

th
Group
(by si
White
Negro
Span
Amer
All

At this time we have the roster starting from left to right around the desk, next to Mr. Ron Shelby is Mr. Fred Winston, Mr. John W. Porter, Mr. M. E. Nelson, Public Relation's Director of San Diego Gas and Electric Company, Mrs. Brodshatzer, Mr. George Stevens, who is the Direct Action Chairman, is that right Mr. Stevens?

Mr. Stevens) Yes.

Mr. Neer) Of CORE, Mr. Robert Russell of CORE, Mr. James Brown Jr of CORE, Mr. Harold Brown, Chairman of CORE, and myself, L. _____ Neer.

I take it all of you people are members of the CORE Committee and you are here to receive the company's response to the demands that you presented to me on November the 4th 1963. We think it would be appropriate at this time to review the demands which you have made on the company, so that we all understand clearly what we are discussing.

They are the following:

1. An increase of 7% of total employees, which is approximately 3,000. These shall be Negro employment above janitor.
2. In order to enhance recruitment of Negro applicants, a listing of job openings be given to CORE.
3. Provision for in-company training on all levels of employment for new and old Negro employees, such training shall make up grading possible.
4. CORE shall be notified within one week as to how this company plans to meet these demands.

And I recall that you added one orally Mr. Brown, that the company provide a Negro employee on the first floor, front office, in the electric building here.

Mr. Brown) Clerical.

Mr. Neer) In the clerical help. Thank you Mr. Brown.

Mr. Porter) As I heard those stated Mr. Neer, I think there was an error in the statement of the first sentence.

Mr. B) Yes, definitely.

Mr. Porter) The proposal there was not on increasing of 7%, but an increase to 7%.

H. Brown) Up to 7% around th

Porter) So that the work force would reflect roughly the population ^{n,} ~~act~~ ^{down} in the community.

Neer) I believe you are correct Mr. Porter, Mr. Brown, Mrs. Brodshatzer, from our discussion after the presentation of your demands to me, the language that I read, however, I think agrees precisely with the language which was on the written statement you handed me.

Mrs. B) Yes, that's right.

H. Brown) Yes, well that is in error.

Porter) Yes.

Neer) Well we understood from the later discussion that this did not mean an increase from 3,000, let us say, to 3,210 employees, but rather it meant an increase in the employment of Negroes up to a level of 7% of the 3,000 employees of the company.

Mrs. B) Or a total of 210 as we stated in our previous meeting

Neer) Yes, we took 7% of 3,000 as 210, as an example, thank you Mrs. Brodshatzer. We have studied these demands, and have given them serious consideration, we have also analyzed them in relation to the long established practices of this company as an equal opportunity employer and in the light of the current state and federal laws on discrimination, if we understand these demands correctly, you insist that 7% of our employees, above the level of janitor be Negro, we have never applied racial or ethnic percentages to employees, not only would such a practice be improper and unjust, but racial percentages have little relationship to qualifications in hiring employee with technical skills essential to the operation of the Gas and Electric business. In so far as we are able to determine, there are only three ways in which we can comply with these demands, these are: (1) by dismissing a sufficient number of our present employees, to make way for Negroes. It is difficult for us to believe that you really mean, that we should fire men and women, who by faithful and efficient service have established their ability and efficiency in their jobs simply in

order to make way for members of our group. We feel that you must agree that to fire a satisfactory employee, merely to make way for another individual, not only is rank discrimination, but is outright injustice and a violation of the law. (2) a second manner in which we might meet this demand, would be to hire a large number of surplus employees beyond our legitimate requirements. We cannot believe that you in all seriousness, would expect the company to put on the people that did not and could not be used efficiently. This would be in violation of California Public Utilities Code, section 451, which requires the company to provide adequate and efficient service at reasonable rates. (3) The only other alternative left, would be for us to close the employment door to all citizens except Negroes, and hire Negroes only until they constituted 7% of our work force. In considering this alternative, we must give due consideration to the rights of other American Citizens. Negroes are not the only minority group in San Diego. We have a large number of Americans of Mexican birth. There are numerous citizens whose ancestors come from the Orient, they have just as much right to be considered for any position that might be open within our company, as have Negroes. Thus to adopt this third alternative, would constitute outright discrimination against not only members of the Caucasian race, but against but against members of other minority groups as well. We cannot believe that your committee which is fighting for equal opportunity and justice for Negroes would want us to discriminate against other minority groups, merely to favor your own. Your second demand, is equally improper and impractical you insist that to aid in recruiting Negro applicants, the company give CORE a list of job openings, if we provide a list for you, we would have to in all fairness to others, provide a list for everybody, and this is highly impractical, if we confine the list to you, then we would be guilty of discriminating against all other citizens in favor of your particular group. This, like your first demand, not only is unrealistic, but highly improper and morally and legally wrong. We cannot discriminate or show preference to any group or race in offering employment opportunity in our company. As always, are and will be selected from the applicants having the best qualifications to meet the requirements of a particular job or jobs, as these openings occur from time to time. The opportunity to submit qualifications for employment always has been and will be, open to everyone seeking a career at our company, regardless of race or nationality. (4) An equal consideration

