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The Civil Rights Status of Minority Groups in Clovis, New Mexico

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A Summary of a Meeting
of the New Mexico State Advisory Committee
to the United States Commission on Civil Rights

May 1969

NEW MEXICO ADVISORY COMMITTEE
TO THE
UNITED STATES COMMISSION ON CIVIL RIGHTS

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PREFACE

The United States Commission on Civil Rights

The United States Commission on Civil Rights is an independent agency of the Executive Branch of the Federal Government created by the Civil Rights Act of 1957. By the terms of that Act, as amended by the Civil Rights Acts of 1960 and 1964, the Commission is charged with the following duties: investigation of individual discriminatory denials of the right to vote; study of legal developments with respect to denials of the equal protection of the law; appraisal of the laws and policies of the United States with respect to denials of equal protection of the law; maintenance of a national clearinghouse for information respecting denials of the equal protection of the law; and investigation of patterns or practices of fraud or discrimination in the conduct of Federal elections. The Commission is also required to submit reports to the President and the Congress at such times as the Commission, the Congress, or the President shall deem desirable.

The State Advisory Committee

An Advisory Committee to the United States Commission on Civil Rights has been established in each of the 50 States and the District of Columbia pursuant to section 105(c) of the Civil Rights Act of 1957 as amended. The Committees are made up of responsible persons who serve without compensation. Their functions under their mandate from the Commission are to: advise the Commission of all relevant information concerning their respective States on matters within the jurisdiction of the Commission; advise the Commission upon matters of mutual concern in the preparation of reports of the Commission to the President and the Congress; receive reports, suggestions, and recommendations from individuals, public and private organizations, and public officials upon matters pertinent to inquiries conducted by the State Committee; initiate and forward advice and recommendations to the Commission in matters in which the Commission shall request the assistance of the State Committee; and attend, as observers, any open hearing or conference which the Commission may hold within the State.

This report was submitted to the United States Commission on Civil Rights by the New Mexico State Advisory Committee. The conclusions and recommendations are based upon the Advisory Committee's evaluation of information received at its closed meeting held in Clovis on April 5-6, 1968, and on staff reports. This report has been received by the Commission and will be considered by it in making its reports and recommendations to the President and the Congress.

INTRODUCTION

The New Mexico State Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights held a 2-day closed meeting in Clovis, New Mexico, on April 5-6, 1968, to explore the civil rights status of Negro and Spanish surname Americans with special emphasis on their employment and education problems in the Clovis area.

More than 30 persons, private citizens, public and private employers, government officials and representatives of local organizations, participated.

Information brought before the Committee during those two days revealed a long-standing pattern of discrimination in Clovis that has become a way of life. It is deeply ingrained and all-pervasive, permeating every institution and social and economic structure of the community. It is accepted so thoroughly by the Anglo population that those who might act otherwise do not even realize they are discriminating. For the Spanish surnamed American and the Negro American it means a stonewall--a lifetime of unequal opportunity that begins in school and is extended into the areas of employment and political participation. Many Spanish-speaking Americans experience the additional frustration and isolation of the language barrier, of not being able to communicate or to seek information and assistance.

The New Mexico State Advisory Committee conducted this inquiry because there are indications of increasing opposition to such a segregated society. This report on the Clovis meeting and the recommendations of the Committee

are submitted to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights in the hope that they will stimulate immediate action to reverse the life conditions portrayed. The Committee believes that this country can and must give a positive response to a citizen of Clovis who concluded his remarks with this plea:

Gentlemen, to end my statement I would like to inform you that I have been a failure as a leader of the Spanish Americans in Curry County. They want progress, and I have not been able to give them that. I humbly ask those who are here today not to allow themselves to be failures as I have been, for you possess the ability, the power, the tools to allow progress to be shared by these people. If my experience of failure can be of assistance in the achievement of progress for the Spanish surname Americans in the city of Clovis, then my failure has not been in vain.

EMPLOYMENT PROBLEMS

When a Spanish surname American in Curry County applies for employment he is challenged first by his skin--he is darker than the rest of the people; he is not the best qualified at times; and his opportunity on an equal basis in places of employment is limited.

When employment is achieved by this individual, he must prove himself beyond and above the call of his job. Promotion chances on the job are limited, and for that reason he remains at the bottom level he has here in Curry County today.

