

Mr. FREELAND. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and Senator Baker.

Mrs. JEFFERIES. Thank you.

Senator MUSKIE. Our next witness is an old friend who has been before this subcommittee before, Clarence Mitchell, director of the Washington bureau of the NAACP.

TESTIMONY OF CLARENCE M. MITCHELL, JR., DIRECTOR, WASHINGTON BUREAU, NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF COLORED PEOPLE

Mr. MITCHELL. Mr. Chairman and members of the subcommittee, I thank you for this opportunity to appear, and before I get to my statement I would just like to take half a minute to say something which I hope will reach the attention of some who were present yesterday at this hearing. I think the record ought to show that you and Senator Baker were among the Senators who made it possible for this country to have a fair housing law, and you did it in a dedicated, workmanlike way. In some instances things that were in there might not necessarily have been the way you wanted them, but they were there, and I think particularly in Senator Baker's case it ought to be known that he said on the floor that he was interested in getting a certain amendment in, but if he didn't get that amendment he was going to vote for the bill anyway.

Of course, in your case, Mr. Chairman, you were down at the funeral of Dr. Martin Luther King, which certainly you need not have been as a Senator from Maine, but you were there out of your desire to show your feeling and sympathy during a period of great tragedy.

The other thing I would like to say is that I feel very ancient here because the witness who was just before me is from my hometown of Baltimore. Although he is a rich lawyer in Pittsburgh now, he also was one of my wife's Sunday school pupils in our church, and he was one of the first Negroes to be in the 99th Squadron, which was part of the Air Force in World War II.

He, along with others, made us all very proud of them, but interestingly in that period, Negro officers were not allowed admission to the main officers' section for recreation and that kind of thing. He and his associates decided they were going to do what we now call "take direct action." They went on into this place and they faced a court-martial for doing so.

They were in grave danger of being—he was a captain, as I remember, but in any event they were in danger of being court-martialed. We overcame that, of course, but the interesting thing is they went over to Europe and fought for their country. They have come back and are now good citizens. I think it is important in these times to know that the fight for freedom did not begin just yesterday, and there are various ways of carrying it on.

I think also we have got to realize that we must abandon this defeatist attitude of assuming that we are not getting anywhere, and nothing is any good. The fact that you and Senator Baker are here is an indication of the concern of the elected officials for trying to do something about the problems that confront this Nation.