Ross's Speech Brings Roars of Laughter From Students

Bruce Galphin, an Atlanta reporter who covered Gov. Barnett's speech at Harvard last week, said that the governor was "[t]he greatest thing since Charlie Chaplin." Galphin wrote in "The Atlanta Constitution" that although police guarded the auditorium, "the only security was the laughter of those of repeated laughter." After the speech, the students asked the governor about the state of Mississippi. He said that the governor entitled to vote. But if he's not qualified, then he's denied that right.

Some Discussion

Now if you're asking me that he's been discriminated against, then he's certainly he has a right to appeal to the courts. And, some of them do, you know. (Laughter)

U...you know in Mississippi, we have literacy tests. We try to find out if people are intelligent enough to vote for...uh...candidates. (Laughter)

Gov. Barnett

We try to find out if people are intelligent enough to vote for...uh...candidates...uh... (interrupted by moderator).

MODERATOR: Could I try and rephrase the question? The question is saying that you suggested that Mississippi should be allowed to manage its own affairs, the people of Mississippi should manage their own affairs.

The questioner wonders in view of the proportionately low Negro voting. The Negroes are elected by...them... (interrupted by moderator).

Gov. Barnett

Now if you're asking me that the Negroes are entitled to vote. They're entitled to vote. And most of them are privileged to vote if they want to...they are privileged to vote. If they'll exercise their rights. Uh...there's no question about that.

Just Ask Them

Now, these are a lot of them that don't want to vote. (Laughter)

They're a lot of 'em, and you...you go down to Mississippi, you can ask a lot of 'em, they don't...a lot of 'em don't care anything about voting.

But let me say this about the Negroes. We get along with them...and work with them...in harmony and peace...on the side of the Negroes in the factories, perhaps somewhere...they're good to them. (Laughter)

They own...the Negroes in Mississippi...the Negroes in Mississippi own approximately 25 percent of all the homes in Mississippi and about 42 percent of our population is Negro. They...uh...they own a lot of property.

Negroes, according to one bank in Jackson, there is local community have eight million dollars...uh...in...in one bank in Jackson, Mississippi.

They go to school...there. They have wonderful schools, more beautiful and spacious and comfortable than some of the white schools.

We've spent in Mississippi...the last one hundred million dollars that's been spent, 70 million dollars of that money...uh...has been spent on the Negro schools and...uh...30 million for the whites. In other words, there...there...we're trying to give them equal opportunities...uh...opportunities...uh...in education and in voting.

Did you have...was there another question?

Read the rest of Barnett's "statement" in next week's FREE PRESS.