[ms-0087.008.008.004]

CITIZENS INTERRACIAL COMMITTEE OF SAN DIEGO COUNTY
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HUMAN RELATIONS
and
LOCAL GOVERNMENT
AN ANALYSIS

EMPLOYMENT IN SAN DIEGO

MARCH - 1966

EMPLOYMENT IN SAN DIEGO

CITY OF SAN DIEGO

For several months now San Diego has been classified by the federal government as a "disaster" city with reference to the employment of its local residents. This means that while the national average rate of unemployment dropped or remained constant, that of San Diego climbed or remained relatively high -- above the 6 to 8 percent level of unemployment over a given period of months. These are averages and are very misleading to the layman or to others without some basic understanding of what they mean.

These averages include the so-called minorities which further complicates the picture. At any given time in any big city, the rate of unemployment for the minorities is systematically and consistently, approximately two-and-one-half times that of the given average: in San Diego, then, the unemployment rate for the two largest minority groups--the Mexican-American and the Negro--remains around 15 to 18 per cent of those employable. Yet even this needs more interpretation in order to fully comprehend the total situation of employment in our community. For it has been estimated that for certain particular neighborhoods in Southeast San Diego, the rate is as high as 25 per cent.

COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

The situation is twice as critical when the total county is considered with regard to the Mexican-American. Within the county there are hundreds of persons who live on an income of less than $2,000 a year with five or more members in the family. There are others which make less than $2,000 a year and who move from place to place in order to earn the little they do make. But the need is not just for money, though they must have means of buying the necessities of life. They need also to be included in the many activities of the county and cities, in the school programs and other involvements, as well as in the many training programs which are now going on or which are anticipated.

Many Economic Opportunity programs are now operating in this county. But these programs at the present time, according to reports, do not reach most of the very persons who need them the most. For example, there is no provision for reaching or even hiring the thousands of youth while they are still in school full time; the programs for youth that are presently operating are designed only for those who are not still in school full time. The latter youth program is a wonderful and needed one and is in full swing. The program needs expanding so as to cover many, many more youth who need the work: more funds for this program should be appropriated immediately. These programs also need wider community support.

Despite the fact that many of the minority group youth need retraining--as well as many adults--there is still the other factor which compounds this condition. Because of the isolation, the historical exclusion of minorities in San Diego, and the lack of more positive and affirmative programs to now include them, these

minorities are not ordinarily hired or even sought out for jobs EVEN WHEN THEY ARE HIGHLY QUALIFIED. Recently, C.I.C. has been involved with all the local military installations and facilities in helping them to develop some of their affirmative programs designed to reach-out and include these minorities. C.I.C. has also been involved with several private and public agencies in setting up approaches to reach those usually forgotten ones Many of these agencies have now hired several persons as a result of C.I.C.'s efforts.

In this regard, C.I.C. and several other agencies of the Negro community, the Mexican-American, and the Asiatic community are now planning a conference on "MERIT EMPLOYMENT" scheduled for the Fall of this year. This conference will do much to bring together the business community and other selected persons from the city-county in attempt to articulate their desire and commitment to the concept of merit employment.

Another original approach to this problem initiated by C.I.C. is that which we have called "Hire-A-Teen" and "Host-A-Teen," with added emphasis on a minority teen. In this program we initiate the contact between a local businessman and the teen, or between the businessman and the agencies in the community. This approach has already begun to pay off. This technique has the advantage of having a local resident of the community sit and talk with the owner or manager on a person-to-person basis and explain to them informally in a give-and-take manner the aims and purposes of C.I.C. and the need to reach out to all our youth in the total San Diego area.

What is basically needed, in addition to training programs, is the opening up of more doors to merit employment which have been closed to a large segment of our community because of racial discrimination. Such programs and approaches as those employed by the Pacific Telephone Company, Sears and Roebuck, the San Diego Gas & Electric Company, the Bank of America and a few other businesses, are examples of what can be done when the approach is imaginative and affirmative.

In order to understand more fully the impact of racial discrimination on the unemployment situation in our city and county we might review some of the areas which C.I.C. has been quite concerned about for some time and around which we have initiated conversation, and in some instances other actions by referrals to FEPC, in an attempt to open more doors. Here in part is the picture of our city and county:

1. There are few if any bellmen who are Negro.

2. Negroes, Mexican-Americans, and other visible minorities are found in only a very few menial non-certificated positions in the City Schools.

3. There have been a few Negroes hired <u>recently</u> in the downtown stores.

4. In the Municipal Airport, Negroes are to be found only in the menial jobs: none are found as clerks, ticket sellers, managers, etc., etc.

5. The County Sheriff Department does not have any Negroes in the department in any position, although it should be pointed out that until January of this year there was one Negro in the department as an administrative personnel.

6. 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.

7. Negro waiters and waitresses are equally rare; in the total San Diego area there is not one major, public food-serving establishment with Negro waiters or waitresses, according to our latest survey. There are a few restaurants which hire Mexican-Americans and other minorities

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, 1966.

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 Unifed 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 upgrading 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 principal ships this year for the first time in the history of San Diego. But this, to the minority community as well as to many 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 COUNTY 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.

This list could easily be extended to two or three full pages, but these are some of the job slots in which normally one would expect to find a greater number of minorities.

We therefore recommend that:

1. The C.I.C. convene (or designate a convener for this purpose) local businessmen and community persons for the purpose of working out a more positive approach to opening up doors to employ those minorities who are ALREADY EMPLOYABLE; AND initiating discussion on means and techniques of handling problems which might arise out of this "new thrust."

2. A citizens committee be established to serve both as a "sounding board" and an advisory committee to the presently functioning Mayor's Committee on Jobs, Inc. Further, that this citizens advisory committee meet with the Mayor's Committee on a regular basis; this committee would be in addition to the Board of Directors of the Mayor's Committee and would not be concerned with policy. It's sole function would be that of an advisory nature.

3. The C.I.C. consider establishing among its 1966-67 top priority goals the following:

   A. Convening for the purposes of initiating positive steps to open the doors for the hiring of minorities and/or the expanding of opportunities for more minorities, with the proper authorities of the: Airport Authority, the Yellow Cab Company, the Hotel Managers Association, the San Diego Unified School District, the San Diego Chamber of Commerce, the San Diego Bankers Association, the San Diego Realty Board, the San Diego City and County Civil Service Commissions, the San Diego Tourist and Convention Bureau, the San Diego County Apprenticeship Committee, etc., etc.

   B. Making available to all businesses concerned a variety of services designed to help broaden understanding of the many factors and conditions involved in merit employment and underlying minority group unrest.

   C. Initiating contacts between these businesses and persons, groups and organizations within the minority communities, for increasing mutual understanding and working toward common goals.

4. The C.I.C. consider utilizing all public media in a concerted campaign in an attempt to involve all segments of the community in this effort; through the use of T.V. series, newspaper and magazine articles, plays and any other appropriate creative approaches.

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4/14/67