About ten girls and myself all wanted jobs. At some time or another we had tried, but we couldn't get employment. We decided to go up one side of Main Street and down the other and see what we could accomplish. We did this, and it took us about two days to cover everybody in Clovis. We went to all the shops, hospitals, we covered everything. We had girls in the group who had college, and almost all the girls had finished high school.

After we all passed the test at a department store, in our interview together the manager said why didn't we just give up trying to find a job in Clovis for we wouldn't be able to find one anyway, and go someplace else. He also made reference to a local Negro bar, and he said what we could do was go out of town, get jobs, save enough money to come back and open up a bar. We went to a hospital and we talked with the head nurse and she also made the suggestion.

This is what two minority group members had to say about present-day employment prospects for Americans of Spanish descent and Negroes in Clovis.

Further statements before the Committee amply illustrated the following:

Discrimination in hiring; unrealistic tests and requirements for the job at hand; unequal pay for the same work; no opportunity for training;

no opportunity for promotion; and no confidence in the procedures to deal with discrimination. This is the story of the minority worker in Clovis that unfolded before the Committee.

Although Spanish-speaking Americans are approximately 12 percent of the population of the Clovis area, and Negroes are more than 6 percent, they do not share proportionately in the economy, and their participation in the job structure is limited to menial and dead-end jobs. This is true in the private sector and in public employment under both Federal and local government.

Private Employment

A number of large employers--a railroad, a packing company, utility companies, department stores, etc.--have branches or divisions in Clovis and are considered an important career and employment source for the local population. All claim that nondiscrimination in hiring and conditions of employment are company policy. Yet information given both by their representatives and by complainants revealed these companies as a major source of jobs for only the Anglo majority group.

The Mountain States Telephone Company has 129 employees in Clovis, of which one has a Spanish surname and five are Negro. Of the 149 persons working for the Swift Packinghouse Company, 26 are Spanish American and 18 are Negro; the minority workers are all hourly employees and are not represented among the management group of 20. The Santa Fe Railroad Company has approximately 850 employees in Clovis, of whom about 300 are Spanish Americans and 12 are Negroes; all of the minorities work in unskilled jobs. The only minority group member among the 67 employees of the Public Service Company is a Negro janitor who has been there since 1952. Out of 40

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employees, the Southern Union Gas Company has no Negroes and six Spanish Americans in low grade jobs.

Smaller local businesses representing a cross-section of the city's commercial life employ neither Spanish surnamed Americans nor Negroes and make no statements about their belief in nondiscrimination. A list submitted to the Committee of businesses having no Spanish surname employees included: all finance companies in Clovis, two car dealers, a supermarket, a discount center, a variety store, and others. The operator of a drive-in at the edge of town was reported to have said that hiring Negro girls for other than cooking and dishwashing jobs would be bad for business, and she had never heard of a Negro waitress.

Thus the experience of a Negro woman with two years of college who spent two years looking for a job and ended up as a domestic, is not atypical. There are Spanish Americans and Negroes in Clovis who have been unable to find any job. Servicemen returning from military duty--many with technical training--end up, according to one Spanish American, unloading trucks, digging ditches, moving out of the State, re-enlisting in the service (or becoming hoodlums).

The information brought before the Committee showed that much of the failure of large companies and organizations to hire the Spanish-speaking and Negroes relates to interpretation of the words "qualified" and "qualifications." Managements proclaiming belief in equal employment opportunity actually discriminate in hiring by following established procedures which make equal opportunity impossible.

For example, the district manager of one of the utility companies said that he would consider hiring a minority employee but only two

Spanish Americans and one Negro had applied in the last 5 years. At the same time he stated that a high school education is required for all jobs with the company including ditch digging and meter reading.

A division executive of the railroad said that company regulations specify a high school education for most jobs except that of laborers. When asked to comment on the ratio of 12 Negroes to a total of 850 employees, he replied:

There again, when you hire a man on the railroad, you have to have a man who is qualified. We do not deny him a chance if he is qualified.

Asked if he was saying there are not that many qualified Negroes around, he recommended:

We haven't had that many people show up and apply for employment. Our application blanks are filled out and nowhere does it indicate his race, creed, or color.

