

NIXON REASSURES SOUTH ON SCHOOLS

In New Orleans, He Rules
Out 'Second-Class' Status
for Part of the Nation

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By ROY REED

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President Nixon flew here today to reassure the South that he was at once firm and reasonable in his approach to the next big round of school desegregation this fall.

He reiterated that the Supreme Court had decreed school desegregation and that he was responsible for enforcing the decision.

"I shall meet my responsibility," he said.

But, he said, "This is one country, one people, and we are going to carry out the law in that way, not in a punitive way, treating the South as basically a second class part of the nation but treating this part of the country with the respect that it deserves, asking its leaders to cooperate with us and we with them."

He stressed the importance of maintaining strong public schools while several hundred Southern districts make the transition this fall from racially dual to unitary systems.

Although he did not mention the private segregated schools that are cropping up to permit whites to avoid integration, he seemed to be suggesting that Southerners keep their distance from them.

The President strongly
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praised the several dozen persons who have agreed to serve on state advisory committees on public education to help smooth the transition to unitary systems in seven Southern states where the desegregation increase will be the heaviest.

Part of the purpose of his trip was to bolster the stature of these committees and make them more visible in their home states as they try to persuade reluctant whites to support public education.

In a briefing to newsmen after meeting with the committee leaders, Mr. Nixon described his largely symbolic visit here as "preventive action" to help insure that Southerners comply peacefully with the law.

Easier Transition Seen

He predicted that many districts that might have had trouble between the races this fall would make the transition peacefully instead. Much of the credit will go to the biracial state advisory committees, he said.

"In upholding the law," he said, "a law which requires a very significant social change, one that has enormous ramifications as it affects the communities, the schools, the homes of so many people in the Southern states involved, there are different approaches.

"One approach is simply to sit back and wait for school to open and for trouble to start. And then if trouble begins, to order in the Federal enforcers to see that the law is complied with."

He said he had rejected that approach because, if the law was not complied with, and there were difficulties, "Those who will suffer will not simply be this generation, it will be primarily the next generation, the students, the children in the school districts involved. They will pay the price for the failure, a failure of leadership."

'Magnificent Cooperation'

Mr. Nixon said he believed that leadership sometimes required preventive action. "We are trying to take some preventive action and we are getting magnificent cooperation from dedicated people in the seven states involved," he added.

Mr. Nixon said, as he had said many times in the past, that race and school segregation were not sectional, but national problems. He said:

"I have no patience with those from the North that point the finger at the South and then overlook the fact that in many Northern cities and Northern states the problem may also be a very, very difficult one."

He said that the black and white chairmen and vice chairmen of the seven state advisory committees had emphasized to him that they wanted to see "quality education" and the survival and improvement of public education as school desegregation moved forward.

He asked the news media to stress the success stories in the coming weeks and not merely the "bad" news. Apparently to make his plea more urgent and personal, he visited with members of the Louisiana press at a reception after

the briefing. National reporters were excluded.

Mr. Nixon spent about six hours here, then flew back to Washington late this afternoon. He was accompanied by his wife, several Cabinet members and members of the Louisiana Congressional delegation.

The President was greeted by thousands of friendly Louisiana residents as he rode in his presidential limousine, with the top open, through the hot and humid streets of New Orleans. He and Mrs. Nixon waved enthusiastically to the crowds. He stopped occasionally and touched the outstretched hands of the smiling, yelling people.

One man tore a cuff link from the President's shirt. Earlier, at the airport, Mr. Nixon left his car to get a handshake from construction workers wearing hard hats.

"I have one of those hats," he told a worker.

A small group of antiwar protesters heckled him with chants as he spoke to the crowd from a platform in the middle of St. Louis Street in the French Quarter.

"U.S. out of Vietnam," they chanted until the police began moving threateningly toward them. Then they changed their chant to "more pay for cops" and ended with, "Free David Eisenhower." They were not arrested.

Applause for Critics

The President seemed to pay little attention to the chanters, except to ask the crowd to applaud the "peace buffs," which it did.

Mr. Nixon stood on the platform with his jacket buttoned. While others in the street were

drenched with perspiration from the marsh-country heat, he showed only a few traces of moisture on his face.

Police Chief Joseph Giarrusso estimated the noontime crowd lining Mr. Nixon's parade route from the airport at 85,000 to 100,000. That was probably generous, but the crowd was large. Workers handed out leaflets downtown yesterday urging people to turn out and see the President.

A jazz band led by Al Hirt and Pete Fountain, the two best known of the city's current crop of musicians, played "When the Saints Go Marching In" as Mr. Nixon arrived at his hotel in the heart of the French Quarter.

Mrs. Nixon toured a section near the Mississippi River known as the Irish Channel while Mr. Nixon met in closed sessions with the advisory committee members and selected top representatives of Southern news organizations.

The section is home to both black and white people, most of them of modest economic position, and is known for its free-swinging bars and uninhibited carnival customs. Mrs. Nixon visited a church.

Two small groups who were unhappy with the make-up of the state advisory committees appeared at the Royal Orleans Hotel, the President's headquarters during his visit, but neither made much headway in reaching official ears.

One group was made up of young black activists. The other consisted of segregationists from Birmingham. Both protested that they were not represented on the committees.