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SOME CONDITIONS AFFECTING EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY IN HOUSING AND EMPLOYMENT FOR MINORITY GROUP PERSONS IN THE SAN DIEGO AREA

Statement by
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Citizens Interracial Committee
of San Diego County, Inc.

before the
Fair Employment Practice Commission of the
State of California
San Diego, California, November 9, 1965

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Honorable Chairman, Mr. Dellum, and other members of this distinguished Commission. It is indeed a pleasure to be invited to present to you some observations on the problems of equality of housing and employment in the San Diego Area.

My observations will be limited to the field of housing for the most part: this is not because there are fewer pressing problems in the field of employment, but because the Urban League and others will undoubtedly cover this area more completely than I. I shall comment briefly, however, on a few employment problems with relation to Negroes only; members of the community who are Mexican-American will cover other areas. Let us consider these employment situations first.

Two conditions in the San Diego employment picture stand out glaringly: (1) Negro cab drivers here are a rarity, in contrast to other large metropolitan areas where they often represent a large portion of all cab drivers. (2) Negro waiters and waitresses are

equally rare; in the downtown area there is not one food-serving establishment with a Negro waiter or waitress, according to our latest survey. It is possible, of course, that one or two may have been hired since our survey of a few months ago.

NEGRO WOMEN EMPLOYEES

It is further noted that the largest single number of Negro women workers in the San Diego area are employed as nurses (about 120); the second largest number are teachers (about 100). These two combined fields of work account for well over 30% of all the white-collar positions held by Negro women in the San Diego area. It was this way in 1960, and still is today, 1965. The same conditions generally hold true, although to a lesser degree, with reference to the Mexican-Americans.

Even in teaching and nursing, however, there is evidence of some exclusion, although it is important to point out that the exclusion is not necessarily deliberate or conscious. Significantly, the San Diego Unified School District within the past year has begun a concerted campaign to close the gap by making a special effort to recruit Negro and other minority-group teachers. This is a positive action and the District deserves our wholehearted support in this effort; we highly commend the District. But much remains to be done. The important thing to bear in mind here is that this exclusion has its roots deep in the entrenched practices and traditional approaches to hiring nurses and teachers, and in the attitudes which are endemic

to the San Diego area.

HIDDEN FACES OF DISCRIMINATION

The up-grading of those already in these fields is even more insidious and "off-limits". On the positive side, one Negro and one Mexican-American (who is on leave and has not yet taken office) were appointed to principalships this year for the first time in the history of San Diego. But this, to the minority community as well as to others, represents tokenism and appeasement at its best (or worst). It is a start, however, and deserves much more serious appraisal.

COUNTY-WIDE PICTURE

WITHIN THE SAN DIEGO AREA (USING TEN SCHOOL DISTRICTS) THERE WERE ONE YEAR AGO A GRAND TOTAL OF ONLY 40 NON-WHITE TEACHERS OUT OF A TOTAL OF APPROXIMATELY 2,650. Again on the positive side, it is encouraging to note that many of these districts have made an effort to correct this condition. Several, with the aid of C.I.C., have hired additional Negroes for the first time this year; others have indicated that they would like to do so. Some have done so on their own without outside pressures or help. But now let us turn to the whole area of housing.

THE OVERALL SITUATION

Before considering housing conditions as such in the San Diego area, let us review the past decades in terms of the general worth of the area.

Most of the material in this section is from the 1960 census and from bulletins compiled by the City of San Diego Planning Department.

> The 1964 population of the San Diego Metropolitan Area was estimated at one million, one hundred thousand (1,100,000); it is now estimated at one million, one hundred ten thousand (1,110,000), an increase of 10,000 over the past year. It is generally accepted that the present growth spurt in both San Diego and the whole of California actually began in the 1940's.

In relating these figures to the housing picture, a factor of importance is the greater increase in population of the area outside the central part of the city. Between 1950 and 1960 the population in the areas surrounding the city more than doubled, while the city itself grew by little more than 70%. This increase within city limits was nevertheless still dramatic. The San Diego area, within and without the city limits, then, is one of rapid expansion and has been for two decades. The figures here represent for the total area a net population increase of about 80% over the 1950 figures.

Breaking these figures down, we get a picture of great mobility:

1. About 76% (232,000) of all reporting families in the Census records of 1960 moved in 1954 or later into the homes they were occupying in 1960.

