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HIGH SCHOOL ORIENTATION PROGRAM--A FOUR-PHASE PROGRAM OF SCHOOL COOPERATION.

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IN 1962, THE PACIFIC TELEPHONE AND TELEGRAPH COMPANY SIGNED THE "PLAN FOR PROGRESS" COMMITTING THEMSELVES TO THE GOAL OF FULL EQUALITY IN EMPLOYMENT. A PLAN OF ACTION WAS DEVISED TO SEEK OUT MINORITY CANDIDATES FOR EMPLOYMENT. HOWEVER, POSSIBLE EMPLOYEES HAD DIFFICULTY PASSING THE EMPLOYMENT TESTS. IT WAS REALIZED THAT, IN ADDITION TO ACTIVELY SEEKING OUT MINORITY MEMBERS, THE COMPANY SHOULD HELP THEM QUALIFY FOR EMPLOYMENT. THE FIRST PHASE OF A FOUR-PHASE SCHOOL COOPERATION PROGRAM WAS A 1-WEEK COUNSELOR WORKSHOP FOR 27 COUNSELORS. MANAGEMENT REPRESENTATIVES FROM SEVEN DEPARTMENTS DISCUSSED EACH DEPARTMENT'S ROLE IN THE COMPANY, THE JOB SKILLS PECULIAR TO THAT DEPARTMENT, AND SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENTS. THE COUNSELORS THEN MADE VISITS TO THE VARIOUS DEPARTMENTS AND FORMED DISCUSSION GROUPS. A FOLLOWUP EVALUATION OF THIS PROGRAM WAS MADE. THE SECOND PHASE CONSISTED OF A SERIES OF 1-DAY WORKSHOPS FOR VOCATIONAL AND BUSINESS TEACHERS. DURING THE THIRD PHASE, STUDENTS SELECTED BY THEIR COUNSELORS VISITED VARIOUS COMPANY DEPARTMENTS, ATTEMPTED TO PERFORM THE WORK OPERATIONS OF THE JOB WITH THE EMPLOYEES, AND LEARNED ABOUT THE COMPANY'S EMPLOYMENT OFFICE PROCEDURE. THE FOURTH PHASE CONSISTED OF A BROAD OFFERING OF COMPANY RESOURCES TO BE USED AS EDUCATORS DESIRED. (PS)

Strengthening Counseling Services for Disadvantaged Youth

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Bureau of Pupil Personnel Services
[CALIFORNIA STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, SACRAMENTO]

HIGH SCHOOL ORIENTATION PROGRAM--A FOUR-PHASE PROGRAM OF SCHOOL COOPERATION

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Race relations have become one of the most vexing problems facing our nation today. The roots of the problem are buried deep in American tradition. The real issue -- human dignity -- is almost unperceivable because it has become so clouded by matters concerning state's rights, labor, education, the use of public facilities, franchise, and all kinds of political manipulation.

Students of racial conflict have tried to understand the situation within the framework of specific academic disciplines. Anthropologists, sociologists, historians, and psychologists have contributed to the fund of knowledge. Looking through currently published material, one can select arguments for just about any point one wishes to make on the subject, and blame for the problem has been laid to everything from the Negro himself to slavery, apathy, and so on.

Well, if nothing else, observers of the racial scene have produced a stable of scapegoats from which even a casual observer can draw to place blame for the situation. I mentioned this simply to reinforce what you already know: that today's racial situation is extremely complex, and resolution is a long way off.

During the last decade we have had to remind ourselves of a remark made in 1885 by the celebrated author, George Washington Cable. He said, "The greatest social problem before the American people today is, as it has been for a hundred years, the presence among us of the Negro." Not many thoughtful Americans, either north or south, would have challenged his assertion; and during the three-quarters of a century since that time, the problem has never stayed long out of public attention; for, instead of a solution, it has reached no more than an uneasy postponement. Postponement is tantamount to insouciance -- ignore the problem and it will of its own accord go away. Now, more than ever before, the problem is demanding resolution. Postponement cannot endure; we have lived like dreamers for a hundred years and, like dreamers, fumbled as we picked up the present. We have tried to fit Negroes into the new pattern, but we fumbled even there. We have tried to educate them. We have tried to bring in industry with increasing success, but at the same time we have tried to keep unchanged the sacred pattern of life.

So here we are, 100 years after the Negro's emancipation, not much nearer the goal than we were then. The backfield of the past is in motion, and we can no longer fumble as we pick up the present.

My company picked up the present in just four words: "an equal-opportunity employer." To which we added a compelling challenge -- "Are we?" We had

for a long time followed a policy on nondiscrimination in employment, but I'm afraid I would be less than candid with you if I did not mention that we were not really sure if all our people up and down the state who were responsible for employment believed in the letter and spirit of fair employment, so we restated our policy.

