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WHAT WILL THE 1971 REAPPORTIONMENT DO FOR THE MEXICAN AMERICAN?

SENATOR H. L. RICHARDSON (R), Chairman, Senate Republican Caucus: "I predict that after reapportionment this time the Mexican American will be little better off than he is right now. As long as he puts all of his eggs in one basket, he shouldn't be surprised when they get crushed..."

SENATOR MERVYN DYMALLY (D), Chairman, Senate Elections & Reapportionment Committee: "The fair and just thing regarding reapportionment of the State Senate is to see that the Mexican American communities within California have an opportunity to be represented. Unfortunately, however, neither commitments which I nor the Democratic Party nor the State Senate may make and intend to fulfill will guarantee Mexican American representation in the State Senate...There are now 20 million people within our State. So each of the 40 State Senate Districts will contain approximately one half a million people. Los Angeles County, which is slightly under seven million people, will retain its 14 seats. No gain...A seat for the Mexican American community would have to displace a current incumbent...No current Senate incumbent can realistically be expected to willingly offer up his Senate seat to the Mexican American community. This is part of our problem."

SENATOR DENNIS CARPENTER (R), then Chairman, Republican State Central Committee: "Those district lines which now exist and have not produced what I would call a fair number of Spanish surnames and Mexican American legislators in the State of California are the districts that were established by the Democratic Party...Unfortunately, we might look forward to the same circumstances this year..."

ASSEMBLYMAN HENRY WAXMAN (D), Chairman, Assembly Elections & Reapportionment Committee:

Question by Civil Rights Advisory Committee Chairman Herman Sillas: "Would you state what your position would be if you were to come to the conclusion that giving additional or increased representation to the Mexican Americans would, in fact, mean the removal of one incumbent? Would you now be able to state your position on that, whether you would feel the consideration of increasing Mexican American representation outweighs the removal of an incumbent Democrat?"

Mr. Waxman: "The only response I can give to that is that it is a speculative question and I would not venture to answer it at this time."

Chairman Sillas: "Is it your goal at this time to increase the representation of the Mexican American in the Assembly?"

Mr. Waxman: "I don't think that is a very fair question to ask of me, other than it has already been asked and answered a number of times in the testimony today."

JESS UNRUH, former Assembly Speaker: "Reapportionments are designed by incumbents for incumbents and as a service of incumbents. I have gone through three reapportionments...In no case have I seen anything except the actions of the legislature to protect the members of the legislature and to favor the party in power. In 1961, pursuant to a direct request, I think the principle thing that motivated the legislature in reapportionment after that all-important principle of protecting incumbents was to give the then new Democratic President, John Kennedy, a working majority in the Congressional delegation of California as was possible, as big a one as was possible. We did that.

In 1965, it was totally and completely for the protection of incumbents. In 1967, it was to protect the incumbent Congressmen. I would suggest that is what would govern this reapportionment at both the Assembly, the Senate and the Congressional level. This is the way it is done. If you have a way of figuring out how to do it differently, I think it should be done differently and I am totally willing to support that myself. I take it that is the way it has been done and that is the way it will be done. It will not matter much who is in there, whether they are Black, White, Brown, Yellow, Green, Red, Democrat or Republican. They will first of all make a deal to protect themselves.

Secondly, they will attempt to give their party whatever advantage there is.

Thirdly, they will look after other groups who manage to get the most pressure on them after that."

*--All of the above were statements directed to the California State Advisory Committee of the United States Commission on Civil Rights during its January 21-22 public open meeting in Sacramento on "Political Participation of Mexican Americans."

WHAT'S AT STAKE?

SENATOR MERVYN DYMALLY: "I witnessed from the streets both the Watts unrest in 1965 and the gun battles between members of the Los Angeles Police Department and the Black Panthers in 1969, and I know that if people feel that their voices are not represented within the legislative halls, then they are forced to represent themselves in outcry and outrage in the streets." --Statement to the State Advisory Committee, U. S. Commission on Civil Rights, January 22, 1971.

