

Unionists Call Phila. Plan 'Unworkable'

Minority Job Quota Proposal Attacked At Hearing Here

Donald Slaiman, national director of the civil rights division of the AFL-CIO, yesterday said the imposition of a quota on contractors to increase the hiring of minority group members was "unrealistic and impractical."

Slaiman cited a similar program in Cleveland "where the majority selected for the purpose of a quota didn't last." Those who had been trained and worked into the program, however, were more inclined to stay on the job," he said.

Slaiman testified at a U.S. Department of Labor hearing at 1421 Cherry st. on a revised Philadelphia Plan, the controversial program to force contractors to hire a given number of minority workers before they can obtain federal contracts.

The original Philadelphia Plan was suspended last November after a year's operation by U.S. Comptroller General Elmer B. Staats on grounds that it violated federal bidding procedures. The new plan was rejected by Staats Aug. 5 on grounds it violated the 1964 Civil Rights Act.

The Labor Department will revise and reinstitute the plan, and hopes to extend its coverage to the rest of the nation.

Assistant Secretary of Labor Arthur Fletcher is conducting the hearings here.

James L. Laughlin, a spokesman for the Building and Construction Trades Council of Philadelphia, AFL-CIO, termed the plan "unworkable."

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"In the final analysis we must admit," he said, "the Philadelphia plan seems little more than an unworkable device that will have the unintended result of lowering labor standards, increasing costs and loading incompetent employees on the payroll."

Laughlin also emphasized the importance of training programs such as the government-union sponsored Operation Outreach. The program recruits minority group members and trains them in non-mechanical skills in order to pass tests for entrance into apprenticeship programs.

Laughlin also denied a charge brought out in earlier testimony that unions do not accept qualified minority group members for membership.

"We find the percentage of blacks employed in our union craft jurisdiction is in excess of five percent."

Vincent G. Menasco, assistant deputy of labor, who was sitting on the panel, expressed some surprise at Laughlin's statement. He said that it was his understanding the percentage of blacks employed in the seven crafts affected by the Philadelphia Plan are considerably less than the percentage of blacks who are members of other trades.

Laughlin said that under the Outreach program 302 minority group members in Philadelphia have been trained. He said of that number 83 have been placed in jobs. The rest are awaiting openings.