

Background Information on the Hearings

MR. WALLACE: Members will please take their seats, and we will come to order. The Secretary will call the roll of the Commission.

(roll call of members of Commission)

MR. WALLACE: The secretary will call the roll of witnesses to be heard today.

(roll call of witnesses)

MR. WALLACE: On behalf of the - - - We would be very pleased if those persons near the wall would come nearer, if you want to hear. Take any seat except that one.

MR. HAREWOOD: Will you please reserve that chair, that is the witness chair - any others will be all right.

MR. WALLACE: On behalf of the Commission and to the witnesses, the press and the public, we desire to make a statement for the clearance of understanding of the purpose of this Commission.

There are about fifteen million persons of known African descent or mixture - classified as colored or Negro, in America; about 400,000 in Illinois; 275,000 in Chicago - all of whom by right of the Constitution, are American citizens. Citizens who are handicapped at every turn by artificial barriers set up by individuals who have not grasped the fact that these barriers are not only injurious to the particular group, but they are automatically injurious to the progress of democracy in America.

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They are deprived of employment by employers; of membership in the Unions, and treated as scabs if they take advantage of any opening for jobs, of recognition in public places, and forced against their will to become public charges, for whose upkeep, those who must pay anyway. Their boys and girls are from many of the same schools, excelling in many instances their associates, yet refused the ordinary opportunity and opportunities of life, because of color or race.

Much more could be said, but time will not permit. We, as representatives of the State of Illinois, are especially interested in finding out the facts relative to this situation in Illinois, and on the basis of those facts relative to this situation in Illinois, and on the basis of those facts, - make some recommendations to the Legislature for such remedies as are possible.

We are not concerned or interested in the politics or political affiliation of anyone.

Ladies and gentlemen, the Commission seeks information as a means of helping our State and Country in a greater solidification of its citizens in time of danger, by dealing more fairly with those who have been, and are being dealt with to the contrary.

The bill creating this Commission reads as follows:

(reading)

such counsel and assistants within the amount made available