

**LOS ANGELES COUNTY
CITIZENS ECONOMY AND EFFICIENCY COMMITTEE**

ROOM 139, HALL OF ADMINISTRATION/500 WEST TEMPLE/LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90012/625-3611, Ext. 64605

M I N U T E S

FULL COMMITTEE MEETING

DATE: Wednesday, April 22, 1970
TIME: 9:30 a.m.
PLACE: Hall of Administration, Rm. 739

Robert Mitchell,
Chairman

Raymond Arbuthnot
Dr. John C. Bollens
Davis Brabant
John D. Byork
Maurice Rene Chez
Roc Cutri
Dr. Warren S. Jones
Mrs. Ray Kidd
Harlan G. Loud
P. S. Magruder
Kiyoshi Maruyama
Irvin Mazzei
L. E. McKee
Ferdinand Mendenhall
Louis Rogers
George Shellenberger
Mrs. Benjamin Erick Smith
William Torrence
Gus A. Walker
Burke Roche,
Executive Secretary

Members Present:

Robert Mitchell, Chairman
Davis Brabant
John Byork
Maurice Rene Chez
Mrs. Ray Kidd
P. S. Magruder
Kiyoshi Maruyama
George Shellenberger
William Torrence
Gus Walker

Members Absent:

Raymond Arbuthnot
Joseph Bishop
Dr. John Bollens
Roc Cutri
Dr. Warren Jones
Harlan Loud
Irvin Mazzei
Ferdinand Mendenhall
Louis Rogers
Mrs. Benjamin Erick Smith

GUEST SPEAKERS: Mrs. Marnesba Tackett, Civil Rights Leader
Morgan Moten, Chairman, Committee for Representative Government
Olin Newsome, Chairman, Men of Tomorrow

Mr. Mitchell called the meeting to order at 9:45 a.m. He introduced the committee members to the speakers. After a brief statement explaining the committee's study, he introduced Mrs. Marnesba Tackett as the first speaker.

Mrs. Tackett said that she had worked in the civil rights movement for many years campaigning for equal representation. She said that in the civil rights movement they have for many years fought slow, all too slow, battles through the courts to obtain such decisions as the historic decision by the Supreme Court in 1954 on school desegregation. She said that because of the slow progress, Negroes have been put in the role of always protesting, of always reacting instead of acting. They therefore recognized some years ago the need for people at the decision making level. She said that they as a people have felt that they have just been forgotten.

When lines are being drawn to determine district boundaries, they have been so drawn that they have included the black people out. They have been unable to participate in government. Just a few years ago the Negro had no representation in Los Angeles County or Los Angeles City. The blacks form the second largest minority in the area. The Negro constituency is taxed, made to obey all the laws, but it has no one at the decision making level. There is no one who really knows what the problem is and can present it to the legislative body, so that body can make the kind of laws that will help the black community.

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She said that she and her fellow speakers, therefore, were asking the committee to recommend to the Board of Supervisors that they draw new district lines, and in drawing these lines that they consider the ethnic populations who have been forced - especially the black population - to live or congregate in a certain section of the City called South Central Los Angeles. She said they were asking the committee to correct a bad situation, to make some 750,000 black citizens feel that they are part of the County government. These lines can be redrawn without gerrymandering because it is not necessary to gerrymander to give every segment of the population an opportunity to be represented.

Mrs. Tackett said that historically the civil rights movement has spoken for integration. They are not talking separatism. They are talking about becoming a part of the country. They are talking about entering into the mainstream of American society. Unfortunately, in the past the government has responded to riots. It has responded in different ways, but it does respond. And this is a shame. It is a travesty on justice. With blacks in decision-making places, they can bring to legislation the kind of laws and kinds of interpretation to make the County a better place to live.

Mrs. Tackett concluded with the request that the committee recommend to the Board of Supervisors that the Board be expanded to seven members and suggest to the Board that the lines be so drawn that the opportunity for electing minority representation to the Board will be maximized.

Mr. Mitchell then introduced Mr. Moten. Mr. Moten said he was an attorney and has had an office for over ten years on 103rd Street in Watts. He said he was also the Chairman of a committee called the Committee for Representative Government. The committee was started in 1960 with the purpose of seeking representation for black and brown people in all phases of government, including elected and appointed officials. At that time in 1960 there was only one black representative. This was Assemblyman Hawkins who is now Congressman Hawkins. Now there are three black assemblyman, one black congressman, one black State senator, and three black City councilmen.

The significant point is that these black representatives not only represent the black community but also the community at large. They have been concerned with all segments of the community. Mr. Moten said he did not think the situation would be different if the Board of Supervisors was increased to include the black and brown communities. Any black or brown supervisor would become involved in the totality of County business. He would not be just concerned with his own community.