On June 22, 1962, we signed a joint statement with the President's Committee on Equal Employment Opportunities called the "Plan for Progress." We were then committed to reaching the goal of full equality in employment without regard to race, creed, color, or national origin.

We had taken the pledge in good faith, but with some naiveté, since we had a long way to go. At that time, only a few of our employees were Negroes.

Having signed the President's Plan for Progress, we again firmly restated our policy to all our employees, but we still made no real gains, so we found it necessary to take an active role rather than a passive role in implementing our commitment to the "Plan for Progress." We consulted minority group leaders, sociologists, and other knowledgeable people in minority matters. We surveyed the communities, and then we sat down and had a few good old-fashioned, soul-searching, brainstorming sessions. The fruit of this planning was a definite plan of action which established guidelines for our people in working toward full equality of employment. We then arranged a series of meetings at which all of our management people were brought up to date on minority matters and given a printed folder containing an outline of the plan of action, a copy of the President's Plan for Progress, a letter from our company president, and selected reprints from current periodicals.

Some of us had played enough party games to know that if you start a story at one end of a line of people and pass it along, what comes out at the other end is quite different. So we took the head of the line all the way, and our Assistant Vice-President, C.S. Woodruff, carried the story down the pipe.

Now we had a definite plan, and all our people knew about it. Part of that plan was to use every available means to seek out candidates for employment. But as we went along that track, it came home sharply to us that the demand for qualified Negro males far exceeded the supply. While there were a good many Negro women working for us, there were not very many males. It was difficult to attract Negro men to our company because, for one reason, they could see no evidence of successful Negroes in our company. Another reason was that they had considerable difficulty in passing our employment tests. Our standards were high -- we knew it -- but we also were quite aware of the perils of inverse discrimination -- special standards for Negroes would not do, and a blanket reduction of standards would stand Negroes in no better stead because they would still have to meet the competition for jobs. We have six to ten applicants for every job as it is. We still believe that individual qualifications are the basic criteria by which people should be hired.

We came abruptly face to face with the age-old question of innate intelligence versus employment standards.

First, there is the question of testing. Negro leaders take the position that employment tests used in industry are inherently unfair. They say that these tests are designed around the white middle-class culture, and that the Negro with his insufficient and substandard education and his cultural deficiencies is in no way prepared to compete with Caucasians in taking such tests. Many Negro leaders propose that the tests used in today's culture are going to require review and revision, so as not to exclude Negroes with the capacity to perform well in industry from having an opportunity to do so. Some Negro leaders advocate special training by industry so that members of their race can qualify for employment. They recommended in-plant training so that Negroes can advance in companies. They advocate preferential hiring to set up some kind of racial balance commensurate with the percent that Negroes are of the whole population. Other Negro leaders advocate the setting of subjective employment quotas for members of their race in order that rapid progress can be made.

Whether drastic steps such as those I have just mentioned will be necessary to provide permanent solutions to the social problems with which we are dealing is conjectural. Considerable work needs to be done and will be done in the field of testing to evaluate the appropriateness of giving white man's tests to Negro applicants.

Culture is an important factor in intelligence testing, because the subject is often called upon to relate a test question to his own experience. If a subject has had no experience with the test item or cannot abstract from the question, he is helpless with the question. As an example of the effect of background on test performance, one experimenter recalls the experience of an investigator with poor whites in Kentucky. He presented the familiar Binet problem: "If you had taken ten cows to pasture for your father and six of them strayed away, how many would you have left to drive home?"

The subject answered, "We don't have ten cows, but if we did and I lost six, I wouldn't dare go home."

Now isn't that a ludicrous situation? If the examiner wanted to discover if the child could subtract six from ten, why did he not ask him straightforwardly instead of couching the question in subjective, emotionally charged terms? In terms of that child's experience, there is no relationship between the simple subtraction problem and the serious economic loss suggested by the question.

Well, I suppose the subjects of native intelligence and cultural development will continue to be argued. Meanwhile, we have come to realize that if real progress is to be made, we must do more than actively seek out qualified minority members; we must help to qualify them, and so we started our four-phase program.

I mentioned scapegoating earlier, and one classic example is the popular tendency to ask what the Negro is doing for himself -- or, as Rev. Martin Luther King put it, "When he seeks opportunity, he is told, in effect, to lift himself by his own bootstraps, advice which does not take into account the fact that he is barefoot."

