

The fact that we are rapidly eliminating the vacancies which for years in the District have been well over two and three hundred—we are down to 82 vacancies as of last week. We have, I believe, almost 40 ready for appointment and over 200 in the pipeline being processed for appointment. This indicates that we are up to full strength.

Our predecessors were not able to do that. I think these are all indications of a strong Department, and a good Department, and a Department with good morale.

Mr. ZWACH. Are your police applicants being processed in proportion to the White and black population? Are you bringing on more black policemen so that you are strengthening this area?

Mr. FLETCHER. Yes, sir. I believe the latest recruitment figures indicate that the appointments made in the last several months have been approximately fifty-fifty, white and Negro, compared to a present average of 20 percent Negro and 80 percent white.

The CHAIRMAN. I would like to ask why does it make any difference what color the applicant is, if he is a good man and can pass all the examinations?

Mr. FLETCHER. Sir, I was not asked that question. If I were asked that question, I would say I would recruit good policemen.

Mr. ZWACH. Mr. Chairman, I asked that question because I think it is important in the District that there be some proportion with regard to the population. I would like to have a little more elaboration on it.

The CHAIRMAN. Remember, this is an agency that does not just represent the District of Columbia, it represents the whole United States. If we would want to go by rules and regulations and use quotas, we would have ten percent colored police and employees here in this Federal city.

Mr. ZWACH. These are policemen for the District. We know the reality of the city itself. So my question dealt in this area.

The CHAIRMAN. The taxpayers of the whole United States are helping to pay for this police force.

Mr. ZWACH. That is right. I am fully aware of that.

Mr. FLETCHER. The Chief advised me he does not have the latest figure for the last several months but over the last period of time in recruitment we were recruiting a third Negro to two-thirds white. I do believe in the last several months it has been running close to fifty-fifty.

I believe our job is to recruit good policemen.

Mr. ZWACH. I think at all times we have to face the reality of the District. I would like to say that I live in the heart of D.C., and I have been observing the police. I think they have been good. Wherever they went, they went fast, efficiently. I have been impressed in the main with the operations of the Police Department.

I was very, very depressed in April but since then, I have noticed an improvement. Do you think this bill will destroy your direct line of authority to have someone over the head of them?

Mr. FLETCHER. Yes.

Mr. ZWACH. Who would be responsible with regard to a riot breaking out, would it be this new Commissioner or would it be the Safety Director, or would it be Chief Layton?

This concerns me when we need a quick and rapid determination.