

Unions Say Phila. Plan To End Bias in Hiring Favors Incompetent

Spokesmen for the Building and Construction Trades Council of Philadelphia said Wednesday the Philadelphia Plan for getting members of minority groups into the construction unions was "unworkable" and would lead to "hobby work."

The plan requiring builders working on Federal projects to hire a specific number of minority workers has been in effect locally since July 18.

James L. Loughlin, consultant and former business manager of the council which serves

Philadelphia and the four surrounding counties, said, "In the final analysis we must admit that the Philadelphia Plan seems to us to be little more than an unworkable device that will have as an unintended result a combination of lowering of labor standards, increased labor costs and the loading of incompetent employes on the payroll."

Speaking before a committee studying the feasibility of implementing the plan on a national basis, Loughlin told Deputy Assistant Secretary of Labor Horace Menasco the plan had been tried unsuccessfully during the construction of the mint on Independence Square.

He claimed the contractor was instructed to hire 10 black electricians for the job and that of the 23 who applied none scored higher than 61 in the Federal test which had a passing score of 70.

QUOTA SUGGESTED

The committee then heard from Sylvia Meek, an "independent researcher," who suggested the minimum black membership of the unions in the building trades council should be 40 percent because that was the percentage of black residents in the area.



Attorney Cecil Moore gives his views on implementation of the Philadelphia Plan for getting members of minority groups into construction trades before a committee studying the feasibility of the plan.

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Menasco responded that this was the only proposal for implementing the plan his group had heard so far.

Bernard Katz, the building trades council's attorney, said that 11,000 of the 36,000 men in the seven major building and construction unions were Negroes, but he would not say how many he thought should be members of minority groups.

CONSPIRACY CHARGED

"In response to those who contend there are qualified black craftsmen meriting membership in our unions, who have been denied membership, we categorically deny any such statements," he said, and then challenged anyone who made these claims to supply the names, background and training of such craftsmen.

Cecil Moore, attorney who claimed to be the "father" of the Philadelphia Plan, claimed the contractors and unions had been conspiring to keep blacks out of the construction trades.

C. Delores Tucker, vice president of the state National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, said the Philadelphia Plan had the unqualified support of the NAACP and that the plan would end "the most flagrant and disgraceful patterns of discrimination this country had ever witnessed."

TRAINING ADVISED

Councilman John B. Kelly Jr., head of the contracting firm founded by his father, said unions should not be enforced to take in unqualified help but should be encouraged to participate extensively in Operation Outreach, a program shared by unions and the Federal Government which trains youth for skilled craft trades.