In Congress today the greatest issue is that of civil rights as contained in H. R. 6127 which is pending in the Senate and has been under debate since July 8. A coalition of Democrats and Republicans claim this bill is necessary to insure Negroes the right to vote in the South. In opposition to this, Southern members of the Senate and some others contend the bill is one designed to force integration of the races -- not just guarantee the right to vote.

In the forefront of the fight against H. R. 6127 are Senator Byrd of Virginia and Senator Thurmond of South Carolina. Senator Byrd, is there a need for a right to vote bill in Virginia?

_**Senator Byrd:**_ There is absolutely no necessity for such a bill to be enacted by the Congress. Virginia has laws protecting the right to vote and every citizen who qualifies can cast his ballot along with every other citizen so qualified. These qualifications are not based on racial distinctions.

_**Senator Thurmond:**_ That is also true in South Carolina. The State Constitution of 1895 required the Legislature to enact laws to protect the right to vote. There are a number of statutes on the books in my State for that purpose. Every citizen is protected equally.

_**Senator Byrd:**_ On July 25 the Washington Post, a newspaper which has not been favorable to the South, published a survey of voting rights in the various States. It pointed out that in Virginia "prospects for increasing Negro participation in politics have been enhanced by the establishment of centralized registration in a number of counties." That disproves the charges which have been made against
us that we have denied voting rights to qualified citizens.

SENATOR THURMOND: I am glad you mentioned that subject, Senator Byrd. In South Carolina after the 1952 Presidential election, a Negro newspaper, the Lighthouse and Informer, declared on November 8, that there was no doubt that South Carolina's Negro voters kept the State in the Democratic column. In fact, the newspaper estimated that between 60,000 and 80,000 Negroes voted in the election. In 1956 there was also heavy voting by the Negroes of South Carolina. If they qualify, they vote if they wish to do so and take the time. The claims of the advocates of H. R. 6127, calling it a right to vote bill, are absurd.

SENATOR BYRD: I agree with that. They want to force upon us integration of the races in the public schools and other forms of racial mixing under the guise of providing a "right to vote" for Negroes. It is a fraud on the American people.

SENATOR THURMOND: Yes, and unless the guarantee of trial by jury is included in this bill, there may be many people in sections of the country outside the South who suffer eventually. Before the passage of the Norris-LaGuardia Act in 1932, labor was subject to the same denial of trial by jury which the advocates of this bill wish to impose on persons involved in contempt cases growing out of these so-called civil rights matters.

SENATOR BYRD: I remember how the same people who are now seeking to deny trial by jury to citizens in the South were in 1932 crying out against letting a judge sentence a striker to jail, without a trial by jury -- the very same judge who issued the injunction against the striker in the first place. There have been some large
crocodile tears shed in the name of civil rights during this debate.

SENATOR THURMOND: I hope that people all over the country realize that we are not asking anything special for persons involved in civil rights cases. I believe in every citizen having the same right -- including the right of trial by jury. Since persons involved in labor dispute cases are protected in their right to a trial by jury, every citizen should have the same protection when he becomes involved in a contempt case growing out of an injunction issued by a judge. After all, judges are only human. They are subject to the same emotions as the rest of us and they should not be permitted to act as judge and jury.

SENATOR BYRD: I do not believe a majority of the American people would ever approve of what the advocates of H. R. 6127 are trying to do. Trial by jury is a fundamental right of Americans. Just because a devious method has been devised in this bill to transfer what should be criminal cases to the civil side of the courts, so as to deny trial by jury, does not change the facts.

SENATOR THURMOND: That is right. I have full faith in the integrity of the American people. What we have to fight is the pressure blocs who care nothing for anybody's rights if they can gain an advantage for the group in which they are interested.

NARRATOR: Thank you Senator Byrd and Senator Thurmond for this interesting discussion on the civil rights bill now being debated by the United States Senate. You have contributed much to a greater understanding of the bill.

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