these same questions.

At a dinner which opened the conference, Senator William Benton (D., Conn.) chairman of the Rules subcommittee which conducted hearings on the cloture rule change, pledged "I shall do all in my power" to substitute the majority vote cloture rule for the Wherry resolution. The Wherry resolution provides that two-thirds of those senators present and voting be required to halt a filibuster.

Senator Lehman said "a small minority of skilled stubborn and determined men can under the present procedure block the will of the people."

Senator Hubert Humphrey (D., Minn.) warned his fellow Democrats that if they yield to pressure to ditch civil rights in order to attain a "false harmony and false unity," they may as well "prepare for a long period of harmony carefully protected by being out of power and a dwindling political minority."

Senator Irving Ives (R., N. Y.) proposed that both major political parties adopt identical planks on civil rights and work jointly for enactment of these measures. "We must remember," he asserted, "that wherever human rights are concerned, partisan politics should be banned."

At the closing session of the conference, A. Philip Randolph, president of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, AFL, said President Truman "must be told and urged to set up a national commission on civil rights . . . to probe and survey the civil rights crises in America today."

Another labor leader, Walter Reuther, president of the United Auto Workers, CIO, declared that

the measure of a candidate in the coming elections is where he stands on the basic issue of civil rights.

Elimination of the filibuster would be equivalent to 100 military divisions "in the struggle with men's minds, hearts, and loyalties," Reuther declared. "Take the civil rights message to the people and get them good and angry on it," he urged.

"In a briefing of the delegates before they called upon their congressmen, James B. Carey, CIO secretary - treasurer, told them that civil rights proposals are opposed only by white supremacists and Communists. Carey reminded that these were the two minority groups who opposed the report of the President's Committee on Civil Rights which was received with acclaim in all other quarters.

President Truman was praised for his "courage" in facing the civil rights issue in 1946 and 1947 by White.

35 States Represented At D. C. Rights Meet



NATION'S CIVIL RIGHTS LEADERS invade "Capitol Hill" to take a civil rights platform to their State Congressional representatives asking their stand on poll tax repeal, anti-lynching legislation, Fair Employment Practices legislation and a change in the Senate's filibuster rule. The leadership conference was

sponsored by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People in cooperation with 52 national organizations. A group of the approximately 900 delegates attending the conference are seen going from the Senate office building to the House office building. Delegates came from 30 states.



CIVIL RIGHTS CONFERENCE LEADERS—Roy Wilkins (left) NAACP administrator, and Arnold Arenson take time out to discuss strategy before hearing reports from State delegations on their visit with Senators and Congressmen. Walter White, NAACP executive secretary, was leader of the conference which drew nation-wide interracial attendance, including an interracial delegation from Georgia.



GIANTS IN THE CIVIL RIGHTS FIGHT pause in the Senate office building before taking their case to important members of the United States Senate. Shown left to right are: Theodore Berry, Cincinnati attorney, member of the Cincinnati City Council and president of the Ohio State Conference of NAACP branches; Willard S. Townsend, international president of the United Transport Employees-CIO, member of the CIO executive board and member of the executive committee of the committee to abolish discrimination; George Leighton, NAACP attorney and leader in Chicago who won national note in the Cicero, Ill., riot case, and Ashby Carter, national president of the National Association of Postal Employees.



VIRGINIA DELEGATION, disappointed in not seeing Senator Willis Robertson, make a determined stand in his office where they recite the purpose of their visit to Administrative Assistant J. F. Stratton. Virginia has a potential Negro vote of 400,000. Lester Banks, (extreme right), executive secretary of the Virginia State Conference of NAACP branches,

served as spokesman for the group. Others in the group include Dr. J. W. Tinsley, president, Virginia NAACP; Mrs. Louella Goff, president, Southeastern Federation of Colored Women's Clubs; Rev. Charles Webber, Virginia State CIO Director, and E. W. Beckman, State president, Textile Workers, CIO.