

Draft - Mr. Lilley's opening remarks

Report for Action press conference

Ladies and gentlemen of the press, good morning. Thank you for being here this Saturday morning. I realize that many of you probably had other plans for the weekend until your editors tapped you for this assignment, but I think you'll be glad you came. I think you'll find a story here.

When Governor Hughes appointed this Commission, in the wake of the civil disorders that flared in New Jersey last summer, he asked me, my nine fellow commissioners and our staff to deliver a report with practical proposals to prevent the recurrence of such tragic and wasteful events in our state.

We have spent five months in pursuit of that goal. The Report for Action, all 478 pages of it, is the result of that pursuit.

We do not claim to have arrived at a definitive answer for every problem that faces our cities and state. Nor do we claim that we have even discovered or defined all the problems. But we have used the time available to us to concentrate on those areas we have discovered to be of immediate concern to the people of our troubled communities.

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We have restricted our recommendations to those things that the people and governments of New Jersey and its communities can do -- now -- to respond effectively to their problems.

Many of the problems and some of the answers we propose for them will seem familiar to you. They should. Most of the problems have been around a long time.

Bad housing, unemployment and inferior education for Negroes were determined to be the underlying causes of the Chicago riots of 1919.

And commissions, like this one, have investigated and recommended solutions in the wake of almost every major civil disturbance that has occurred in the United States.

You will find in this report some recommendations that may be surprising. At least, that is our hope. But you will not find anything sensational.

Unless -- that is -- you consider sensational the fact that most of our recommendations will have no dollar-and-cents cost to anyone.

You will find, too, that we have devoted special attention to the problems of Newark, where the most dramatic evidence of dissatisfaction with the "status quo" was given last summer. We believe that the lessons learned from Newark can be profitably studied by cities and communities throughout the state.

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I want to express my deep appreciation to Governor Hughes for the cooperation he has given this commission and for enabling us to work with complete freedom and independence.

Exposure of my fellow commissioners and myself to the magnitude of the problems that prevail has forged a report nearly complete in unanimity. We are unanimous in this, too -- we believe that commissions like ours have outlived their usefulness, unless action is to be forthcoming.

We will now attempt to answer any questions you might have about the report.

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