It was brought to the Committee's attention that Negroes in Clovis feel it is almost impossible to get a job with the telephone company.

A Negro woman with 2 years of college told of her experience:

When we finished the interview, she told me that she didn't think I would be capable for the telephone company, that I did not meet the requirements, that she was sure I wouldn't meet the requirements for any other jobs that I might apply for. She said it wasn't necessary to tell me what they were.

Some months later the applicant returned to the telephone company, again seeking an operator's position and was given a written test. She was told she did not qualify and not to try again. She said that afterwards, her neighbor--a German woman--applied for and was offered the same type of job without taking a test.

The employment manager for the telephone company stated that vacancies are filled from applications of "qualified" persons filed in the central office in Roswell. Standard hiring procedures include interviewing

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applicants, checking their high school or previous employment attendance record, and giving a high school equivalency examination. A poor attendance record in school or having filed for bankruptcy would be reasons for not hiring a person, she said.

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The area director of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, a Spanish American, contended that such yardsticks for evaluating people for employment are not indicative of reliability and do lifelong injustice to minority group people. Employers do not take into consideration that poor attendance at school may be due to family problems and that bankruptcy proceedings are provided by law as a solution for otherwise insurmountable financial problems.

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Not one of the employers appearing before the Committee had a training program for prospective employees. The nearest thing to an affirmative action plan of any kind was a series of programs held for high school students by the telephone company to point out the company's equal opportunity policy and the students' need to finish school.

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Discussing promotions, several of the management representatives said they have a nondiscriminatory promotion-from-within policy and upgrading programs for their employees. Again, in many instances, a high school education is a requirement for participation.

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Although the Committee had received numerous complaints from minority group workers, all of the employers said there had been few or no complaints of discrimination from their Clovis employees. Complaints, if there are any, however, are usually handled at a regional or central office which in some cases is in Dallas or Chicago. Also commenting on the large

number of complaints at the hearing, the EEOC officer said the seven cases he had out of Clovis were closed without a full investigation because the persons involved were fearful of proceeding. "Minority group people have had such bad experiences with government agencies that there is no confidence there. They would like to believe you, but they won't believe you; they can't. It means their bread and butter."

City and County Government

By official count, the city of Clovis employs 150 persons. Eight of these are Negroes, and 30 are Spanish surname Americans. Two of the Negroes are on the police force. Almost all of the others in the minority groups are either laborers or sanitation department workers. One of the latter has been there 17 years without a promotion. There are no minorities in the fire department or in the welfare department. There are no minority group supervisors, and very few supervisors who can speak Spanish.

The mayor and city manager told the Committee that there is no employment opportunity program as such in Clovis and that the city has never participated in federally sponsored programs for recruiting and training minority group workers. In 18 years they could remember only two or three Negroes and three or four Spanish Americans applying to the fire department. Neither had heard of the case mentioned at the meeting of the Spanish American who was a fire fighter in the Navy for 4 years but could not get a job with the Clovis fire department. One official admitted:

I think a lot of these people are qualified for these jobs. Some of them for one reason or another may be hesitant to apply.

He felt, however, that there is a need in the city for vocational training and expected that a vocational training school, soon to be instituted by the Eastern New Mexico University and funded by the Clovis municipal government, would help to solve some of the problems discussed.

Asked how the language problem is handled in connection with municipal services, the mayor stated that if there is a need for interpretation in the fire department or elsewhere in the city government, an employee who can speak Spanish--not necessarily a Spanish American--is called in. There are no interpreters as such on the payroll, nor do those helping out when called upon get paid extra for doing so.

Disputing the claim by city officials that Clovis is an equal opportunity employer, the representative from the Santa Fe office of the New Mexico Fair Employment Practices Committee made these points:

- * Wages paid Spanish Americans in the Clovis city government are extremely low.
- * Wages are not based on the service rendered. An Anglo patrolman, for example, with 4 years' service drew more money than a Negro police sergeant /now resigned/ with 10 years' service.
- * Rigid physical specifications for the fire department might account for the lack of "qualified" applicants among minorities. Firemen must have a minimum weight of 155, a minimum height of 5'8, height and weight proportionate to each other and meet stringent vision requirements as well.

