

MR. WIMBISH: I second it.

MR. HAREWOOD: You will have to wait on that.

MR. DICKERSON: Assuming, of course, that he has been served. Mr Chairman, if he has been served, and has not shown up, my motion will be in effect.

(Whereupon Senator Wallace did then and there "put" the motion before the Commission which was carried unanimously.)

SENATOR WALLACE: Mrs Gaines.

MR. HAREWOOD: Will you raise your right hand, please.

I R E N E M c C O Y G A I N E S

called as a witness, having been first duly sworn by Mr. Harewood, testified as follows:

Q Will you state your name, please ?

A Mrs Irene McCoy Gaines.

Q Where do you live, Mrs. Gaines ?

A 3262 Vernon Avenue, Chicago.

Q What organizations - - rather, with which organizations are you connected ?

A Appearing today, representing the Chicago Council of Negro Organizations.

Q In what capacity ? A As President.

Q Have a seat ? A Must I sit.

Q Have a seat, Mrs. Gaines ? A I am asking permission

to stand.

Q Of course. A Thank you.

SEN. WALLACE: Mrs. Gaines, the Commission desires that you make a statement with reference to the condition of the schools serving Negro pupils, and the availability of educational facilities for Negroes.

A Yes.

Q We will be pleased to hear from you now.

A Yyes. Mr Chairman, and members of this body, within the last decade in Chicago, there has been established a deliberate and systematic program of discrimination against the city's Negro children of school age.

From studies which have been made, and facts assembled by the Chicago Council of Negro Organizations and other agencies, we find:

In 1939, 31,169 elementary school children attending the 24 schools in the near southside area, and more than 10,000 children in the high schools of that section.

In an area of the City where housing, economic and industrial problems are most accute, where the school system should be in operation for intensive work to rescue children from a blighted environment, and to prepare them to meet their difficult problems of life, we find the greatest lack in educational facilities. We find these children of the City, herded into building^s, many of which are on the verge of collapse, with

inferior equipment, giving 95% of these children a half day in school and a half day on the street.

Of the 14 elementary City schools on a double shift, 13 of them are in the Negro districts.

Although most of the congestion in the schools of this area is due primarily to the vicious practice of restrictive covenants, much of the necessity for a double or triple day school shift is due also to the manner in which school boundaries have been made by the Board of Education, and the stubborn refusal of the Board of Education to allow colored children to go to school in an adjoining area, which in a number of cases is much nearer the child's home than the school designated for him in a Negro district. This in spite of the fact that white children living in Negro areas are urged to take transfers to schools in other districts. And in spite of the fact that the enrollment in schools adjacent to the Negro areas was consistently declining. We here cite two or three cases in point:

PARK MANOR SCHOOL: 70th and Rhodes Avenue - not operating on a double shift, with many empty seats, while McCost School, 66th and Champlain Avenue, has a double shift. Colored children are refused admittance living within three blocks of the Park Manor.

SEN. WALLACE: How many blocks did you say that was ?

A I said children within three blocks of the Park Manor
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School, made application and had been and are being refused.

SEN. WALLACE: Despite the crowded condition of the school they are zoned to go to, and the vacant rooms in another school even nearer their home ?

A Yes.

MR. DICKERSON: They have to go to McCosh School nevertheless?

A Yes.

REP. GREENE: Mrs Gaines, did you notice applications, if they were in that school zone or not, if you understand what I mean ?

A I know they are in the McCosh zone and try to get transferred to Park Manor School because of the smaller load there. On account of the double shift mainly. We get those complaints and

REP. GREENE: I know, I was wondering if you are sure. Approximately, if they are living in the school zone, and in that district, their residence in that district is such

ALDERMAN GRANT: (interrupting) I am not on this Commission, but I think

REP. GREENE: (interrupting - to Alderman Grant) Well, you are over there, you stay over there.

ALDERMAN GRANT: I would like to know.

REP. GREENE: (interrupting) I would like for you to keep quiet, you are not on the Commission. I have something on my mind I want to clear up.

REP. GREENE: (continuing) The proximity of that school, the Sherwood School to this other school district, the McCosh - where this other school is located, by virtue of the fact that it is close by, that would give those aggrieved persons a right to make application for transfer to that school even though it is not in their district ?