2. About 20% (61,000) had moved into their present home between 1940 and 1953; and

3. About 4% (12,000) were living in the same places to which they had moved in 1939 or earlier.

These statistics refer to the population of this entire area.

When they are analyzed for those families generally classified as "White", they remain as given, that is, in the same proportions. But when they are analyzed for those persons classified as "Nonwhite", there are some differences.

1. About 80% (compared to 76% White) had moved into the homes they were occupying in 1960 (10,600 families) in 1954 or later.

2. About 20% (2,700, compared to 20% White) were living in the same homes to which they had moved in 1953 or earlier.

3. For the Nonwhites, however, there are no data pertaining to the number moving between 1939 and 1953.

DISPERSION AND TRANSPORTATION

A word or two about the location of homes will complete this introduction. The over one-million persons living in this San Diego area are spread over the mountains, in the valleys, up and down hills and across the many, many canyons, as well as along the water and beach fronts in rhythm with its topography. Location of homes, then, becomes an important consideration as well as owning or having access to an automobile. In 1960, it was found that:

57 of every 100 families owned one car

25 of every 100 families owned two cars

4 of every 100 families owned three or more cars

only 14 of every 100 families reported owning no car

Slightly over half (55%) of area residents in 1960 lived within the city limits. But they did not necessarily live in concentrated

tight urban patterns. Ownership of an automobile is as crucial within the city limits as without, because of the lack of adequate public transportation and the topography of the area.

We note at this point that patterns of living and residential concentration are NOT the same for all the residents of San Diego: those persons who are generally referred to as minority groups (Mexican-Americans, Negroes, Puerto Ricans, Tahitians, Somalians, Cubans and others), do not yet enjoy equal access to all areas of San Diego.

This is best illustrated by these statistics from the 1960 census relating only to Negroes:

> There were some 40,000 Negroes living in San Diego County (which is the same as the San Diego metropolitan area referred to herein). About 34,000, about 86%, of these live within the City limits. If we exclude the 2,300 who live in military establishments, we see that about 32,000 Negroes live within the civilian area of the City limits. Negroes in 1960 thus constituted about 7% of the total City population.

Today, five and one-half years after the census, it is estimated that the <u>percentage</u> of Negro residents is about the same, while the <u>number</u> has increased only slightly. Throughout the same period, the white population has continued to increase at phenomenal rates.

Yet, in 1960, 82% of all Negroes living in San Diego (about 26,000 of the 32,000) lived within TEN census tracts. This pattern has not changed, according to our findings, since 1960.

DEEPLY ENTRENCHED PATTERNS AND PRACTICES

It is quite apparent that the nonwhite population or families are not widely dispersed with any degree of symmetry throughout the area. Typically, there are clusters of concentrations flanked by vast areas of exclusion. In its report of June 26, 1963, the San Diego Branch N.A.A.C.P. in a "Report and Recommendations on the Study of Major Grievances and Immediate Requirements of Southeast San Diego", stated:

> "San Diego does have an alarming and shameful degree of segregation and discrimination in housing. This problem not only exists; it is becoming worse.
>
> This concentration of the Negro population ... is greater than it was six years ago. It was greater in 1950 than it was in 1940.
>
> We submit that this ghetto pattern is by no means incidental, accidental, nor is it due to the choice of the Negro population. It has been made possible by deliberate discrimination and segregation, encouraged and fostered by the officials of the City and County."

AN ILLUSION

Just as in many other communities, the rapid expansion and growth of racial residential concentrations has been accompanied by an increase in some dispersion that often creates the illusion of progress toward residential integration. Such movement, often called progress, of course does not represent some occasional "gains" but the total pattern depicts a net loss.

There is some question as to the extent to which Negroes have broken out of this concentration in pockets since the census was taken. To be sure, at least one Negro family lives in all but one or two of the surrounding suburban communities; usually the one or two families which have moved into the previously closed areas have done so in the face of pressures, embarrassments, and even stone-throwing, window-breaking and sometimes cross-burnings, though by means have these occurrences been universal in our area.

But the pattern is very familiar, characterized by:

> Pushing out the periphery of existing ghettos to fringe areas;
>
> Clustering of small groups of Negro families in close proximity to each other, within interracial areas;
>
> Movement of an occasional Negro family into a high status, otherwise all-white neighborhood. Usually, this is an exceptional situation, even today;
>
> Unwritten quotas in subdivisions, acknowledged by some developers; this seems to challenge the individual developer to attempt to break the bonds which have engulfed him within the industry.