He also reported a conversation with the police chief concerning promotion to sergeant of a new Anglo patrolman over a Negro who had been on the force for 4 years:

.....and I asked him how this thing came about, and he said, 'Well, you understand one thing young man, I promote whomever I please, whether they are qualified or not.'

Others involved in efforts to obtain city employment for minorities also felt they were making little headway and blamed this on their lack of political power and representation. A five man liaison committee from the Spanish-speaking community had been able to establish some communication with the mayor but there was generally little contact between city officials and the Spanish-speaking population. One Spanish American leader expressed the belief that the at-large method of elections in Clovis guarantees shutting minorities out of the city government. He added:

You know if you do not have representation of all segments in the community, there is going to be discrimination, and we do not have that representation on most of the boards.

Clovis Memorial Hospital

Based on complaints concerning Clovis Memorial Hospital, the Committee inquired into three major areas--employment of minority groups at the hospital, availability of facilities on an equal basis, and arrangements for payment of bills.

Clovis Memorial Hospital is a city-county owned and operated institution that is dependent upon income received for services. It employs a total of 203 persons. Twenty-five are Spanish surname and 12 are Negro and most of them are in menial service jobs. There are no minority group staff physicians.

Hospital administrators claimed to have received few applications from minorities for any kind of job. A number of persons complained that minority members received less pay than others for the same work and have been forbidden by their supervisors to discuss their salaries

with other employees. A Spanish American nurse's aide said that deductions were made from her paycheck for meals even though she brought her lunch, and the deductions were never the same amount.

According to hospital officials, the minimum entering wage for a nurse's aide is \$230 per month, and there is no ceiling on the job. Some beginners are paid more. The highest amount paid a nurse's aide has been \$350. They said an employee's performance is usually reviewed after the first six months by her immediate supervisor, the head nurse, and the superintendent of nurses; if they think she has done well she gets a raise of about \$10 per month. All of the Spanish American and Negroes, according to the record, started at the bottom, and their salaries have progressed very little.

Statements made at the hearing and approximately 20 other persons who had previously brought information to the Committee, charged that Negro maternity cases had been and could expect to be assigned to Room 203 of the hospital. The administrative staff, however, considered this a coincidence due to private room requests and said that they had never discriminated in room assignments or other facilities.

It was also brought out that there are no interpreters as such at the hospital. A number of admitting office employees who can speak Spanish-- though not Spanish American--serve as interpreters during the day. At night, either Spanish Americans working in other capacities around the hospital are called in to interpret or the problem of obtaining necessary information is left until the next day. Hospital officials said they would consider hiring an interpreter in the admitting office if they could find a qualified person.

Inquiring into complaints that there is a connection between a private loan company and the hospital, the Committee was told of an arrangement by which patients who could not pay all of their bill at once upon release from the hospital are required to sign promissory notes to the loan company. A Spanish American whose two-year old child had an emergency appendectomy related this experience:

She was there, I would say, 4 or 5 days, and the bill was \$463. I usually don't go around with \$400 or \$500 in my pocket because I don't have it to begin with.

When the time came for them to dismiss my little daughter, he [the hospital administrator] asked me if I was prepared to pay the bill. I said the only way I could pay the bill was to let me make it in payments. He said he wanted this money now, so I told him I didn't have that kind of money on hand. He told me I wouldn't be able to take my daughter out of the hospital until I paid every bit of it. I tried to reason with him to let me make it in payments and he told me to go to the finance company and borrow the money. He went into his office, shut the door, and told me that I couldn't take my daughter out.

From what I hear of this Memorial Hospital, they don't refer to it as a memorial hospital any more, they say, 'I am going to the Iron Curtain!'

Another Spanish American said that he was so upset at being told he would have to sign a note to the finance company that he forgot to ask for a receipt when he finally paid his bill and later was forced to pay again. That hospital officials take a different view of this collection method, came out in the administrator's remarks:

Question: Do you think the people who are not indigent but are poor and are given a note to SIC (the finance company) along with their bill, do you think they might feel some sense of coercion to sign that note if they don't have the cash?

Administrator: I don't think so; this is discussed with them.

