

**STATEMENT OF HON. JOHN E. RANKIN, A REPRESENTATIVE IN
CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI** in response to
President Truman's proposed Anti-Lynching Legislation- February 1948

When you stir friction, those Negroes are going to move. Where are they going—Harlem, New York, Philadelphia, St. Louis, Los Angeles, Chicago, Indianapolis? Then what are you going to do with them?

In the rest of the South—and I am speaking particularly of my district where the relationship is the best I have ever known between the whites and the colored people—you talk about lynchings. There has not been a lynching in my county since I was born, and I am as old as the gentleman from New York, nearly. . . .

So, the relationship is the best I have ever known. You are talking about schools, education. At home, schooling is compulsory. The Negroes have their own schools, and they want their own schools. They get along. Negroes in my town now have a better schoolhouse than the one I went to school in when I was a boy. We have no friction with them. They behave themselves better evidently than they do in New York, because we do not send half as many to the penitentiary. They are enjoying a protection that they do not get anywhere else except in the Southern States. If you do not believe it, you just take the records of any other State in this Union now and check and see how many they have living in those States and how many they have in the penitentiary. You will find that those States that are raising the most howl about the conditions in the South have the largest percentage of their Negroes in the penitentiary.

When you disturb the peaceful relations now existing between white man and Negro, one of them is going to move. Which one is it? You know who it is going to be. You have done more harm, just such agitation as this has done the Negroes of the South more harm, deprived more of them of homes, than anything else that has occurred since I have been a Member of Congress. And today, as I said, the time has come when they are not needed as servants. We have three servants to take their place: oil, gasoline, and electricity.

You are not doing them any good. And you do not care a tinker's damn about them. That is the tragedy of it. You don't give a tinker's damn, if you will excuse the expression, about the Negroes in the South. This is done to try to create a political furor for political purposes in the North.

You are not doing yourselves any good. If you want to know about this, go down there. Do not go down there and ask the chief of police or the sheriff. There [indicating] is what they call the Negro section. Go over there. Go and see how they live and ask them and see how ridiculous they will make you feel before you get away from there. This thing is not for a thing in the world but just to create disturbance in the southern States, where we have done the very best we could. Nowhere else under the shining sun—nowhere—has the Negro ever received the treatment at the hands of the white people where he lived in large numbers as he does now among the white people of the South. But you are injuring the cause of the poor Negro. . . .