

8 PP (RACIAL) 5/5 SNEEL

COMPILED REPORT
January--September, 1945

The work of the Department of Race Relations was formally begun on January 12, 1945. Office space with telephone and part-time secretarial service is provided in the offices of the Portland Council of Churches, located in the Central Y.M.C.A. The activities are carried on through the Commission on Race Relations of the Portland Council of Churches, Dr. Lansing E. Kempton, Chairman, With the assistance of Dr. I. George Nace, the Commission was increased from 11 to 20 members and sub-committees on housing, employment, health and recreation, publicity and public relations were appointed. A statement of purpose was adopted by the chairmen of the sub-committees at a meeting on July 11th. A copy of the statement is attached.

The first several weeks of the department's operation were spent in orientation. Visits were made to defense housing projects, shipyards, churches, homes and clubs in the Portland-Vancouver area. Conferences were held with city and state officials, with labor representatives, and with persons engaged in professional or voluntary service in either direct or related fields of race relations.

THE COMMUNITY:

The Negro population of the Portland-Vancouver area in 1940 has been estimated at about 1,800. This population was distributed among 60 of 63 U.S. census districts with the major concentration in the lower Williams Avenue area. The Negro population during the war increased to an estimated 22,000. The majority of in-migrants came from Texas, Louisiana, Alabama, Missouri, Illinois, Oklahoma and Arkansas.

Most of the in-migrant Negroes, as well as those of other races, live in housing projects, Vanport being the largest. Other projects which are open to Negroes are: Guild's Lake, Linnton, Fairview, and East Vanport in Oregon; and in the state of Washington: McLoughlin Heights, Burton Homes, Ogden Meadows, and Hudson House.

The practice of segregating the Negro is followed closely in all of the projects. The Portland Housing Authority states that "while we do not discriminate, we do segregate". A Vancouver Housing Authority official stated that "because of the feeling among the white people against living where Negroes are indiscriminately housed, we had to segregate the whites to avoid trouble".

Realtors, following the National Board of Realtors' Code, have adopted a policy of restricting sales of real estate to Negroes to the Williams Avenue area. It is also a general policy among mortgage firms that only 50% of the appraised value of a Negro's home shall be financed. Thus, with inflated real estate prices, the Negro finds it more difficult to buy a home. Restrictive covenants are in effect in some areas against Negroes, Chinese, Japanese, Indians and Filipinos. No such covenants have been found to exist against Jews.

Prior to the war, Negroes were principally employed as hotel and train waiters and porters with a few in other unskilled positions. Other minority groups, such as Japanese-Americans, Chinese and Jews, did not constitute a noticeable source of labor supply since a great majority of these people were engaged either in agriculture or some form of business. The degree of integration of minority groups into the life of the community varies. It is safe to say that there was far less evidence of integration of the Negro than any of the others in the pre-war period.

Many of the Negroes employed in war industries were in unskilled jobs in the ship-building industry. Many among them have skills in other fields or industries. The majority of Negro shipyard workers were assigned to the "graveyard" shift (night)

which was the first to be discontinued after the end of the war. This meant a sudden release of Negroes. Many were re-employed in vacancies on other shifts or transferred to other yards where there were openings. There is no direct evidence of discrimination on the part of the war industries in releasing workers. The attitudes of a great many labor unions constitute a problem in the matter of Negro employment. Four methods of dealing with Negroes are evident: (1) to exclude Negroes entirely; (2) to admit Negroes through auxiliaries; (3) to issue temporary work permits; and (4) to admit Negroes to full membership. Some young Japanese-American people have also experienced difficulty in securing union membership. Very little is being done within the unions, both C.I.O. and A.F. of L., towards bettering racial understanding. Some union officials are opposed to F.E.P.C. legislation. With the shutdown of war plants, most unions have suspended issuing new memberships until their present members have all been placed in jobs.

Service jobs, other than those mentioned above, have not been opened to Negroes in the past; and there is little progress in opening new opportunities. One department store employing Negro elevator operators recently dismissed these workers and hired white girls. There was no dissatisfaction with the service of the Negro girls. The general attitude of the employer, where union membership is not in question, is that the white employees will refuse to work with Negro help.

The United States Employment Service reports that often the Negroes sent to jobs where the employer has not stated a preference are not accepted. Because of the inadequate staff, according to USES, they are unable to do the educational job in the field that is necessary to sell the idea of using Negro workers. The Portland Urban League, assisted by other groups, is undertaking to do a job in this respect; and the League is also cooperating with USES in screening applicants. It seems that some employers are determined to carry out a plan that was quite evident earlier this year; namely, to encourage in-migrant Negroes to leave because of inability to find jobs.