Federal Government

Cannon Air Force Base is the major Federal employer in the Clovis area; it was also cited at the meeting as a serious offender in the matter of discriminatory employment practices. Minority workers and those trying to aid them complained about the standard personnel practices at the base. They said:

- * Few Spanish Americans and Negroes are hired for any job.
- * They are given only menial jobs--dishwashers and orderlies, etc.
- * Minority workers who are hired are seldom promoted.
- * When a qualified minority employee is promoted to a higher job, the job is frequently downgraded.

A Spanish American who had worked for a Clovis contractor for 13 years as a heavy equipment operator applied for the same kind of job at the Air Force base. Told there were no other openings, he took a dishwashing job which he is still in after 21 months.

Another, a qualified steamfitter with veteran's preference, work experience, and a good school record is still washing dishes after two years. Though he was assured repeatedly of being the number one applicant for a steamfitter vacancy, his application upon investigation could not be found. This man is in fact also doing plumbing, carpentry, and electrical work daily; but his wages remain at the mess attendant's level. "I have gotten to where I have to take my tool box every day instead of my apron," he said.

The head of the government employees' local union at the base, who had handled some of the complaints, said it is difficult to help the mess boys because their job descriptions are so vague. In addition, he claimed

personal knowledge of 29 instances of Spanish Americans already employed at the base who, filling all of the requirements for specific jobs except the high school education, were given the jobs but at a lower salary. The jobs were downgraded.

The base equal employment officer contended that there was no discrimination on the base because no complaints have been filed with him. He placed the number of workers at 390, including 14 Negroes and 59 Spanish Americans at grade levels admittedly below the national average.

At the time of the meeting, there were 23 Wage Board-1 workers employed at wages ranging from \$1.85 to \$2.05 per hour. Eighteen were Spanish American and one was Negro for a total of 83 percent Wage Board-1 minority group workers. At the other end of the Wage Board scale--Wage Board 10--one Spanish American out of a total of 32 was employed.

A review of General Schedule (GS) employment at the base revealed three Negroes and no Spanish Americans out of 33 GS-3 employees, and one Spanish American and no Negroes out of a total of 18 GS-7 employees. No minority group member appeared to be employed above GS-8.

Hiring, he explained, is based on tests as well as ability to do the job. Jobs are not really posted; vacancies are filled by going through the files to find a suitable employee already on the payroll. There are no programs on the base to aid persons in the lower wage levels to go higher. On the contrary, the practice has been to downgrade the few higher jobs that have been given to minority workers. Asked by the Committee what would keep a Spanish American or Negro from qualifying at the higher level, the equal employment officer responded: "Maybe they have passed

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a clerk-typist test and qualified as a GS 2, but the Civil Service Commission might have said that to be eligible you had to have two years experience, and they haven't had it." In response to further questioning, he affirmed that the jobs had to be downgraded to make them available to minority groups.

Another Federal employer in Clovis--the Post Office--has one Negro janitor and 10 Spanish American clerks and carriers out of a total of 70 employees on the rolls. When asked about the lack of balance in this situation, the Postmaster said:

"It seems rather strange to me, but we haven't had these people given to us on the eligibility list. I don't know why. We appear to have several Negroes well qualified to take the examination, but they don't get high enough on the eligibility list to use them."

He admitted that no affirmative steps have been taken to recruit minorities but said that Civil Service regulations do not give him jurisdiction in this matter. Vacancies, including those for hourly rate temporary jobs, are filled by choosing the top name from a list of eligibles sent by the Civil Service Commission in Denver. In the 33 years that the Postmaster and his assistant have been on the job, no Negroes have been made available to them by the Denver office, they said, and no Negro in Clovis has ever been assisted in filling out an application to take the examination by them.

Federally Assisted Programs

Information presented at the meeting indicated that Spanish Americans and Negroes are virtually unrepresented among the employees administering federally assisted services and programs in Clovis, and no attempt has been made to recruit them or give them job training.

New employees are chosen from the top names on the Civil Service register, which tends to eliminate minorities. This method of filling jobs has also prevented hiring Spanish-speaking employees who are actually needed. Social Security, unemployment compensation, and health and welfare transactions are conducted with clients, many of whom are Spanish-speaking, by Anglo employees who only speak English.

