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New Incentive For Minority Hiring

Nationwide efforts to increase minority employment in every sector of the economy have met with varying degrees of success in the last few years.

Certain business firms have made major efforts to hire and train so-called hard-core unemployables. Many report success with such programs.

Nowhere has the effort to increase minority employment met with more difficulties than in the construction industry. Recent troubles in Pittsburgh and Chicago emphasize that fact.

The so-called Philadelphia Plan or a modified version of that plan, now the subject of hearings here by the U. S. Department of Labor, give some hope of major improvement in that area.

A convincing argument in favor of a speedup in the training of minority workers in the skilled trades was made on the first day of hearings by Dr. Howard E. Mitchell, director of the Human Resources Center at the University of Pennsylvania.

Dr. Mitchell warns that the construction industry here will face a serious shortage of labor in the skilled trades in little more than five years unless recruitment and training are sharply increased in the next few years. That sounds like a built-in incentive for boosting minority representation in those trades despite traditional opposition to opening them up.

Supporters of the status quo may brand Dr. Mitchell's findings as timely propaganda. We hope instead that they will give needed impetus to a movement that has encountered far too many obstacles.