

FEPC—A CHALLENGE TO DEMOCRACY

(Continued from page 1)

article was ordered to be printed in the Record, as follows:

F. E. P. C.: A Challenge to Democracy

(By Richard J. Roche, O.M.I.)

A steady job which pays wages is a very important thing. Very few people are able to live without using their hands and brains in exchange for money. Without a job, most men may not eat; without a decent job paying relatively decent wages a man cannot live anywhere but in a slum, cannot keep the ravages of disease from his home, cannot hope to plan for his children any brighter future than the drab, hand-to-mouth existence which is his own.

Most working people, many politicians, and even some businessmen have at least come to the Christian—and Papal—point of view: that since man is bound to lead a good life, and since a decent job with decent pay is at present a practically necessary means to good life, there is a right to work, to use one's skills for just wages which will support a man, and his family in decent comfort.

Recent years have seen this right extended, at least in theory, to workingmen in general. Yet here in the United States, many of those who have come to recognize the fundamental nature of this right to work are failing—out of a false self-interest—to recognize the fact that this same principle applies to the minority-group working man (notably the Negro) exactly as it applies to all working men, or to working men in general.

It is not necessary to prove that the Negro worker has been the special object of the denial of the right to work. That is known to all of us. It has also become known to us that even a war-induced shortage of white manpower in the fact of almost grave international situation could not break down the bar-

riers to any appreciable degree, not only in industry, but also in many branches of government.

Qualified But Black

As an example in point, there is the case of the large and extremely important Federal agency which, not long after the outbreak of the war, was engaged in most vital war research. The research was impeded by a lack of skilled electrochemists. A young man, a university graduate with specialized knowledge in the very field of research, was sent to the agency by a Federal referral office. The young man was a Negro. But the personnel officer of the agency shook his head sadly when the young man presented himself: "I'm so sorry, but the position has been filled." The Negro chemist left.

He had forgotten, however, to obtain the personnel officer's signature to his admission slip, and discovered that he was not allowed to leave the building. So he went back to get it. The sign on the door read "Enter, so he entered. The personnel officer was talking on the telephone and did not even look up. He was saying: ". . . the best qualifications I have seen in a long, long time. Just what we need. . . Yes; would have hired him on the spot if he

could only erase his color."

Because there was a President's Committee on Fair Employment Practice (F. E. P. C.) the Negro chemist soon obtained the position, and vital war research, halted by a false labor shortage, went forward at once.

SUPREME COURT JUSTICE LAUDS BOND BUYERS

(Continued from page 1)

were James L. Houghteling, national organizations director, who was one of the speakers of the evening, and William Pickens, chief of the interracial section. Other addresses were made by Mayor Kelly of Chicago; Lawrence F. Stern, chairman, Chicago and Cook County War Finance Committees; Aaron Payne, Chicago attorney; Major C. Udeli Turpin of the Illinois War Finance Committee, and others.

The South Central Association is an organization of Negro and white business and professional leaders of Chicago's southside. All expense for the War Bond dinner was defrayed by the Association. In two previous drives similar dinners have been promoted by the group. In the Sixth War Loan Drive \$1,500,000 worth of bonds were sold by the association at its special dinner,

while the Fifth War Loan dinner netted sales amounting to \$1,200,000. The association is headed by James G. Shaw. Arrangements for these dinners are made by Major Turpin.

OPA OFFICIALS INCREASE NEGRO EMPLOYEES

(Continued from page 1)

ers, making a total of 1,250 persons. These figures do not include Negro personnel employed at the national office in Washington.

Two hundred and five of these workers are earning \$2,000 or more. The majority of these are in OP A Region II, which covers the States of New York, Pennsylvania, and Maryland and the district of Columbia (not including the national office.)

The range in types of jobs held by these OPA employees is wide. There are nine attorneys associated with price, rationing and enforcement program; 41 price or rationing executives, examiners, inspectors and aides, including one rent director and one interviewer. There are 14 information officers, 17 administrative officers, 43 investigators, five economists, including one accountant; 891 stenographers, typists and clerks, and 14 machine operators.



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