In the county health and social service department with a monthly caseload of approximately 1,500 including child welfare, disability, blind, and food stamp problems, there is no Spanish-surname employee and no one in the office who speaks fluent Spanish. Some time ago the Clovis director requested a Spanish American caseworker from both the State director of the program and the local personnel officer, but the request has not been acted upon.

A representative of the New Mexico State Employment Office in Clovis said there had been little attempt to contact minority groups in the area about jobs or job problems or to take advantage of government sponsored training programs, but he expressed the intention of remedying this situation.

EDUCATION PROBLEMS

It was pointed out at the beginning of the meeting that the biggest educational problem for Spanish Americans in Clovis is that of the dropout, particularly at the junior high and high school level. Parents, children, and school officials revealed the enormous ramifications of the problem. They spoke of many different causes--social ostracism which barred children from participation, unavailability of information, lack of counseling, absence of Spanish American teachers and counselors, lack of understanding of or sensitivity to a minority culture or its problems, unfair grading, the language barrier, etc.--all adding up to an ever-widening sea of discrimination and making it impossible for minority children to remain in school. Worse, no official seemed able to recognize the full extent of the problem or indicated a willingness to move constructively to solve it. As an administrator of a government equal opportunity program, himself a Spanish American, said:

It is a great problem for minorities not only to stay in school but to have the fortitude to go back day after day and face the looks, hostile attitudes, feelings.

Minority parents told the Committee of their difficulty in obtaining information affecting their children's education. If a child does not seek counseling--and most are too timid to ask--it is not made available, they said. When parents try to find out about curriculum requirements or opportunities for further education, they are shunted from office to office. Programs to help alleviate the dropout problem are not explained to parents or children. Relating her efforts to help her children, a Negro mother said:

You get the run-around on schools and jobs in Clovis. You get the run-around like a dog chasing his tail. You don't know who, when, or where.

I've been trying for two years and I finally got him into the auto mechanics program the last year he was in school. ...This one girl I was speaking of, she wants to go into college to be a home economics teacher. I have tried and tried and tried for her to find out what help she could get that would help her into college.

A Spanish American mother said:

I have heard that there are Anglo students who have very good grades who have been called into the office and advised to go where it would be advantageous to get a scholarship or put them in the right direction to where it would be to their advantage, but I have never heard Spanish kids or colored kids being brought in and these facts being made known to them. In other words, if they don't go in to ask what can be done to help, they are not encouraged, they are not brought in.

A major cause of dropping out, parents felt, is the general discouragement and low morale of minority children caused by their treatment in school. The children do not participate in school activities, whether it is the student council or the Spanish club.

Mentioned in this connection by both Spanish American and Negro parents was the selection of a Teen of the Week made by Clovis High School teachers and publicized in the newspapers. The father of a Spanish American student said:

I guess she feels the same way I do. You can go into the newspaper and you can go as far as you want to, look at the pictures, names and all that, and I have yet to see a Spanish American. Awhile ago, I saw one Negro girl. The reason I bring this up--I don't want my kids in the newspapers or anything like that--but it looks to me like morale has a lot to do with it, whether you are picking cotton, are in the service, going to school. If morale is down, it's not good. If the boys and girls could see that they might be selected, I think that they would put more into their school, their studies, and everything. But this way they are being pushed back, maybe indirectly, but that is what it has amounted to as far as I am concerned. ...Some people might not take it

seriously, but teenagers can be embarrassed and are very sensitive.

Another parent said that the lack of recognition of minority students' abilities caused them to lose incentive. He remarked that even if a Negro boy is twice as good as an Anglo boy at playing ball, they will make sure it is not the Negro who gets the recognition.

A 13 year-old junior high student alleged that she received an A in all her geography tests but a D on her report. Test papers are not returned.

The Spanish American can make a good grade on English, but if you made a good grade, the Anglo would make a better grade. If a Spanish American would make an A or 100% on a test and the Anglo made below a D, the Anglo would get the 100% and the Spanish American would get the F. ...They say it helps the students work better.

After all, people do work awfully hard for the grades they are trying to get. If they keep getting put down until there is no hope, they might just as well give up.

She described how minority students are ignored in the classroom:

Here lately they have been acting like Spanish people shouldn't be going to the schools; they should go someplace else and mind their own business and stay in their own crowd.