A Yes, except for the fact - this other advantage, aside from distance - they have at the McCosh School a double shift, a double day shift, which makes the children lose a lot of time - and they have empty class rooms, and no double shift at Park Manor.

REP. GREENE: Have you any suggestions to make that would be helpful in that regard, assuming they make application, and application is denied ?

A Yes, I am coming to that - I am getting to that now.

SEN. WALLACE: Proceed.

A (continuing) SHERWOOD SCHOOL, 57th and Princeton, very recently had 5 empty rooms, while Betsy Ross, at 60th and Wabash has a double shift, and the Board of Education has forced the Negro property owners within 5 blocks of the Sherwood to sell their homes for the erection of another school to serve the colored children of this area.

They are now receiving these applications, and making these plans for the Negroes, a school in that section, for the erection of another school just within five blocks of the

Sherwood School, which has recently had five (5) empty rooms, and this other proposition to accomodate Negro children which live in that area, instead of letting them attend the Sherwood School and dispense with this new project just for the colored children.

Q I see.

A (continuing) PARKMAN SCHOOL, 51st and Wells Avenue, an all day session school, has a principal who informs parents of colored children moving into the Parkman District, that they cannot be accepted there, but will have to be transferred either to Farren School, 51st and Wabash Avenue, or to the Coleman - 46th and Dearborn Street, both double shift schools, because of their color. White children living in the same block are admitted to the Parkman.

This principal practically suggests to the parents of these children, because of the colored children, they can't come to that school.

SEN. WALLACE: Have you the name of that principal ?

A Yes, I have.

ALDERMAN DICKERSON: What is the name of the principal ?

A Mrs. Clausen.

ALDERMAN DICKERSON: Do you know whether the children in that area have been admitted to Parkman ?

A Yes, what we are informed, children living in that area, colored children are refused admission. All this is due to
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the attitude of the principal entirely.

Recently a colored child who had come up through the grades in the Parkman School, when graduated with her white classmates and presented at Englewood High School by her parents, was told that although she lived in the District, they could not accept her, but would give her a permit to go to DuSable because she was colored.

Another phase of discrimination is found in the policy of persuading colored teachers to take transfers from schools in which they have taught for many years, to a school nearer their home, which invariably places them in one of the schools in the Negro area.

REP. GREENE: Just a minute, right there. Have you ever had occasion to see where a person, a teacher, a colored teacher has asked to be placed in a Negro section ?

(no response)

REP. GREENE: I have had it brought to my attention, that some don't want to teach in a white neighborhood, and asked to be transferred to a colored area, have you anything on that ?

A That is possible, some might prefer that.

REP. GREENE: I see.

A (continuing) Principals are permitted to reject a teacher on the basis of color; this is invariably done by principals of schools in white areas, and even permitted to some extent in colored districts as for example at the Burke
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School, located in the heart of a Negro district, and which has an enrollment of 2200 colored children and an all white teaching staff, quite contrary to the wishes of the community and members of the P. T. A. of that school.

The Northside Civic League has found that 70% of the pupils of the Sexton and Jenner elementary schools are colored, and there are no Negro teachers employed in either of these schools, although repeated requests have been made for a mixed staff.

Another discriminatory practice is found in the policy of the Board of Education, to restrict admissions of colored students to the Chicago Teacher's College.

In 1939, of 400 students admitted, there were only 11 colored; in September 1940, of 75 college graduate students admitted, only 5 were colored, - despite the fact that other colored students were notified of their passing grades.

When a committee from the West Woodlawn Community Club made protest of this policy to the Board of Education, they were told that the proportion of Negro Students had to be kept down because after graduation there would be no place for them, as they would not be accepted by the principals in white districts, and that they were not wanted in some Negro districts.

A clerk at the Chicago Teacher's College recently told a young colored cadet who had asked to be assigned to a school on the north side near her home, that that would be useless, as

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she was going to teach colored pupils only.

For years, there has been a warranted and justifiable dissatisfaction and unrest among would-be workers, parents, students and citizens generally because of the very limited and restricted opportunities and inadequate facilities afforded for learning major trades.

