

To the Honorable Robert Montgomery
Chairman, State Affairs Committee
House of Representatives
State of Michigan

Testimony on House Bill No. 318

April 18, 1951

By: George Schermer, Director, City of Detroit, Mayor's Interracial Committee

The Mayor's Interracial Committee of the City of Detroit is an official city agency charged with the responsibility of abating racial tensions and developing interracial understanding and cooperation. While this Committee is but one of the many forces working toward the elimination of racial and other group prejudices and discriminations, it does stand in a central position as an observer and analyzer of conditions and trends. It is from that vantage point that we speak on the matter of fair employment legislation for our state.

During the first two years of its operation the Committee devoted all of its attention to relieving the extreme tension then existing. By the summer of 1946 it became apparent that Detroit had passed the worst part of the interracial crisis. The Committee then attempted to evaluate the situation from a longer range perspective and to draft a program which could serve as a permanent foundation for intergroup peace and cooperation.

The Committee recognized that a primary factor to be dealt with was that of economic opportunity. The facts of economic discriminations and restrictions upon minority groups, especially the Negro group, were everywhere manifest. If the economic restrictions could first be removed, or at least relieved, it would be possible to work out the other problems.

As a part of its long range program the Committee adopted a statement on employment practices which read in part as follows: "The stimulation and encouragement of fair employment practices in every branch of economic activity in the community is one of the most important functions of any program of intergroup