

Minorities Important

The preservation of the American political and social traditions necessitates the utilization of the human resources of both national and regional minority groups.

Speaking informally at a Rice Forum Sunday night, Rep. Henry B. Gonzalez (D-Tex.) stressed particularly the importance of minority groups in Texas.

According to Mr. Gonzalez, one of the principal problems in our society today is to "provide a flow of skilled—highly skilled—labor. We are faced with a shortage of skills in areas of need."

Economic Drag

The failure in Texas to utilize fully the potential of minority groups is a deterrent to the development of a strong regional economy. Citing census records which show a strong movement of Negroes out of the South to northern urban centers, Gonzalez

maintained that this emigration constitutes a serious drag on the economy.

The discriminatory nature of local laws affecting minority groups is another factor blocking use of available human resources. Gonzalez pointed out that while Texas maintains no minimum wage and hour laws it enforces strict laws to restrict any efforts at organization and unionization.

"In this situation the unskilled segments of the labor force, largely composed of members of minority groups such as Negroes and Latin Americans, are at a distinct disadvantage."

Open Discrimination

Gonzalez contended that the fight for legal recognition carried on by one minority group is essentially a fight for all. "In broad terms," he maintained, "the problem of the Negro is analogous to that of the Italian, the Jew, or the Mexican." All are problems of a minority group openly discriminated against by local laws which are "fundamentally unconstitutional."

In contrast, the differing political import of various minority groups is due to inherent rigidity of group structure. The difference between Negro and Latin American minority politics, Gonzalez pointed out, is that the Latins have failed to develop any strong national organization.

He attributed this condition to the fact that while educated Latin Americans can transcend their minority groups, Negroes cannot. Thus in the latter case leaders have stayed to work within the group, while in the former they have tended to desert it for the larger society.