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EDITORIAL

Civil Rights Bill Must Have Teeth

(From the Las Vegas Review-Journal)

As the civil rights debate drags on in the Senate, both Nevada Senators report their mail is heavily against the bill.

Nevada's respected senior Senator, Alan Bible, says that his mail is running more than three to one against the bill in its present form, that is the 55-page bill passed with an easy margin by the House of Representatives.

He believes, and we must agree with him, that some of the changes advocated by Republican Senator Everett Dirksen would make the bill more workable.

Unfortunately, some of the Dirksen proposals also would strip the bill of any teeth at all.

As an example of this, Dirksen suggests that Title Two of the bill be made voluntary by deleting the attorney general's power to sue in cases where Negroes were excluded from hotels, restaurants and other places of public accommodation because of their color or race.

In its present form the bill prohibits racial discrimination in restaurants, retail food stores, gasoline stations, motion picture theaters, places of entertainment, hotels, motels, and any transient lodging place except owner-occupied rooming houses with less than five rooms. The attorney general's office would have the power to bring civil suits to make the law stick, but only if efforts to obtain voluntary compliance failed.

The cry goes up, of course, that this section of the bill infringes upon the basic right of the owner of a business to refuse to serve anyone he wants. But this is a very weak plea, for these are the very businesses which otherwise are open to the general public.

It is the implied duty of such businesses to serve the public; and it should stir the conscience of this nation to think that a family, whatever its race, traveling through any part of this country should have to worry about where it can stop and eat, where it can spend the night or even where it can use a gas station rest room.

It already is an accepted legal doctrine in this country that the federal government has authority in matters of interstate commerce, whether it be in shipping a load of cattle or a case of liquor. Should any less be done in personal interstate commerce where discrimination has forced intolerable indignities upon Negroes and Americans of other races?

Once the bill is passed it undoubtedly will be complied with on a voluntary basis in most cases. But just as certainly it must have teeth if it is not to become a farce.

(From the New York Times)

Civil Rights Compromise

If the agreement reached by Attorney General Kennedy and Senate leaders of both parties on amendments to the civil rights bill provides the votes to break the Southern filibuster and speed passage of a fully effective law, it will represent a historic contribution to the national welfare. The question the country cannot yet answer is whether, in the interest of marshaling enough Northern and Western votes for closure, concessions have been made that would gravely weaken the bill's enforcement in the key areas of fair employment practices and access to public accommodations.

The difficulties now being encountered in New York State in trying to break down the barriers to admission of Negroes and Puerto Ricans in the sheet metal workers' and the plumbers' unions demonstrate that even a strong fair employment law may be too weak.

The details of the proposed Senate compromise are still secret. However, it is known that the leadership decision would strip the new Federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission of the authority the House version gave it to initiate suits after persuasion had failed. Under the Senate compromise, the commission could only recommend suits, to be instituted by the Attorney General, who, in turn, would have the power to start court action only where a pattern of discrimination was found to exist.

On public accommodations the enforcement authority also has been watered down, both through mandatory referral of complaints to state agencies in states that have similar laws and through a restriction of the Attorney General's right to initiate suits to cases involving a pattern of discrimination.

Swift Senate action on civil rights is imperative, but the completed bill must provide meaningful protection where Negroes have for a century been subjected to personal humiliation and economic exclusion. The House passed its bill with the overwhelming support of both parties. President Johnson has repeatedly expressed his unreserved endorsement of all its major provisions. No one believes that it—or any other law—will bring an end to every form of discrimination, but its fundamental guarantees must be preserved.

AFRICA in Today's World

By CHARLES I. WEST, M.D.

No discourse by an African politician over the last year has drawn so much private debate in West Africa as the one made by President Felix Houphouet-Boigny of the Ivory Coast April 12 according to Russell Warren Howe of the Washington Post foreign service.

In an unparalleled diatribe at the National Assembly building in Abidjan, to ministers, legislators, diplomats, church, labor and women's leaders, "Ufwe," French Africa's senior statesman, denounced the influence of juju (black magic) in politics.

Houphouet-Boigny, a former Vice Premier of France, is regarded by many as the best example of an African who has reached the top in both worlds—the Western World of the 20th century, and the tough, shadowy world of African politics, little changed over the centuries.

He wields more influence than any other French-speaking African. The Ivory Coast's economy has grown by 20 per cent a year over the last five years, and Ufwe is seen by such admirers as Nigeria's Premier Abubakar Tafawa Balewa as the greatest African exponent of realpolitik.

AS A MODERN representative of the great paramount chiefs of the past, Ufwe has been known as a frequenter of powerful witch-doctors, a man who never took a decision without consulting oracles; who displaced his country house from one end of a village to the opposite end to evade one spell—and who never travels by air, to defeat another.

Ufwe's addiction to witchery, combined with that of most other well-known African leaders, has led observers to believe that "spukpolitik" is an inevitable element of African public affairs. African politics often looks like a book written by Lewis Carroll and illustrated by Charles Addams.

But since Ufwe is, above all else, a pacesetter, his attack on fetishism—formerly a subject which no African leader dared mention in public—is expected to lead to other hardy denunciations by French—and perhaps British—African—leaders.

Ufwe prepared the ground by summoning four other presidents to the Ivorian provincial city of Bwake earlier in the month. Simon Kiba, veteran editor of French Black Africa's only really independent newspaper, Afrique Nouvelle, reports that incredible secrecy surrounded the talks, which ended with a published decision for greater cooperation among Ivory Coast, Guineau, Mali, Niger and Upper Volta.

The other reason given for the talks was to "examine the situation created by the discovery of a plot against Houphouet-Boigny's life, and steps to be taken to ensure the safety and stability of the five states and to counter subversion." This phrasing is believed to have reflected a searching, secret examination of juju and how to deal with it.

TWO FACTORS SEEM to have led to Houphouet-Boigny's decision to challenge the dark forces of fetishism before which other African presidents tremble. One was the allegation that the late Ivorian Chief Justice, Ernest Boka, had been trying to procure Ufwe's death by black magic. The other looks like a tardy reconversion to Christianity, to which he be-

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