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AMERICAN G. I. FORUM OF THE U. S.*Veterans Family Organization*

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OFFICE OF THE NATIONAL CHAIRMAN

Memorandum No. 5

OCTOBER 1956

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COMMITTEE TAKES ACTION ON GI FORUM COMPLAINT OF DISCRIMINATION

In memorandum #4 from this office, the matter of discrimination of Spanish speaking by the railroad industry and the Brotherhood of Railroad Firemen and Enginemen was pointed out. The memorandum recommended action to be taken in order to bring the matter before the proper authorities. The response to the request from this office to act was certainly gratifying. Resolutions against the discriminatory practices were passed by GI Forum groups and other organizations from New York on the Atlantic to California on the Pacific shore.

On September 4, 1956, this office requested the President's Committee on Government Contracts to investigate the GI Forum's complaint of discrimination. On September 12 the Committee made its first move to look into the matter. The reply to our letter reads as follows:

"The Committee is anxious to extend its jurisdiction to railroads and other common carriers. As evidence of this, it should be noted that on September 12, 1956 the Committee instructed its staff to take such steps as may be necessary to get the contracting agencies to negotiate with the common carriers for the incorporation of the nondiscrimination clause in bills-of-lading, Government transportation requests and certain postal contracts. Currently the staff is arranging for certain preliminary talks with the various contracting agencies and it is hoped that shortly the Committee will be in a position to start processing complaints which involve railroads and other common carriers.

You will of course, be advised of all pertinent developments in our efforts to bring railroads within the jurisdiction of the Committee."

JOHN HAY WHITNEY SCHOLARSHIPS

Enclosed are copies of the announcements for application to receive John Hay Whitney scholarships. Look around your community and see if there are members or friends who may wish to apply. Give the local newspaper a copy.

WETBACK PROBLEM CONTINUES

Mr. Ed Idar, Jr., one of the foremost experts on the wetback problem and co-author of What Price Wetbacks writes to tell us of the sudden rise in the number of wetbacks coming in to do cheap labor. Recently an incident occurred in which some of the wetbacks being shipped by boat to Mexico became involved in a fight on board and as a result some of the wetbacks jumped overboard. The advocates of cheap labor and low wages immediately termed the boat a "slave ship" and called for a stop to the use of ships to transport wetbacks apprehended. Mexico yielded to the pressure and discontinued the use of ships to transport wetbacks.

"Now, however", says Idar, the grapevine has passed the word down in Mexico that "el barco ya no esta operando," and apprehensions are climbing fast--at a time of year which is an off season and there is little work to be done."

The GI Forum's policy has been well defined on the issue of wetbacks. We are opposed to the use of cheap wetback labor. Even a slave in olden times had more rights, privileges, and security than the wetback. We are opposed to an open border that invites subversives who may wish to infiltrate this nation. And most important, an open border allows the free flow of narcotics which are the source of many of the most serious crimes in the country.

Mr. Idar has kept up with this problem. I am therefore asking the leaders of the GI Forum to write to your Congressmen and your Senators in Washington and ask that the transportation of wetbacks by ship be resumed.

In doing this you will be carrying out a most important policy of the American GI Forum.

Vicente T. Ximenés
National Chairman