If you are going to ask a question, they will wait until everyone else is finished, then they will take yours. If there is another question, they will wait until that question has been answered. If they have all been answered and they didn't want to answer you, they will get on a different subject and just let your question alone. It is kind of ridiculous for them to do that, I think, for after all they are the teachers, they should help.

Instances were also reported of teachers using derogatory language to minority students:

He got mad at one of the Spanish American boys and he called him a "Spic" and he told him to get up there on the stage and tell him what the lesson was.

He got mad at this colored boy, and he said, 'All right, nigger, come here, I want to talk to you.' He just pulled him by the collar of his shirt, pulled him toward the wall, and made him stand there for the rest of the class.

Prior to the State Advisory Committee meeting, the principal of Marshall Junior High School was reported to have announced over the loud speaker several times that "if anyone said anything about Marshall Junior High, that student or teacher would be kicked out."

A complete lack of understanding of the language difficulties of Spanish American children was also alleged. The representative of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission explained the magnitude of the language obstacle:

My first language was Spanish, and I spoke Spanish for five years before I started school. The first day I was in school I had to learn English overnight. Besides the emotional shock of being away from your mother for the first time, you are faced with an overpowering problem of learning another language.

A student said that the teachers make fun of the Spanish children just as much as they can, and that they think it is funny that they do not understand.

When questioned about the dropout rate, the superintendent of schools admitted that it is generally high in Clovis and higher among Spanish Americans, particularly at grades 8 to 10, where, he said, most of them feel they are not achieving:

We have noticed that all children start closer together and as they go up through the schools, the wider the gap is between the slow students and the fast students. As soon as it catches up with them, they lose interest and drop out. They aren't successful.

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He said that there is no effort to follow-up on dropouts to alleviate the dropout rate of minority students in particular. Assistance programs are for all children and are limited to reading, speech therapy, and extra guidance service programs under Title I and III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and in Head Start Programs. The regular vocational courses in school are also considered corrective measures.

The school official said there is very little counseling of children unless a child or a teacher makes a special request. He admitted that a child can go through school in Clovis without ever having talked with a counselor. In addition, there has been no effort to hire Spanish American or Negro counselors.

The Committee was told that of the 397 teachers in the school system, 380 are Anglos, 13 Negro, two Spanish American, and two Chinese. The minority group teachers are usually assigned to minority group classes. Of the 13 Negro teachers, eight are assigned to the Lincoln-Jackson School which has a student body of approximately two-thirds Spanish American and one-third Negro. Three Negro teachers are at the predominantly Negro La Casita Elementary School. One of the Spanish American teachers teaches Spanish in the high school, and the other is a teacher's aide in a predominantly Spanish American elementary school.

Maintaining that there has been no policy against hiring Spanish American teachers, the school official observed:

We are getting quite a few applications now for the first time in three years from Spanish teachers. We had five or six just recently who are interested in teaching. For some reason through the years we haven't had very many.

He admitted that he did not have the time, thought, or interest to recruit them.

However, according to a Spanish American resident:

The reason we don't have any more Spanish teachers over here, I believe, is because Clovis and Curry County have been known as Little Texas. It has always been a discriminatory area; it is a sick area. The teachers don't want to come and teach here.

CONCLUSIONS

1. Discrimination appears to be firmly embedded in every facet of life in Clovis. Though this report deals primarily with employment and education, the Committee observed that the minority populations have inadequate opportunities in the political and social life of Clovis as well, because the standards of acceptance and advancement are majority group standards only. There is no sensitivity to, interest in, or concession to cultural or educational differences.
2. There is discrimination in all aspects of employment in both the public and private sectors. This includes hiring, rate of pay, and opportunity for promotion. Most minority workers in Clovis have menial and dead-end jobs.
3. Some employers assume that eliminating references to color and national origin from applications resolves the problem. They do not seem to be aware that an affirmative action program must be implemented if equal opportunity is to be realized. Even so-called equal opportunity employers in Clovis have failed to implement any type of affirmative action to recruit and upgrade minority workers.
4. Qualifications and tests for jobs often serve to eliminate minority workers from jobs which they are capable of performing, by imposing standards and language and experience requirements that are unrealistic and unrelated to the work to be done.
5. Civil Service rules and procedures of the Federal Government originally established to insure fairness frequently achieve the opposite effect and prevent minorities from being hired and promoted. To be hired a

person must not only be qualified, he must be the best qualified out of many applicants in a large geographic area. Downgrading of jobs instead of upgrading of people is a frequent practice.

