

MAY 22, 1950

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

I have just received the report of the President's Committee on Equality of Treatment and Opportunity in the Armed Services. For the past two years, this Committee has been working quietly to find ways and means to bring about true equality of opportunity for everyone in military service.

I have followed its work closely, and I know that it has probed deeply into the problem, which is not a simple one, and has been careful to keep uppermost the need for military efficiency.

As the Committee explored personnel practices in the Armed Services, the members of the staff worked in the closest possible consultation with the Army, the Navy and the Air Force. In fact, the consultation was so close and continuous that the Committee's recommendations grew naturally out of the joint discussions. The Services have accepted all of the Committee's recommendations.

It is, therefore, with a great deal of confidence that I learn from the Committee that the present programs of the three Services are designed to accomplish the objectives of the President; and that as these programs are carried out, there will be, within the reasonably near future, equality of treatment and opportunity for all persons in the Armed Services, with a consequent improvement in military efficiency.

I attach the highest importance to this Committee's assignment. In the Committee's own words, equality of treatment and opportunity in the Armed Services is right, it is just, and it will strengthen the nation. That is true throughout our entire national life.

As more and more of our people have shared the opportunity to enjoy the good things of life, and have developed confidence in the willingness of their fellow Americans to extend equal treatment to them, our country has grown great and strong.

Today, the free people of the world are looking to us for the moral leadership that will unite them in a common purpose. The free nations of the world are counting on our strength to sustain them as they mobilize their energies to resist Communist imperialism.

We have accepted these responsibilities gladly and freely. We shall meet them with the sure knowledge that we can move forward in the solution of our own problems in accordance with the noblest of our national ideals - the belief that all men are created equal.

Judge Fahy and the members of his Committee have been unsparing in the time and energy they have devoted to their mission. Every American who believes sincerely in the language of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence owes them a debt of gratitude.

This Report is submitted as the United States Senate is considering a motion to take up a Fair Employment Practices Bill. The work of the President's Committee on Equality of Treatment and Opportunity in the Armed Services shows what can be accomplished by a Commission in this admittedly difficult field. I hope the Senate will take this Report into consideration as it debates the merits of FEPC, and that, as I urged in my State of the Union Message in January, it will permit this important measure to come to a vote.