The NATIONAL TECHNICAL ASSOCIATION has called our attention to the fact that Negro pupils are barred from certain classes and shops in the WASHBURNE TRADES SCHOOL, because the equipment of those class rooms and shops has been furnished by private organizations, which reserve the right to say what types of children may be taught on it - speaking of: Automotive mechanics, Air conditioning, Heating, Welding, Sheet metal works, Electrical engineer and so forth.

From the daily press, we are informed that Congress has appropriated twenty-six (26) million dollars for the national vocational training program for National Defense, plus eight (8) millions of dollars for equipment.

Phillip McNamee, industrial co-ordinator of Chicago vocational schools, has estimated that nearly two (2) million dollars of Federal funds, will have been spent for the training in Chicago, by June 30th, 1941, when the program is scheduled to expire. In addition, he says: "the Government will buy an estimated \$450,000.00 worth of new equipment, such as lathes, and welding tools, which will remain in the Chicago Schools."
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MRS GAINES: (continuing) LACK OF RECREATIONAL FACILITIES:

School playground and recreational facilities originally built for the children of approximately 110,000 people cannot adequately serve the children of 300,000 people.

In the schools in Negro Districts, we find too few playgrounds, swimming pools, gymnasiums. We find no stadiums or athletic fields. This lack greatly contributes to the delinquency of colored children. The Chicago Council of Negro Organizations has joined with other organized racial groups in the City to petition the school board for a wider use of school buildings, and equipment that we already have, by keeping them in operation after school hours for several days a week, for the recreational and civic development of the community.

COMPETENT TEACHERS - not political appointees needed:

Gross examples of incompetence of teachers placed by the Board of Education in the schools in the Negro Districts have been reported from time to time. In nearly all instances, these teachers have not and do not qualify as teachers in the Chicago School System. Their names do not appear on civil service lists of qualified teachers, but have been placed into the schools by political influence.

From a further study of this situation, it also appears that incompetent or unsatisfactory teachers in other school districts are invariably transferred to the schools in Negro areas. Competent white teachers are always given the opportunity.

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(repeat) Competent white teachers are always given the opportunity to transfer out into other school districts. Negro pupils frequently have in one subject, four or five teachers during a semester.

EFFECT UPON the development of the Negro child. The double and triple day shifts, the discriminatory policies and practices, these lacks of efficiency in personnel and equipment, have a baneful effect upon the lives of Chicago's children.

The Negro child's development is seriously curtailed by the fact that he is getting 40% less schooling than other children in the City; and the quality of the equipment of his class room and laboratories precludes him from making the same type and kind of demonstrations made by children of other races when presented for college entrance.

These patterns of discrimination and segregation practiced in our public schools, not only handicap the development of the Negro child now, but seriously effect the attitudes of the white child who seeing the Negro children and Negro teachers set apart and denied full participation in the school activities of the City as other citizens, become accustomed to these practices and in later life maintain this attitude of separateness and segregation which makes for bad race relations.

Negro children, therefore, when mature are denied equal economic opportunity; are denied equal participation in the

civic and political life of the nation, and we are thus prevent^{ed}-
from contributions~~or~~ or from contributing their best to
American thought and culture.

Now, we have some recommendations, submitted by the Chicago
Council of Negro Organizations, to this honorable body, to
this Commission, which we hope might be adopted in some way
through proper legislation, which will tend to remedy or
eradicate some of the existing evils in Negro communities, as
has to do with the school situation, and will put to an end
racial discriminatory practices, which now exist:

THEREFORE, the Chicago Council of Negro Organizations recommend:

1. That equitable changes be made in public school bound-
aries; and that maps of these boundaries be made available
for examination by civic groups and agencies interested in
relieving the problem of overcrowding of the schools.
2. That all principals be prohibited from barring a teacher
because of color.
3. That students be admitted to the Chicago Teacher's
College solely on the basis of merit and without regard to
race, color or creed.
4. That Washburne Trade School or any other school
supported by public funds, be prohibited from using equipment
provided by a private agency which reserves the right to say
what types of children may be taught on it, to the end that all
vocational opportunities directed by the Board of Education may

be given to all of the City's children seeking these courses, regardless of race, color or creed, or the social status of their parents.