CASES FROM THE FILES OF C.I.C. AS EXAMPLES

All complaints which come to C.I.C. are naturally confidential and must be kept that way. Without violating this rule, then, here are some of the kinds of cases actually handled within the past year.

1. A family who after locating an apartment paid a month's rent in advance, only to have the check returned when the owner discovered that they were Negro. This case was referred to the F.E.P.C. and the family advised to contact a lawyer.

2. In and around the San Diego State College area, three different families have encountered discrimination because of race; these cases were also referred to the F.E.P.C., but handled through a local realtor.

3. At one of the largest F.H.A.-controlled apartment complexes, a Negro family was told that no vacancies existed, despite the fact that vacancies were at that time advertised. A check by our office indicated that there were over fifty such vancies within the category desired. The family involved did not desire to push the case and it was closed.

4. Referred to the F.E.P.C. were two cases involving trailer camps. We are still following these cases very closely.

5. The case of one high-ranking Negro officer who could not locate quarters in the downtown area because of his color was handled through the offices of a local realtor who spent considerable time and energy accompanying the family. Two cases involving officers were also referred to the F.E.P.C.

6. Other examples include: not less than ten listings by realtors with inserts which read, "For whites or Caucasians only". Individually reported cases state that sellers were asked or told by realtors that they (the sellers) would have to stipulate that the property be sold to whites only. Many persons report that realtors have referred to neighborhoods as being depressed since Negroes moved in, etc.

7. C.I.C. is now working in two communities with citizens groups formed to prevent the neighborhood from becoming all-Negro. In one of these a second meeting is scheduled for next Monday.

8. Three members of C.I.C.'s housing committee have personally helped Negro families who were encountering discrimination in finding places to live by accompanying them, or by finding a place for them. This has happened in about a half-dozen instances.

These are some of the kinds of cases handled during the past year - though they are only a sampling - which indicate clearly the traditional pattern of keeping certain geographical areas closed to

minority persons.

MINORITY-GROUP INCOMES AND REAL ESTATE PRACTICES

Unlike many other communities, the San Diego metropolitan area can not support the myth or the valid claim that housing segregation is a byproduct of the nonwhite's economic inability to compete in the open market for standard, or for high-cost housing. In San Diego, this traditional "excuse" can be refuted in many ways. For example:

1. Income: One-third of San Diego's Negro families earned over $6,600 per year in 1960. This figure also represents the city-wide median income. Ten percent of the Negro families were high-income families, earning over $10,000 per year. (1960 census figures)

2. The median value of all owner-occupied homes in San Diego in 1960 was $16,300. Assuming that this value reflects the approximate purchase price, and using the old rule-of-thumb formula that housing cost should not exceed two and a half times the annual income, then an annual income of about $6,500 would be required to purchase a house of this price.

But there were 2,950 of such nonwhite families who reported incomes at this level and above in the 1960 census enumeration; yet only 1,265 nonwhite families owned homes above this $16,000 dollar level.

3. The median rent for all rented units (homes) in San Diego in 1960 was $86 a month. Using this same rule-of-thumb (one week's income equivalent to one month's rent), then a yearly income of $4,500 would be required for renting such a home.

   But, here again, there were over 5,600 such reporting families of over $4,500, yet only 2,700 families renting houses at this level or above.

REALTORS AND BUSINESS TRANSACTIONS

Additionally, and to anticipate the question of nonwhite families' interest in home-ownership, it was reported in 1960, that more than 5,300 (about 39%) of all nonwhite families owned their own homes, in spite of the interacting problem of unequal opportunity in employment and housing.

It is obvious that, for the minority group persons, just as it is for the majority, many thousands of real estate transactions take place in effecting the movements of these residents of black, yellow and brown skins. This is not meant to imply that every single movement involved a formal transaction with a real estate agent or broker, but generally this is true in the normal course of things in which land, land usage and home transactions are involved.