There is no discrimination in the public schools. Students from minority groups are enrolled in practically every school in the area, and are given opportunity to participate fully in all curricular and extra-curricular activities. Two Negro teachers were recently hired by the Portland Public Schools and assigned to Elliot School in the Albina district. This district is composed of about 60% Negroes. Parent-Teacher Associations are likewise open to all people. Most Colleges and Universities accept Negro and other minority group students without discrimination. A few have some housing restrictions.

Most of the Portland hospitals follow a non-discriminatory policy. The Vanport Hospital, which is subsidized by Federal funds, does segregate. There is discrimination in nurses training offered by local hospitals. The one hospital that is known to be willing to accept Negro trainee nurses requires that there be at least two at the same time. The reason given is that the trainees are housed in pairs, and it is not the policy to room Negroes and whites together.

The churches are generally willing to admit any person irrespective of race. There are about six local churches with multi-racial membership. There is one inter-racial church in one of the housing projects and one in Vancouver. There are four local Negro churches pastored by well-trained clergy. Two of the Negro churches have white members.

With the exception of one theater, no discrimination is practiced. The one theater is located on the fringe of the largest Negro neighborhood and follows a policy of requiring Negroes to sit in the balcony. A few of the higher class restaurants and

cafes refuse service to Negroes, while a much higher percentage of the smaller restaurants and cafes refuse service. Many of the smaller places display "We cater to white trade only" signs. Only one hotel will admit Negro guest without restriction. One other hotel will accept noted Negro guests but will restrict the privileges of these guests. No service is rendered Negroes by the rest of the hotels.

There are no Negroes on the regular police force. Two Negroes are employed as special officers with authority to carry firearms and make arrests. According to the Chief of Police, no special training or instruction is given the Portland police on minority groups as many of our major cities offer. The police department recently requested 100 additional police officers. We are seeking a qualified Negro to make application.

Both city and state officials are apparently satisfied with inter-group relations and state that there is no reason for concern. Neither the governor nor the mayors of Portland and Vancouver, Washington, see the necessity for an official inter-racial committee.

This is a general picture covering some of the major aspects of the situation that faces us in the field of race relations. There is a growing tenseness and restlessness due to the concern of displaced workers over jobs and housing. No definite plans have been made to ease the Negro housing situation either by the local government or private business. Practically no headway has been made by any group, government, civic, or church in breaking down the barrier to Negro employment in private industry. With the expiration of periods in which workmen's compensation is paid, there will, without doubt, be a marked increase in tension between racial groups.

ORGANIZATIONS:

At the time this department began operations, there were two organizations other than government bureaus, with workers active in the field of interracial or intercultural relations. These organizations were the National Conference of Christians and Jews and the Baptist Convention. There were several other organizations interested but active only to the extent that the voluntary service of their members permitted. Special committees active in the field of race relations were: The Interracial Committee of Portland, Father Thomas J. Tobin, President, (not The Committee on Principles and Practices, Inc.); The Vancouver Interracial Committee, Rev. George P. Helliwell, President (now the Civic Unity League); the Urban League Committee and Public Affairs of the Y.W.C.A. The Vanport interracial committee had become inactive and was revived by this department with the able assistance of Rev. Ennis M. Whaley, Vanport, now chairman of the committee. A partial list of agencies and organizations representing labor, church, civic, social and government groups with programs related to racial relations is attached. The work of completing the list continues. There are several small church and civic groups taking part to some extent in improving race relations. The only new agency that has been set up with a paid worker since our work began has been the Urban League.

The Council of Social Agencies is undertaking the organization of a citywide committee on interracial affairs. A planning committee of 20 has been appointed to work out a plan of organization with a statement of purpose. The interracial Clinic recommended an implementing committee to give impetus to this movement. (reported below.)

ACTIVITIES:

The Director of this department has conducted forums, discussions and given addresses in Portland and in several cities and towns in Oregon and Washington. The list includes: 15 regular church services, 20 youth groups, 3 summer youth conferences, 5 college group forums (Willamette University, Salem; Pacific University, Forest Grove; Linfield, McMinnville; Lewis & Clark, Portland; Oregon University Extensions, Portland), 22 independent groups, 24 church affiliated groups and 1 radio program.

Support was given to the civil rights bill before the 1945 state legislature. We have been very active in our support and in rallying the support of individuals and other organizations to the federal legislation of a permanent Fair Employment Practices Committee.