5. That the vocational training now being paid for by the Federal Government for National Defense, be made available to all applicants regardless of race or color.

6. That teachers and substitutes be chosen from legitimate lists of competent people and not through political preferment.

7. That principals be prohibited from refusing pupils on the basis of color; also, that the Board of Education be restrained from urging the transfer of white children from schools within a colored district.

Respectfully submitted by - IRENE McCOY GAINES, President
Chicago Council of Negro Organizations.

SEN. WALLACE: Is it your opinion that the crowded conditions are responsible for this situation ?

A I think that is where a partial responsibility should rest -, and I point out this also, that the teachers are also responsible for a great deal of it.

ALDERMAN DICKERSON: Indirectly ? A Yes.

SEN. WALLACE: Are all of the teachers of the Chicago Schools required to pass a normal examination ?

A That is the requirement, but it is not enforced, and many incompetent teachers, in Negro districts, have never seen the National Teacher's College, rather the Chicago Teacher's
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Q SEN. WALLACE: Is there a large list, school list of eligibles for teaching, waiting to be called to service ?

A I am quite sure there is a large list, yes.

Q All right. I think by courtesy, we will permit Alderman Grant to question the witness further, if he desires ?

ALDERMAN GRANT: I appreciate that. I won't ask any questions, thank you.

MR. HENDERSON: Mrs Gaines, have these things been reported to the Board of Education at different times ?

A They have.

Q And what were the reports, and what disposition was made of the complaints ? A Well, in several of the instances they corrected the trouble, but in most of them, nothing has been done. Several instances where adjustments were made, sort of appeasement. But that is the general practice, unless (stay) you saty right behind it, action on the part of the parents of the children who are being denied because of prejudice, nothing is done.

REP. GREENE: Mrs Gaines, what is the method as to application to the Teacher's College ?

A Examination.

Q Both oral and written ? A Yes, both oral and written. We do have many, many colored students, some of them are college graduates, who have recently taken the normal examination, the written part, and they have received their grades,
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but as soon as the oral examination comes up, they are shortly afterwards notified they did pass, their grades posted but when it comes to appointment and assignment, large numbers of them are excluded.

REP. GREENE: Do they have a certain number a year to be certified ? A It varies with conditions. They give them the written, and they pass the written examination, and then thats all they do.

Q Meaning then that these graduate students pass the written and flunk out on the oral ?

A They pass the oral, and then they are told "we can only take a certain number of persons and certify them to the Board of Education", and in the mean while they are waiting - they are on the waiting list, they have to get a number before they are call^{ed}, and this applies particularly to the colored students, this thing of "waiting."

Q In recent years, has the number increased over a period of years discussed, for the last five years, we'll say ?

A It has decreased.

MR. HAREWOOD: Have you ever talked with or met Doctor Bousfield, and gone over this situation with him ?

A Yes, we have.

Q Do you know the situation at the Sexton School ?

A No, I don't know of any recent developments there, no more than what I have reported on.

MR. HAREWOOD: (interrupting) I understand that school -
the Sexton School at 60th and Evans, has many vacant rooms.

A Yes, we know that.

Q That a practice of discrimination exists there, which
if provision were made, maybe the double shift at the McCosh
might be relaxed ?

A That is true.

SEN. WALLACE: Thank you very much for your appearance and
for your information.

(witness excused)

SEN. WALLACE: At this time, we would like to call Doctor
William H. Johnson, Superintendent of Schools.

MR. HAREWOOD: Mr. Rogers is here in his place.

SEN. WALLACE: All right, we will hear from him.

D O N C. R O G E R S

called as a witness, having been first duly sworn, was examined
in chief by Mr. Harewood, and testified as follows:

Q What is your name, please ? A Don C. Rogers.

Q Now Doctor Rogers, in what capacity are you connected with
the Board of Education, and the Chicago School system ?

A I am Director of Bureau of Research and Building Survey.

Q And your address in Chicago ?

A 6293 Louise.

-199Q Are you acquainted with some of the conditions we have