The patterns of racial residential concentration, racial segregation, -- and exclusion -- (or discrimination) which characterize this area are deeply entrenched in its real estate practices and routine operations. In some sections of this area, such opposition is well organized, while in others, it is unorganized but is considered proper and in "good taste". Further, many persons engaged in the business of selling or renting properties report that in opposing the moving in of a minority person and the exodus of whites, they are carrying out the desires, often unexpressed, of the white residents. There are volumes of evidence to suggest that such an assumption

needs questioning. There is the question, then, as to whether such a stated position is that of the potential seller or rentor, or is the expression of hidden negative racial attitudes of the businessman themselves.

Coupled with these conditions and the accompanying attitudes on the part of realtors and related business representatives, is the observation that at this time, November, 1965, only two Negroes are members of the San Diego Realty Board. This latter condition is not unique to San Diego. For excluding minorities, especially Negroes, from realty boards as an issue is now pending court action in many cities and states. In our own State of California, Los Angeles has a test case pending at this very moment. Nevertheless, this condition does afford another insight into the magnitude of the problem facing us in San Diego.

MEASURE OF MOBILITY

Finally, one other observation should be included in such an analysis. It is generally agreed among all authorities in the housing and related fields that the most widely accepted and trusted index of the extent of free movement in a housing market is the age of the structures sold or rented to the nonwhite persons.

> Using this index then and the period from 1939 through 1964, it is of great significance that nonwhite families occupy the largest number of deteriorating and dilapidated structures.

Nonwhite occupy the oldest structures and rank far below the whites in acquiring structures now being constructed and/or which have been built within the past few decades. Equally significant is the observation that many of these structures are without inside toilets and hot running water and are generally far below the minimum standards established for residential homes.

This impresses the fact that there are many parts of this area in which nonwhites have not penetrated at all or to any appreciable degree.

In closing, it should be added that while this report has concentrated primarily on the problems of the Negroes, the Mexican-Americans also face acute problems in these two areas, although those in education are equally acute. But because the 1960 census classified the Mexican-American as white, there is considerable difficulty in obtaining accurate data in certain specific areas.

May I thank you honorable gentlemen for this opportunity to present some important observations as related to the area of housing in San Diego.

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The community looks upon Careers for Youth program as something to give unmotivated kids a dream. "If a youngster thinks he can become a doctor or an engineer or whatever, as long as he holds on to that dream, he has a chance. This is still an open society." Without emphasizing anti-discrimination, this youth project has helped lessen discrimination by bringing businessmen and other members of the comunity out to speak before the various Career Clubs and by taking the participants in the program to visit a variety of places of employment. All this means direct contact between employers and young Negroes or Spanish-Americans.

Robert B. Choate, Jr., a civil engineer in his middle thirties, became interested in the Urban League program for young people, Tomorrow's Scientists and Technicians, and talked to 150 people about starting a Phoenix vocational guidance project. Interested volunteers included a hospital pharmacist and his wife, educators, city employees, and several wealthy members of the community. But Careers for Youth, as Choate soon learned, could never be just a vocational project. "The kids that needed the program lived in the depressed parts of the town and needed inspiration. They needed to think there was a chance for them to be something better, but in order to hope you must know what exists. Many of these youngsters had never eaten off a plate, used knives and forks, ridden a bicycle, or had a quiet place to study. And 85 percent of them did not finish high school." Principals of the high schools told the Careers program planners that most of the youth had never met a lawyer, doctor, or engineer, and had no notion as to how professional members of the community earned a living.

Securing enough contributions to hire a full-time secretary and office space, the people interested in the program approached the schools, especially those in and close to the depressed sections of town. Both elementary and high school personnel lent their support and helped to organize Career Clubs. Membership was open to any youngster and the immediate object was to encourage the student to finish school--to stick it out, and maybe even try to go to college. People from every occupation in the area volunteered to visit the clubs and told the kids about their work. Then came tours, with the program managers renting busses, and taking eager youngsters to factories, hospitals, the courthouse, and civic offices. The professional men, skilled technicians, public officials, business and industrial executives stopped whatever they were doing long enough to speak with the young people and answer their questions.

In order not to lose contact with the youngsters during the summer months, Careers for Youth hires a high school counselor and pays him a salary to talk with the groups. Sometimes the counselor has to go to the homes of the youngsters and get them to participate, but contact is maintained.

Along with the vocational aspect of the program, systematic exposure to middle-class living is carried out. Visits to model homes, bookstores, good restaurants, theatre, ballet, concerts, and other community activities are initiated by the adult volunteers. Financial help is offered to the youngsters with high school and college scholarships given to the deserving.