

Five Cases Come Before FEP

Explanation of Fair Practices Act Underway

By Marguerite Wittwer Wright
Staff Writer, The Statesman

Either Oregon's race relations are excellent or minority group members are not reporting instances of discrimination in employment to the proper authorities. There's been no "flood of complaints."

In the six months of its existence, the fair employment practices division of the state department of labor has been asked to investigate only five cases of alleged discrimination. All of these involve Negroes in Portland.

But the number of disputes that come to the attention of the state labor bureau is not a fair criterion for measuring the progress of the FEP division. Deputy Labor Commissioner William S. Van Meter and Katharine S. French hasten to point out. A large part of their job of making FEP work in Oregon is educating the public about the law.

Victims of discrimination are often "extremely reluctant," Van Meter said, to file protests because they don't know their civil rights and how to exercise them.

They don't know whom to see and what to do, and even when they are aware of FEP they are hesitant to deal with "the law" for fear of further prejudice. Moreover, minority group members often voluntarily exclude themselves from the job market because they don't want to expose to humiliating refusal on the basis of race or creed.

That the number of cases up for conciliation gives an inaccurate picture of race prejudice in the state is shown by the fact that there are proportionately more Negro unemployed than white unemployed, and that the incidence of skilled workers among Negroes is far less due to lack of training-job openings for them, Van Meter said.

Since, last July, FEP division personnel have been busy explaining the law to service clubs, church groups, student groups, women's organizations, professional organizations and placement officials. They have prepared pamphlets and posters for distribution to employers, labor unions, employment agencies, trade organizations and schools. They have helped rewrite employment application blanks to conform with the law, and tried to clarify to employers their responsibilities under the law and to workers their privileges under the law.

The Oregon fair employment practices act was passed by the 1949 legislature. Its purpose is to eliminate discrimination in employment because of race, religion, color or national origin, and it provides machinery for redress of grievances. Individuals may file a complaint of alleged unlawful employment practices with W. E. Kinsey, state labor commissioner. A deputy commissioner then investigates the case and makes recommendations to Kinsey. If conference, conciliation and persuasion don't straighten out the problem, a hearing may be ordered, injunction issued and the whole dispute may land in the laps of the supreme court.

Employers Cooperative
So far, however, employers have been very cooperative once they understand there's a law against unfair practices, Van Meter said.

The first case (when the employer claimed he had already hired a white worker and was therefore right in not hiring the Negro) was dismissed for lack of sufficient evidence.

Another case was closed when the worker in question was hired. (Follow-up of the case disclosed that the Negro was fired for lack of skill the same day he was hired through the good offices of the FEP official. He was paid for that day on the job, though.)

The third and fourth cases involve two colored men with the same employer. They charge they were assigned work on the basis of their color—a practice forbidden by law as discrimination in conditions or privileges of employment. Investigation of these cases has been underway two months.

Case Involves Union
The other case, also as yet unresolved, involves a labor union. The complainant charges he was denied union membership because of his color, and the law forbids any labor organization to exclude or expel from membership or discriminate in any way against members because of race, religion, color or national origin.

Complaint in each of these cases originated with the aggrieved worker and at no time to Van Meter's knowledge, has a dispute deliberately been manufactured by some interested pressure group. The FEP commissioners do not attempt to "dig up" instances of discrimination or solicit complaints. To date they have made no surveys of discrimination on a broad scale, including social discrimina-



Mrs. Katharine S. French and William S. Van Meter, deputy commissioners of the state bureau of labor, have a dual role to play in administration of Oregon's fair employment practices act. Not only do they receive, investigate and report findings on acts of racial or religious discrimination, but they also have the huge task of educating the general public in the practice of tolerance. (Statesman photo.)

A study of that sort would be up to the FEP advisory committee—seven Portlanders with David Robinson as chairman.

Long-Range Job

Working headquarters of the FEP division in Salem are at 855 Chemeketa st., where Van Meter and Mrs. French have their desks. Van Meter is a long-time Oregon resident educated at Jefferson high school in Portland and Monmouth college. He served on the staff at Woodburn Boys' school and has done graduate work in group prejudice at Harvard. His assistant is a Columbia university alumnae with experience as a social worker in a Japanese relocation camp in Arizona.

Their long-range job, as Van Meter and Mrs. French see it, actually is to eliminate, through education, the necessity for fair employment practices disputes. That will come about—and it won't happen overnight—when Negroes and other minority group members are generally accepted as equal citizens.

It is too early to say just what influence the FEP law will have on discrimination throughout the

School Costs Cause Debate At Jefferson

By Gladys Shields
Statesman News Service
JEFFERSON—Words were batted about like ping pong balls during the discussion of school affairs at the February meeting of the Jefferson Parent-Teachers association.

The budget for the school year 1950-51, now being published, came up for debate. Contrary to most previous occasions, it was not thought to be adequate to meet present school needs. One item was the \$2,000 allowed for repair of the present gymnasium building. Some argued that the building was not worth repairing, and a new one should be built instead. The discussion ended, by the suggestion that all turn out for voting on the budget on Monday night, March 6.

