



Assistant Secretary of Labor Arthur Fletcher stresses a point in address to Philadelphia Chapter, National Association of Intergroup Relations, at City Hall Annex. James Sanders, treasurer of NAIRO, listens to talk on the Philadelphia Plan.

U.S. Official Denies Phila. Hiring Plan Has Been Dropped

Assistant Secretary of Labor Arthur Fletcher denied Wednesday that the government had "backed away" from the controversial Philadelphia Plan. He said the program for hiring minority workers in the construction industry was "still in full force."

Speaking to the Philadelphia chapter of the National Association of Intergroup Relations

notes "affirmative action" on hiring minority group members in general—particularly in industries such as shipbuilding, chemical and steel

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U.S. Aide Sees Court Consent To Phila. Plan

by MARTIN J. HERMAN
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Assistant Secretary of Labor Arthur C. Fletcher said here yesterday that he believed the legality of the Philadelphia Plan for black employment will be upheld in the courts because the plan is in line with U. S. contract laws.

"I didn't decide there ought to be quotas or ranges for minority employment," Fletcher said. "Contract law made the decision."

"To satisfy contract law you've got to be specific. Don't get hung up on quotas or ranges."

Case Pending in Court

The Contractors Association of Eastern Pennsylvania has filed suit in U. S. District Court, contending that the Philadelphia Plan is unconstitutional because it requires the hiring of a specified number of minority group members in federally-assisted construction projects.

Fletcher told about 80 persons at a session of the 1970 conference of Pennsylvania Human Rights Commissions in City Hall Annex that the court will have to decide whether contract law takes preference over the Civil Rights Law which prohibits the setting of quotas.

"We in the civil rights movement have been pretty lucky in the courts," he said. "I have a hunch we'll continue to be."

1st Plan Ruled Invalid

Fletcher said that U. S. Comptroller Elmer B. Staats

"It seems to me if we fail to deal with this problem everything else will go for naught," he said. "Unless something specific is done when the end of the decade comes, the National Planning Commission said the unemployment ratio between black workers and white workers will increase from two to one to five to one."

Fletcher said America's wealth is the number of jobs it can produce and he predicted the next decade will see continued shortages of skilled workers.

He criticized labor unions for excluding black workers.

"What some people call racism, I call selfishness," he said.

Hiring Hall Exclusions

Fletcher said unions know enough jobs are available in construction to help blacks, but they exclude them through exclusive hiring halls and by keeping the work force small so they can bargain for high wages and members can get more overtime work.

The official also announced that the Labor Department was putting into effect a new "Order No. 4" which will deal with increasing minority group representation in the work forces of goods producers who deal with the Federal Government.

Unlike the Philadelphia Plan, which deals exclusively with construction and sets goals, Fletcher said, Order 4 is a guideline for "affirmative action" for the production industry to insure equal job opportunities for minority-group members.

