

The CHAIRMAN. Well, I pass that one, because I don't think this is a sectional matter. This is something that affects not only the people of Maryland and New York and Ohio and California, but even Mississippi. It is a question, as I view it, Mr. Mathias, of taking away from the people one of the few last privileges or heritages we have, and that is the right to dispose of his own property without the Federal Government looking over his shoulder.

It is the right to acquire, enjoy and dispose of it. Now, and this is my observation and the gentleman may comment on it if he sees fit, I am not the wisest man, and of course that is an understatement of the year, in this Congress. Maybe I haven't traveled around as much as some other people.

But I have an idea, Mr. Mathias, that the politicians—and this is what we are in the final analysis, and I don't think that is a stigma exactly either—are really not aware of the thinking of the people of this country.

And that is one of the reasons that we thought it might be well to defer this thing a little bit, to slow it down a little bit and give the politicians an opportunity, possibly during the Easter recess, to go home and see how the people feel about it.

I think that we have been reading only the mail that we get from certain people. I am not and I cannot be convinced, at least up to this point, that the people want to surrender this heritage to which I just addressed myself. And I am going to make a little prediction here for whatever it is worth.

I think that you are going to find as a result of this issue which is going to be disposed of one way or the other here, that there are going to be a lot of political heads rolling in the dust as a result of the November election because of this pushing that is going on in favor of a certain minority group.

In fact, I wonder sometime who is the minority now.

Mr. MATHIAS. Mr. Chairman, you very graciously invited me to respond.

The CHAIRMAN. And I very graciously give the gentleman the opportunity now.

Mr. MATHIAS. I would say, I won't take issue with the Colmer poll one way or the other. But I would say on the question of whether we are doing anything fundamental that I hope this committee has before it constantly the language of the act of Congress of April 1866—

The CHAIRMAN. The 89th Congress?

Mr. MATHIAS. 1866.

The CHAIRMAN. Oh, 1866. All right.

Mr. MATHIAS. Which established the fundamental law of this country on this subject, the law which has been enforced by many Chief Executives through executive order in matters and in areas where executive orders are effective. And that when we think of the heritage of America, we realize that the act of 1866 is a part of that heritage and that what we are doing today is not disturbing any fundamental settlements made under the act of 1866, but in effect implementing it in accordance with the practices of our time.

This is the heritage of America, Mr. Chairman, I believe.

The CHAIRMAN. Any questions?