is always given to all applicants. Your third demand presents no special problem, in keeping with sound business management and planning, an in-company training program has been in operation for years, this program is open to any qualified employee, regardless of race, to prepare himself for more responsible positions as openings occur. Apprenticeship training programs are held for mechanics, cable splicers, linemen, meter-testers, repairmen, switching center operators, mechinists, welders, blacksmiths, carpenters, and power plant operators. These programs are conducted when the need arises, to develop reserve of skill manpower capable to advancing to more technical jobs as openings occur. The company lonh followed the practice, where every possible, of promoting from within. In addition, many employees seek to advance themself on there own, by taking evening, high school and college courses. We encourage this practice and will even lend financial assistance, if the course will lead to greater proficiency and eligibility for promotion. As a result of studies, we are forced to the conclusion that you are demanding that we adopt the very practices to which you are opposed, namely, drawing lines of racial discrimination by hiring, training, and promoting one racial group to the exclusion of others. There are several reasons why we cannot exceed to your demands. First, to yield would be to violate sound and long establish practices of this company, which for years have observed the rule of employing people and promoting employees strictly on the basis of merit, with equal opportunity and fair treatment for all. Secondly, to adopt a policy of preferential of Negroes to the discrimination of other American Citizens would constitute a clear cut violation of section 1420A of the California Fair Employment Paactices Act. You are asking us to violate the law, and we cannot be a party to any agreement that does so. Not only would we be subject to severe penalties, but we would be abandoning our respect for the law. On the other hand, we are proud of the fact, that amoung our employees in responsible positions, are to be found representative of various nationalities, creeds, and races, including many Negroes. For more than a quarter of a century, we have been employing Negroes, and people of other minority groups, who meet the necessary qualifications called for by the jobs to be filled. We cannot legally or morally depart from the fair and just practice that has made this possible.

Hal)

Is that the end, sir?

Neer) That's the end Mr. Brown, If you would like that copy we'll have it sent to you, you are welcome to it.

Hal) No. In this manuscript here, I can find varied arguments, at which this time I see no need in going into, however, I would like to point out one or two things. One is that in this sanctimonious attitude of equal opportunity employer, we have such small percentage of Negroes working here, not only in this company, but in many other companies, not only in San Diego, but in many, many cities throughout this country, and now we have been accused of practicing, or asking for discrimination on behalf of the Negro. I want you to know that this is insulting, and for any group such as CORE, whose aims are widely known, and whose objectives are widely known and appreciated, for it to be inferred that we are asking someone, some company, to act undemocratically, to act immorally, is highly insulting. I see no reason now for us to remain. I think that what you had to say is quite clear, we understand that within our request there seem to be no room for you to acknowledge them.

Neer) Well, Mr. Brown I think we acknowledge your request. I think we have given you our answer, and the reason for our answer and I may say that it certainly was not intended as an insult, but only as a statement of the facts.

Hal) You did not state the facts. You made a statement that you have been hiring Negroes and other minority groups for many years, we still can not find a good proportion of minority persons working here. You claim that you are an equal opportunity employer for all these years and yet the condition still exists that we have not received an answer, and now you say that if you were to hire Negroes to bring the total up to 7%, that you would have to discriminate on the basis that it would be harmful to persons of other groups. I can only ask you this question Mr. Neer, for almost 400 years Negroes have suffered as a result of discrimination by Whites, and I have yet never heard Whites come to the front and say, "This is wrong, let's do something about it", I have never heard the Gas and Electric Company say this, and yet, after practically 400 years of receiving this treatment, we ask that now this company and other companies within this country compensate in some way, which the government has seen fit to do in the case of the Indian. We only ask this, and we ask this humbly, and yet, it is inferred that we