ESTEBAN TORRES, Director, Congress of Mexican American Unity: "The trouble was caused by uncontrollable young people who've just given up on working within the system."--Statement quoted in the February 3, Los Angeles Times, following East Los Angeles' fifth major disturbance in recent months--riots which left several dead and wounded and caused $1.4 million in property damage.

SHERIFF PETER J. PITCHESS, Los Angeles County: "This violence was caused not by outsiders, but by those who live in the community."--Statement quoted in the same February 3, Los Angeles Times article.

GEORGE NICHOLOW, vice-president, CBS Radio: "Too many politicians say they care about the Mexican Americans when in fact, they don't. KNX has learned that the plan is to re-district the State in a way that will give the Mexicans only one or two seats in Sacramento. If this is true, it is disgusting hypocrisy on the part of the Democratic Party. It should be repudiated by every concerned citizen in this state. KNX believes that if you are a registered Democrat you should tell your party leaders how you feel about this. Those who make peaceful change impossible, make violent revolution inevitable."--Excerpt from editorial broadcast six times over KNX-AM and KNX-FM on February 8.

MARIO OBLEDO, executive director, Mexican American Legal Defense & Educational Fund (MALDEF): "Should the legislature fail, as they have done in the past, to reapportion in order to assure minority representation in the Assembly and the Senate, MALDEF has already committed itself to file legal proceedings to insure that these minorities are represented...Our staff attorneys have begun research to show that the present system denies the Mexican American community the equal protection of the laws...The underlying principle of this case is that legislatures cannot apportion themselves in such a way as to deny representation to identifiable ethnic groups..."--Statement to the State Advisory Committee, U. S. Commission on Civil Rights, Sacramento, January 21, 1971.

RICHARD CALDERON, former Democratic candidate: "La Raza Unida Party is now in the forming stage as a result of many years of frustration in our community...If no districts are drawn in our behalf, I forsee the strong possibility of La Raza Unida Party developing and qualifying for the 1972 general elections...I am also sure that the 1972 Presidential elections are paramount to the Democratic Party...If our community is slighted again, many persons would listen to and become involved in a freedom delegation. I would remind the Commission that this occurred at the previous National Democratic Convention, where the Mississippi Freedom Delegation was fighting to be seated. I think that we would be getting many allies because it would prove the contention of many southerners that the eastern and western states are unjust in many ways to the minorities..."--Statement to the State Advisory Committee, U. S. Commission on Civil Rights, January 22, 1971.

THOMAS BRADLEY, Los Angeles City Councilman: "I think that there is a kind of sense of pride that we need to engender in all of our people, a sense of pride at being able to point to a member of one's community and say, 'There sits John Jones, representing the Black community,' or 'There sits Julian Nava representing the Mexican American community." There is a motivation that I think cannot be engendered any other way except to show by example this kind of success story. That youngster who sees the election of a member of his race to an important post then begins to realistically hope it can happen to him. He may work harder in school, he may prepare himself even better to some day hopefully achieve the same position. That, I think, is why we must fight so hard for this kind of representation." --Statement to the State Advisory Committee, U. S. Commission on Civil Rights, January 22, 1971.

FACT SHEET

MEXICAN AMERICAN POPULATION IN CALIFORNIA: No 1970 census data on this ethnic group will be available until the end of 1971, and then it will be based on only a five percent sample. Public school enrollment figures and other recent studies place California's current Mexican American population at between 2.5 and 3 million persons--or between 12.5 and 15 percent of the state's total population.

Yet--

--Out of 80 State Assemblymen, two (Peter Chacon, San Diego, and Alex Garcia, Los Angeles) are Mexican American.

--Out of 40 State Senators, none are Mexican American.

--Out of 38 California Congressmen, one (Edward Roybal, Los Angeles) is Mexican American.

--Out of 15,650 elective and appointive offices in California (including municipal, county, state and federal), only 310--exactly 1.98 percent--are held by Mexican Americans.

--Of the top 40 State officials (as listed in the official 1970 California Roster), none are Mexican Americans.

--Of the nearly 700 Assembly and Senate staff persons listed in the 1970 legislative handbook, only seven have Spanish surnames.