Another topic for discussion was teachers' pay and method of hiring. After much talk pro and con, the Parent-Teachers went on record to give the teachers a contract for more than one year at a time and a pay increase.

Crowded school conditions was also talked as were plans for future expansion of the school.

A candlelight Founders day pageant and music featured "Our Golden Tribute" during the program hour. Donna Oldenburg announced; Clyde Goin was first narrator and Barbara Blackwell, second narrator. The girls' quartet, composed of Dorene Borst, Pat McGuire, Paula Smith and Barbara Armstrong, sang, accompanied by Mrs. Gilbert Looney. Mrs. Beth Stull and Miss Evelyn Hall directed the pageant.

Taking part were: Donna Armstrong, Shirley Higgins, Jimmie Adams, Sharon Wells, Carol Hart, Ray Terhune, Richard Morton, Kay Smith, Sharon Hanson and Lucia Tyler.

Refreshments were served in the home economics room following the meeting. Hostesses were Mrs. Hal Reeves, Mrs. Don Reed, Mrs. Henion, Mrs. Leland Sarff, Mrs. M. M. Beal and Mrs. Robert Harris. Four-H clubs will have charge of the March meeting.

Brush College School Stages Special Program

Statesman News Service
BRUSH COLLEGE—An interesting miscellaneous program was presented at Brush College Community club at the February meeting.

Announcing program numbers was Mrs. Oliver Sargent, chairman. The numbers included songs by Larry Ray and the lower grade

pupils under the direction of the teacher, Mrs. E. D. Roseman; a humorous question and answer game between the women and men in which the women were winners; comic moving pictures by Otto Roller; a shadow show by four women. A story told by Carl Meers was illustrated by those present.

Cemetery Board Calls Meeting March 10

Statesman News Service
HUBBARD—The board of directors of the Cemetery association met at the deLespinasse home Tuesday evening.

A public meeting will be held in the city hall Friday, March 10 at 8 p. m. to inform all those interested about what is being done at the cemetery. All lot owners and the general public are invited. There will be a short program of special music. Frances Weaver and Mrs. A. J. Smith are co-chairmen for the meeting.

Rebekah Lodge Holds Session At Carlton

Statesman News Service
AMITY—Nine members of Industry Rebekah lodge attended the 43rd annual convention of Rebekah lodges of District 15 at Carlton. Endeavor 201 was host for the event, with Mrs. Neta Stoutenburg as chairwoman.

New officers are Helen Branson, chairman No. 12, Mabel Laman, vice-chairman No. 53, secretary, Gladys McLean, No. 12, marshal, Hazel Gibbs, No. 95, conductor, Mary Miller, No. 76, musician, Gertrude Lindsay, chaplain, Lina Holman O.G., Sylvia Willard, I.G., Elsie Barger, R.S. chairman, Helen Davis, L.S., Grace Bradley, R.S. vice-president, Delia Blackburn, L.S., Veda Willard.

MRS. HARDING PRINCIPAL
BRUSH COLLEGE—Mrs. Sigrun Harding of Salem has been engaged to teach the upper grades at Brush College school and has also assumed her duties as principal. The position was left vacant when Miss Muriel Kaster married Tom Burton, Feb. 9. Miss Kaster had taught at Brush College school nine consecutive years. Mrs. E. D. Roseman is instructor of the lower grades.

Salem Heights Scouts Observe National Week

Statesman News Service
SALEM HEIGHTS—Many parents attended the celebration of American Scouting's birthday Wednesday when troop 19 met at the Salem Heights community hall. Fred Bolton and Dick Colgan

presented the colors; Jimmy Lawrence and Edwin Kreech acted as guards. Harvey Peterson, scoutmaster, told of the history of the troop, which was started Jan. 18, 1911, at Salem Heights and was the first troop west of the Cascade Mountains. Peterson has been with the troops for 10 years and the parents gave him a vote of thanks for his service.

Earl Ahlers, troop committee chairman and institutional representative of American Legion post 136, presented the troop with a new flag, which was received by Junior Assistant Scoutmaster Mark DeCew.

Ken Hills, assistant scoutmaster, conducted an investiture ceremony. Received into the troop were Rodney McClellan, Lane Olson, and Lynn Davis. The closing ceremony was a gathering around a lighted candle, with the scouts repeating the scout oath. Floyd McClellan led in the scout benediction.

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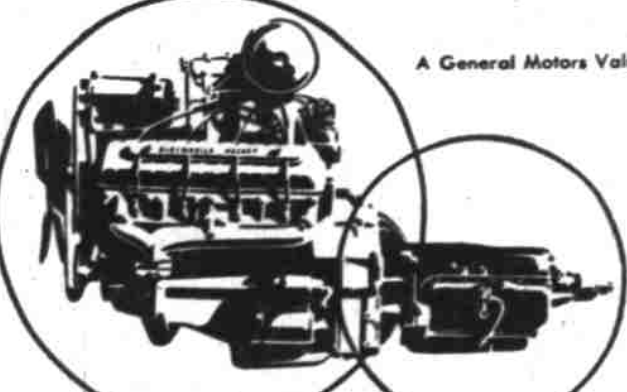


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