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5804 – Bill to Create a Commission on Human Resettlement

Guest: Rep. George Andrews (D-Alabama)

Morphew: Another special report...introduction...the main topic today is your bill to create a commission on human resettlement. It hasn't gotten a lot of attention because of the 'left wing censorship' that seems to exist in this country...tell us about it.

Andrews: The bill, as you say, seeks to create a Commission on Human Resettlement. It's now pending before the Judiciary Committee of the House of Representatives, which is the same committee that last year brought out the so-called Civil Rights bill. I've been worried about racial relations in America, and particularly in the South, for many years. In some of our counties in Alabama, we have a ratio of 80 Negroes to 20% white. I don't think any civil rights bill that the congress can pass can help those people. As a matter of fact, they don't need any help. In my opinion, they fare better and make more progress in the South than in any other section in America. But many people in America believe that our colored people are persecuted, so I introduced my bill in all good faith, hoping to give an opportunity to any of those people in the South who are unhappy, give them an opportunity to leave if they don't like the South. My bill would create a commission to be known as the Human Resettlement Commission. The commissioners would be appointed by the president and confirmed by the Senate. The commission would have regional and district offices wherever necessary, and it provides in section 9, that any Negro who appeared before the commission and satisfied the commission, first, that he was a worker, that he would carry his own weight, that he'd make a living and wouldn't become a charge on any community into which he moved, and second, that he was unhappy with local laws, customs and traditions that prevailed in the state where he then resided would be eligible for a long term, low interest rate government loan in an amount sufficient to enable him to move himself and the members of his family and his household goods to any state of his choice. And it would be the duty of the commission to assist him in deciding where he would move.

Morphew: And helping him line up work...

Andrews: That's right. If he were unhappy in the South because the laws, and the customs and the traditions of the state in which he then lived prohibited his children from going to school with the white children, if he were unhappy for that reason, then let the commission pick out a state that permitted integrated schools. And let the commission see that he found a job in that state and move there.

Morphew: Is there any precedent for this type of resettlement?

Andrews: Oh yes, we moved literally thousands of people to the West Coast back in the thirties because of economic conditions in certain sections of this country. And then, following the end of World War II, we had the displaced persons commission which brought literally thousands of foreign people into this country. And why did they come? They came because they were unhappy with local laws, customs, and traditions that prevailed in the countries from whence they came.

Morphew: So this would merely give the U.S. the same right that Congress has already given to people who are not citizens.

Andrews: That's right. I went before the Judiciary Committee last year and tried to explain this bill to Mr. Seller, the chairman of that committee who was the author of the so-called Civil Rights Bill.

Morphew: He's from New York...

Andrews: From New York. Incidentally, they don't like this bill. They haven't reported out of the committee. He said, when I told him about the foreign born who came over here under the displaced persons commission law, why he said, they were persecutes! And I said, well Mr. chairman, many people think our niggers are persecutees. Why, he said, what would happen if all those people left down South. I said, I don't believe you could go through some of those counties that are overpopulated with nigras. I don't believe you could send the finest investigative team in America down there and find a half a dozen of them who are unhappy. If some of these outside agitators come in and wave the red flag in their face it'll make them unhappy, but they are not unhappy. They wouldn't leave. But if you did find one who was unhappy because of local laws or customs or traditions and you gave him an opportunity to leave, you'd do both races a great service. There wouldn't be many of them take advantage of it, but at least we'd give them the ways and means of leaving a place if they were unhappy and I want to say to you, that in my humble opinion, a bill like this would do unhappy, dissatisfied American citizens far, far more good than civil rights legislation.

Morphew: So the point is that the so-called liberals do not want to consider your bill...

Andrews: No, they are not sincere in the civil rights bill. They don't want to help these people. They want to try to get their vote. Now if you will give them a bill that will really help them, they don't like it.

Morphew: And also don't you think that it would make it clear to these liberals that people in the south are a whole lot happier than they would have the rest of the country believing...

Andrews: That's right, that's right.

Morphew: What is the basic theory behind this bill besides giving people the chance to move somewhere else?

Andrews: That's all. That's all and I say if you get rid of people who are unhappy because of local traditions, regardless of race, you will help both races.

Morphew: By contrast, in your opinion, the Civil rights Bill seeks to stir up trouble rather than alleviate it.

Andrews: That's right. That's right.

Morphew: And under the terms of your bill, anyone who was unhappy, who admitted he was unhappy and was willing to work, would be able to go to a place of his choosing.

Andrews: That's right. I offered this bill last year on the floor of the House when the Civil Rights Bill was up for discussion, as an amendment to the Civil Rights Bill, and made the statement that any man who made a point of order against this bill was not germane to the Civil Rights Bill was, in my opinion, not a true friend of the nigras. And Mr. Seller was THE man who made THE point that this bill was not germane to the civil rights bill. And I challenge his friendship and sincerity toward the colored race.

Morphew: Don't you feel that the action in passing the civil rights bill was cynical?

Andrews: Well, certainly. Nothing on earth but a bid by both the republicans and the democrats to get the colored vote in America. That bill was opposed by only, most of the southern democrats, not all of them, and a few northern democrats and republicans.

Morphew: It's a very intriguing bill but I had not heard of it until I came to Washington and talked to you and other congressmen about it.

Andrews: Well, I think, for instance in the state of Oregon, both their senators and all their congressmen favor integrated schools. The percentage of nigras in their state is less than 1% if I remember correctly. It's very, very low.

Morphew: One county in a southern state would have more than the entire state of Oregon.

Andrews: Oh, sure. Yet, none of those senators nor congressmen from Oregon favor this bill. And they will tell, well I don't know what they will tell you. My opinion is they don't want any of them out in their state.

Morphew: So the idea is that it's easy to favor something that isn't going to have any effect on your area.

Andrews: That's right.

Morphew: And you can be calloused enough to ignore the effect on other areas where it will apply.

Andrews: That's right.

Morphew: Net effect of the passage of the CRB?

Andrews: Oh, I think it will just create a lot of trouble. Lot of trouble.

Morphew: Open invitation to agitators to stir up more trouble.

Andrews: That's right. That's my opinion of it, and has been said on your program many times, I think it was Communist inspired.

Morphew: Answer to people who ask what can we do?

Andrews: Help me get H.R. 4672 passed.