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Los Angeles County alone now has more than 1.1 million Mexican Americans, according to a study released by the Economic & Youth Opportunities Agency (EYOA) on February 15. Half of these are clustered in the Greater East Los Angeles area.

Another recent study, conducted by Dr. David Lopez-Lee and Professor Henry Pacheco of California State College at Los Angeles, shows that Greater East Los Angeles has been politically subdivided so that portions of this dominantly Mexican American area are in:

Nine different Assembly Districts.

Seven different Senate Districts.

Six different Congressional Districts.

Voter registration figures in these districts reveal that none have more than 30 percent Mexican American voters, and that most fall between 14-28 percent Mexican American voter registration. For a Mexican American candidate to have a chance to win against an incumbent (who helps draw the district lines), it is variously estimated that between 35-45 percent Mexican American voter registration is needed.

If district lines had not been gerrymandered in 1960, 1965, and 1967, California's Mexican American could be in a position today to hold:

Six to eight Assembly seats.

Two or three Senate seats.

Two or three Congressional seats.

This--while still low--would give Mexican Americans representation in Sacramento and Washington more in line with their numbers in this state.

CALIFORNIA'S PAST AND PRESENT POLITICAL LEADERS ARE IN AGREEMENT THAT THE MEXICAN AMERICAN HAS BEEN GERRYMANDERED OUT OF REPRESENTATION IN THE STATE LEGISLATURE AND CONGRESS.

Here are some of their statements:

GOVERNOR RONALD REAGAN (R), "Thousands of Californians are still being cheated out of their correct proportional share of legislative and Congressional representation as a result of a cynically and deliberately contrived imbalance...Large communities of particular ethnic groups like our fine citizens of Mexican descent have been gerrymandered and cut up so they have no chance to choose either legislative or Congressional voices representative of their particular problems. This time reapportionment must correct that injustice..." --Excerpt from his address to the Republican State Central Committee, Memorial Auditorium, Sacramento, January 31, 1971.

SENATOR MERVYN DYMALLY (D), Chairman, Senate Elections & Reapportionment Committee: "For four years I have walked the floor of the State Senate and never have I seen an elected representative of the large Mexican American communities within our state. I have walked the halls of this impressive Capitol Building and I have seen few, if any, staff persons who are Mexican American...Obviously, their interests have not been looked after..." --Statement to the State Advisory Committee, U. S. Commission on Civil Rights, January 22, 1971.

SENATOR H. L. RICHARDSON (R), Chairman, Senate Republican Caucus: "The Mexican Americans have literally put all of their eggs in one basket. They have for years joined one party, and have for years been systematically taken advantage of...The Mexican American is a hip pocket vote...Once they have committed themselves to this posture, then the only question is, how does the lily-white liberal divvy up the Mexican American community to serve as a consistent voting block for his district?"...--Statement to the State Advisory Committee, U. S. Commission on Civil Rights, January 22, 1971.

SENATOR GEORGE MOSCONE (D), Majority Floor Leader, California Senate:

Question (by Father Henry Casso): "Do you feel from your experience that there is serious gerrymandering to the detriment to the Chicanos in Los Angeles?"

Senator Moscone: "I think the best answer to your question--and I hope it is not evasive--but I look around me in the Senate and I see none. Therefore, the answer must be yes." --Statement to the State Advisory Committee, U. S. Commission on Civil Rights, January 22, 1971.

CONGRESSMAN EDWARD ROYBAL (D), 30th District, Los Angeles: "The Supreme Court decisions over the last decade relating to legislative reapportionment have lulled many citizens into the supposition that gerrymandering and other techniques used to minimize minority group political influence have become obsolete. Nothing could be further from the truth...Any political boundary map of East Los Angeles will graphically reveal this sad condition in which no less than four Congressional Districts arbitrarily intersect the area."...Testimony before the State Senate Elections & Reapportionment Committee, Los Angeles, February 12, 1971.

JESS UNRUH, former Assembly Speaker: "Quite obviously the Mexican American community has been reapportioned more with regard to how it would maximize the Democratic representation that it has as to how it would maximize the Mexican American representation."--Statement to the State Advisory Committee, U. S. Commission on Civil Rights, January 22, 1971.