

Warren Fears Watergate Overreaction

By B. DRUMMOND AYRES Jr.
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ATLANTA, May 21—Former Chief Justice Earl Warren said today that the Watergate scandals had caused so much doubt and cynicism that some Americans were beginning to propose "dangerous" changes in the country's basic governmental structure.

Mr. Warren, who retired from the Supreme Court five years ago, specifically cited suggestions that the Justice Department and the Federal Bureau of Investigation be taken out of the executive branch and placed under Congressional supervision. Both agencies have been deeply involved in various aspects of the Watergate controversy.

Speaking at the commencement exercises of Morehouse College, a predominantly black liberal arts school that has produced some of the nation's top Negro leaders, Mr. Warren also urged close study of two controversial suggestions for other governmental changes.

One calls for establishing a special court to relieve the Supreme Court of some of its

workload. There have been periodic complaints that the Court is so overburdened that it is ineffective. Mr. Warren was critical of the suggestion, saying that it might eliminate "free access to the high court."

The other suggestion proposed that the office of Vice President be abolished and that succession to the Presidency be transferred either to some Cabinet member or some high-ranking member of Congress. This proposal came after Vice President Agnew was forced to resign.

Honoring Degree

Mr. Warren told the 165 Morehouse graduates:

"I submit to you that in troubled times such as these we are not experiencing that there is danger of some such half-baked ideas finding their way into the law unless some people like yourselves will give time and personal attention to the affairs of government on all its levels."

The college conferred an honorary doctor of laws degree on the former Chief Justice, noting that "perhaps the most significant and far-reaching action of your eventful career came exactly 20 years and four days

ago, when you wrote the historic decision holding that racial segregation in public schools is unconstitutional."

In his address, Mr. Warren dwelled only briefly on that decision, saying at one point:

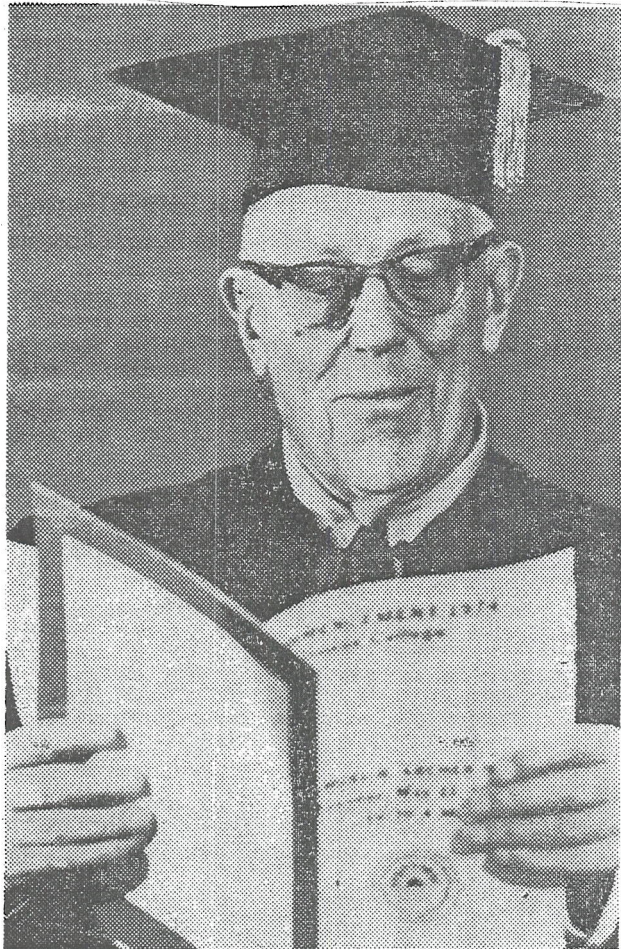
"We are only part way up the mountain we have essayed to climb. We must not falter in face of recalcitrance born of race prejudice."

The rest of the time, he mainly talked about what he termed the country's "troubled waters." Of Watergate, he said:

"The scandal has shaken the faith of people, not only in the individuals involved, but also the procedures which brought them to their high places."

Concerning the suggestions about the Justice Department, the F.B.I. and the Vice Presidency, Mr. Warren said:

"The sponsors fail to recognize that the conditions they recoil against do not flow from public officials following constitutional procedures, but, on the contrary, from circumventing them. As a result, they ignore the old truism that we do not tear down good buildings merely because they have been occupied by bad tenants."



Associated Press

Former Chief Justice Earl Warren reading a commencement program yesterday at Morehouse College, Atlanta. In a speech, he deplored Watergate's effects.