

In other words, in the interim classes are the whites staying in the schools as Negroes come in or do these increased percentages indicate more Negroes attending schools where there are fewer whites, as we know it to obtain in the northern cities?

Now would you demonstrate that pattern or simply indicate the lack of such a pattern?

Mr. LIBASSI. We can provide the statistics which will show the numbers of white children who were in the schools and are in the schools by State, but I must admit that the very few numbers of Negro children going to desegregated schools which I referred to in the testimony is certainly outweighed by the increasing racial segregation of Negro children throughout the country as a whole.

We are not making progress. We are losing ground in extending desegregated education for Negro children. There is very definitely an exodus of white children to parochial schools in the cities and to the suburbs. Frequently the movement out is—

Mr. CAREY. May I at this point object? I have heard the statement before there is an exodus into the parochial schools in the cities and suburbs. How do you account for the fact that the statistics this year indicate that for the first time since 1964 the number of children attending at least one denominational Catholic parochial school declined for the first time in that period?

Where do you get the figures to support your statement when records indicate the attendance has dropped for the first time since 1946?

Mr. LIBASSI. The Civil Rights Commission report noted that the numbers of children, white children in the cities—that the racial composition of the parochial schools in the cities is disproportionately white where as the public schools, the student composition is disproportionately Negro.

Mr. CAREY. Again where do you get your figures? The studies I have been able to obtain and which I have been reading very carefully indicate in the parochial school system of the city of New York the number of Negro children and minority children have markedly increased.

Mr. LIBASSI. I do not mean to suggest that Negroes are not attending parochial schools.

Mr. CAREY. More Negroes are attending parochial schools than ever before.

Mr. LIBASSI. The key reason gets to the very heart of your question. The key reason why Negro parents are sending their children to parochial schools is the same reason white families are doing that—for sending their children to the parochials—and that is, the quality of education in the parochial schools is superior.

Mr. CAREY. Why don't we say the unsayable thing here? How are we going to achieve desegregation unless we give true freedom of choice to the parents to go out and seek quality of education wherever he can find it?

Take the Negro family where we have a family unit that really wants—and I think every family unit really wants—the best opportunities for its children. It looks like the school system has forced par-