There is a great insensitivity on the part of the white community to the hopes and aspirations of the black community. The Negro community wants to participate. It now feels that it is not represented, although it is being taxed. It is really taxation without representation. Some people will oppose the increase of the Board on the basis that it increases taxes; but from the black

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viewpoint, the black community is being taxed, and taxes are increasing, but the black people have nothing to say about it. Should it not be of vital concern to everyone to have equal representation of all segments of the community at all levels of government. The Board of Supervisors needs black representation. Now if anything goes wrong on a racial basis, the black people blame the white Board of Supervisors, and the brown people blame the white Board of Supervisors.

Mr. Moten said the black community asks for the opportunity to help so that in this way it can share the responsibility - that it can share in both the criticism or the praise which the Board may receive. It is simply impossible for the present Board of Supervisors to know the emotional aspirations and hopes of the black people.

Mr. Moten said that we know about the violence that results when people have lost hope and no longer care. The young black militants say that the white power structure will never listen to black moderates, will never listen to such people as Mrs. Tackett, Mr. Newsome, and himself. Increasing the Board would certainly inspire the young black and brown people to the extent that it might even decrease the dropout rate in the schools. The representation on the City Council has been effective and has certainly raised the aspirations of a lot of the young black people.

Mr. Moten concluded that an increase in the Board would be completely constitutional and in keeping with the spirit of America.

Mr. Mitchell then introduced Mr. Newsome, Chairman of Men of Tomorrow, a black businessmen's association.

Mr. Newsome said he believes that the white establishment is in a world of trouble. It is all a result of the failure of the majority community to adhere to the Supreme Court decision of 1954. As a result there has been a breakdown in law and order, and the white young people are saying to their parents that you really did not believe what you said.

The black community does not have the opportunity to develop and participate in the decision-making apparatus. Decisions are now made by the Board of Supervisors for the construction of County buildings called capital projects. These projects are not built in the area for which they were asking for representation. Also as a result of these projects, contracts are let for construction. The black community needs the representation so that they receive their fair share of contracts, subcontracts, and employment. Now the community has to be continually defensive. It must always be answering the question why do you want to participate in your own destiny.

Mr. Newsome said that no longer can the white establishment look for a few blacks to represent the black community. Mrs. Tackett, Mr. Moten and himself have a written statement to present to the committee, but it does not indicate that those three are representing the black community. The so-called black

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middle class are now changing from a silent majority within a minority and are now becoming a new breed. On page 4 of the written statement the point is made that within a scant four years the percentage of Negroes nationally who believe that a qualitative and quantitative change will be brought about only through violent means has increased from 21% to 31%. Among black teenagers, this figure is now 40%.

Mr. Newsome said that the people on the committee were the people who could make change. They were the people which he held personally responsible for making adequate recommendations. Without the support of the committee, nothing will happen regarding these charter amendments.

Opening the question period, Mrs. Kidd asked how the districting in the Los Angeles City reflected on the successful election of the City Councilmen. Mr. Moten replied that some redistricting had been accomplished, particularly in Mr. Lindsey's district, which helped elect black councilmen. The basic purpose of boundary changes, he said, was to allow the black community to participate, a community which for a long time has been excluded out. The word gerrymandering itself came from the practice of excluding Negroes so they could not have equal representation.

Mr. Torrence asked Mr. Moten how he would combine or redistrict so that not only the black community in South Central Los Angeles, but also the large community in Pasadena and the large community in Pacoima would receive proper representation. Mr. Moten said there was no possibility of providing direct black representation to the outlying communities. It would be impossible to draw a district to cover such a wide area in such a way that it would meet the Supreme Court requirement for contiguous and adjacent districts. From a realistic point of view, the redistricting should concentrate on the area where the largest population is.

Mrs. Tackett added that, if a district is drawn so that it does not cut up and dissect the black community, it is bound to result in some black representation.

In reply to a question from Mr. Roche regarding capital projects in South Central Los Angeles, Mrs. Tackett emphasized the need for the black community to have representatives at the decision making level to insure that black contractors and entrepreneurs are made aware of the business opportunities available to them and the assistance they may receive from all levels of government. She emphasized it was to the advantage of the whites that the Negroes be represented. The present situation is extremely serious, and the young black people have just about decided that they would really rather die than be a slave. Mrs. Tackett said that these young people are beginning to do the things that she and the other speakers feel are deplorable and suicidal. Unless the whites help the Negro moderates and unless they act in such a way that these young people will hear the moderates and give them credibility, the whites will simply be faced with having to kill all Negroes or put them in concentration camps. She said she and the other speakers were actually here to help the committee to help America out of a very bad situation.

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Mr. Moten added that a recommendation by the committee to increase the Board of Supervisors would give the black community a tremendous lift. He said that we in Los Angeles can then say that we are truly a democratic County; we are truly representative, and we are living the American dream.

Mr. Mitchell thanked the speakers and said they were very well qualified to represent the black community.

He announced that the next meeting of the committee would be on Monday, April 27th.

Mrs. Kidd told the committee that besides this being Earth Day, it was also National Secretaries' Day; and she would like to propose a motion giving a vote of thanks to Miss Lynn Larsen from the committee. The committee unanimously agreed.

Mr. Mitchell then adjourned the meeting at 11:10 a.m.