I would like to think that our program may help to get him a pair of shoes. We began with the premise that here in California nearly everyone has equal access to education -- at least through high school. We felt that satisfactory completion of high school would equip most people to pass our employment tests -- they're not hard, and a passing score is often as low as 30 percent. We knew that a lot of Negroes dropped out of school for reasons far too numerous to mention here, but as we examined the dropout statistics, we realized that a lot of non-Negroes were dropping out, too, and one of the biggest reasons, though not often verbalized, is what I call "academic myopia." This shortsightedness obscures the relationship between school and work. School is "here and now," and work is "then and way out there." Students need to be made aware that school and work are contiguous segments of a lifetime continuum.

Nolan Kleary and Glenn Varner, in Crucial Issues in Education, say, "One of the goals of education should be to provide exploratory experiences which will help all pupils choose their vocational goals." And to that commendable piece of advice may I add: And it should be the goal of business to help the school to do so. This, then, became the launching pad for our four-phase program.

The components of our program are not new. They have been around for quite a while, but we tailored them for today's needs.

The first phase was a counselor workshop. Traditionally, the counselor workshop was a month-long experience for five or six counselors. They were taken on our payrolls and then plunged willy-nilly into as many different work experiences as possible in a month. We asked them to take off their counselor hats, put on a telephone people hat, go through the mill and come out wise to the ways of "telephonia." This was a good program, but with only a few people, the base was not broad enough for the expense involved. The basic motivation for the counselor workshop was employment, but now we had new reasons -- far less selfish ones. And so we built a new program on the foundation of previous workshops, seeking to broaden the base and buttress the weaknesses. The new counselor workshop involved 27 counselors for a period of one week. We asked them to leave their counselor hats on and look for ways in which they could interpret our company to their counselees. The program began with an address by John Kumboltz of Stanford University. The week was taken up with departmental presentations, and we had seven of them. For each of these, a management representative discussed the department's role in the company, the job skills peculiar to that department, and any special education requirements. After this, the group toured the department's facilities, giving the counselors opportunity to talk with our people and observe the work situation.

By the end of the week, the counselor group had had a pretty comprehensive look at Pacific Telephone and they had been liberally sprinkled with our business philosophy. We had talked of our experiences in minority recruiting, mentioned our desire to make a significant contribution to solving the dropout problem, and outlined our employment procedures. Then we told them of our intentions to pursue the four-phase program and asked for their help with phases two, three, and four. We felt that our future contacts with the counselors would

give us a continuity in our relations with the schools that we had never achieved before.

We wanted an objective appraisal of the program, so we administered a survey prepared by our chief statistician's office. It showed us a few things. Some parts of the program that we particularly like did not seem to be favored as highly as others; on the other hand, they were impressed by some things that seemed routine to us. For example, one of the most popular items in the program was a visit with a cable splicer down in a manhole under a busy street.

The survey gave us some additional material with which to build subsequent counselor workshops. We plan to survey the entire program as we go along, and at the end of the year, we expect to have quite a bit of relevant data.

The second phase of the program is a series of one-day teacher workshops for teachers of business-related subjects. These workshops are especially tailored to show how we use the talents of the people who have been trained within the teacher's particular discipline. For business teachers we concentrate on the areas of business skills. For vocational teachers we focus on our craft jobs, but always included is a discussion of employment proceedings.

The third phase is student workshops. The student workshops involve 25 students. They are selected after counsultations with the counselors (the same ones who attended the counselor workshop). These 25 students are separated into groups of five, and on five consecutive Fridays, they visit one of our departments. In each department, there are jobs peculiar to that department. The participants are released from school for the last two periods of the day, and because we are taking up part of their school day, we furnish the school with a quasi grade report.

During the workshop, participants actually sit down with one of our employees and, as nearly as is practicable, perform the work operations of the job. Once again, we devote about two hours to a discussion of our employment office procedure.

Phase four is simply a broad offering of our company resources to be used as the school people see fit. When I say company resources, I mean that we will do everything short of giving them the store. One of our best resources is a plant school consisting of courses on 27 different telephone subjects. These are courses that have been developed to maximize the skill potential of our people and to teach specific techniques when they are required in some of our more complex jobs. We offer the teachers themselves as classroom resource speakers and the course materials and the school itself for field trips.

And, of course, we continue to offer our regular teaching aids -- films, high school science programs, booklets, teletrainer programs, and a speaker bureau. Going beyond this, we are meeting with minority leaders in the community to seek out ways in which we can help, perhaps through study centers, Christian centers, and social activities. We are attempting to interest our employees in serving as volunteer workers in these activities.

Well, this is what we are doing in the field. So far, most of it has been pilot study work, and it may be some time before we know the results and can make them available in every community. In the meantime, we are doing everything we can to aid in the uplifting of disadvantaged youth.

NOTE: When Mr. Robinson made his speech available for publication, he also furnished the Department of Education with a list of selected references which appears on pages 106 and 107.

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