6. In the private sector, rigid application of traditional hiring and promotion regulations have the same effect.
7. Complaints of discrimination in both public and private employment are handled by offices and personnel too far away to be effective. In addition, minority people are wary of using these procedures for fear of reprisal.
8. Lack of representation of the minority populations in the political structure of Clovis, including boards and commissions, leaves them without a voice in the city and perpetuates discrimination.
9. Because of the language barrier, Spanish Americans are isolated and hindered from progressing in all areas. There are so few Spanish-speaking teachers or counselors in schools, supervisors on the job, employees at city hall or in Federal Government offices, Spanish-speaking persons cannot clearly communicate their needs or problems and do not receive available information, guidance, and assistance.
10. The dropout rate of minority group children is quite high and is undoubtedly related to discrimination in the schools which makes it very difficult for the children to remain in school. There are no programs specifically designed to alleviate this problem.
11. Minority children who do finish high school rarely go on to college, in many cases because of the tremendous difficulty in obtaining the necessary information and guidance.

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SUGGESTIONS FOR ACTION

The New Mexico State Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights offers the following suggestions to the employers of Clovis, to its school system and to the administrators of the Federal and federally assisted programs in the area. It is the hope of the Committee that these groups will take the necessary corrective action so that equality of opportunity is provided to all the citizens of Clovis without regard to race or national origin.

1. Employment

- a. Employers in Clovis should take affirmative steps to hire Negro and Spanish American personnel. These steps should include contacting minority group leaders and organizations for assistance in recruitment.
- b. Employers should re-evaluate their testing procedures which may have unrealistically high standards, and personnel officers should review rejected applications. If necessary, company or public training programs should be utilized to remedy skill deficiencies of minority group applicants now considered unqualified.
- c. Employers should establish definite and clear promotion policies which are accessible to all employees. Affirmative steps should be taken to upgrade Negro and Spanish American employees through training and counseling programs and by the posting of openings at all levels.
- d. Efforts should be made to establish effective communication between minority group employees and supervisory personnel.

- e. Immediate steps should be taken to place qualified minority group employees in white-collar and supervisory positions in all areas of employment in city and county offices, banks, public service and utility companies, private industry, and Federal Government agencies, including the Post Office and Cannon Air Force Base.
- f. Federal, State, and local governments should undertake programs of recruitment and on-the-job training of minority group members and should examine and improve their own employment and promotion standards so that government, at all levels, becomes the model for the private sector.

II. Education

- a. Clovis Public School District should take immediate steps to recruit Negro and Spanish American teachers and counselors.
- b. The school district should institute a mandatory training program to assist teachers in working with minority group children.
- c. The school district should develop specific programs to assist Negro and Spanish-speaking students to complete high school and enter college.
- d. The school administration and faculty should be instructed to assist Negro and Spanish-speaking students to participate fully in all school activities.
- e. Joint planning seminars and community meetings should be initiated to bring the schools and the entire community together and to enable parents and other members of the community to discuss problems of mutual concern with school personnel as a means of combating the cultural isolation of the minority communities.

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- f. Intense efforts should be made to obtain increased parental and community participation in the school's objectives through the use of para-professionals, teachers' aides, adult education programs, and community-wide projects. Each school should form a community advisory committee with a membership representing the entire ethnic and socioeconomic composition of the student body. In schools with Spanish-speaking students, such committees should include bilingual members.
 - g. School administrators should demonstrate an active concern for the welfare and development of minority group students. Any teacher found guilty of racial slurs or discrimination should be dismissed.

III. Federal and Federally Assisted Programs

- a. Programs and institutions which receive Federal assistance such as the welfare department, the Social Security Administration, the New Mexico Employment Security Commission, the local selective service board, and Clovis Memorial Hospital should take immediate steps to employ Negroes and Spanish Americans.
- b. Periodic reviews of the quality of service provided by these local agencies to Negro and Spanish American citizens should be made by the administering agencies.
- c. Any employee of these agencies or institutions who is found guilty of racial discrimination should be dismissed.