An interracial youth choir was organized under our auspices with the generous assistance of Miss Isabelle Gates of the Baptist Convention. This group is composed of Japanese-American, Caucasian and Negro young people of high school age. We are seeking persons of other groups who will be interested in becoming members. The Portland Youth Council recently agreed to assume sponsorship of the choir, thus making it a definite part of the youth's program in the community.

In a conference with Dr. Spalding, Superintendent of Portland Public Schools, early last Spring, we were informed that plans were already under way for the employment of at least two Negro teachers for this school year. Two Negro teachers have been hired. We commended Dr. Spalding and assured him that he had the support of this department.

Through the initial efforts of this department, Dr. Howard Thurman, Co-pastor, Fellowship Church or All Peoples, was presented in two lectures during May. Evening programs were held at the First Christian Church, Portland, and at Lewis and Clark College. The Congregational Conference of Oregon, The Fellowship of Reconciliation, The Portland Christian Youth Council, and students of Lewis and Clark College were co-sponsors. More than 500 persons attended the two lectures. The Interracial Youth Choir took part in the program at Lewis & Clark College.

The Citizens' Progressive Council was organized under the supervision of this department. This group consists of about 12 young men (Negroes) who wanted to do some work among the Negro people along the line of property improvement, encouraging better citizenship, and supporting movements to improve race relations.

During the summer, a "courtesy campaign" was inaugurated under the joint sponsorship of this group and the Portland Council of Churches. Copies of the pledge are attached. Lapel buttons were purchased and distributed among those who pledged courteous treatment of others. The program was launched with Mayor Earl Riley of Portland publicly accepting the first button. More than 1,200 persons to date have signed the pledge. Requests for information concerning the project have come from other west coast cities and states.

During the summer months this department took part in the programs of several camps. We, also, secured two Negro campers for the Regional Youth Conference at Lake Tahoe, Nevada, raised, in one case, funds necessary for sending the delegate. **Negro campers were solicited for church camps in the state.**

Following the example of Rev. Ritchie Low in Vermont, we conducted a "Get - Acquainted Week" with Negro children of Portland and members of the Friends'

Society of Newberg, Oregon, participating. Twelve Negroes spent the week in Newberg with white families. Pictures of the group are on file in our office.

A one day interracial clinic was held on September 20th, with Dr. George E. Haynes, Executive Secretary, Department of Race Relations, Federal Council of Churches, in the role of director. The clinic was sponsored by our department with 11 other organizations joining as co-sponsors. Case reports were heard on housing, employment, recreation and health, and community resources, with group discussions at the end of each report. At the final evening session, a summary committee compiled the several recommendations growing out of the discussions and presented them to the entire body for approval. The recently published City Club report on "The Negro in Portland" and supplementing surveys conducted under our direction furnished the material for the case reports. About 125 delegates attended the sessions. Copies of the reports and findings may be had by writing the Department of Race Relations, Portland Council of Churches, 308 Y.M.C.A. Building, Portland, 4.

Our office has supplied many groups with materials and data on minority groups. The calls for such service are steadily increasing. The Director has written articles for publication in several local church publications and bulletins.

While this department is not primarily engaged in job-placement, we were able to find openings for four young Negroes. In one case, it required breaking down racial barriers. The employer in this case reports that the young Negro woman is one of the most efficient workers on his staff.

This department is represented through its Director on the following boards or committees: The Committee on Principles and Practices; Board of Directors, Civic Action, Inc.; Portland Housing and Planning Association; Board of Directors, International House; Vanport Interracial Committee.

Both local daily newspapers have given good publicity to our program, and both have demonstrated an active and sincere interest in our efforts to develop mutual understanding and good will among our racial constituents.

PROPOSED PROJECTS;

We are charged under the findings of the interracial clinic:

1. To organize an implementing committee to assist in forming a citywide committee on race relations,
2. To bring increased pressure for the passage of federal legislation for a permanent F.E.P.C.
3. To continue working on our educational program designed to ultimately integrate minority groups into community life, including the areas of employment, housing, recreation and health and religious activities.
4. To develop among Negro people a desire to seek training in specialized fields so that they will qualify for jobs in higher brackets, and to assist in providing the facilities for such training.
5. To work for elimination of discrimination against Negroes and other minority groups by some labor unions.

In addition to the above responsibilities, we propose:

To broaden the scope of the Commission on Race Relations' effectiveness through the development of affiliated group memberships throughout the state.

To develop an "Open Door" project where misunderstandings among racial groups may be mediated.

To organize and perpetuate a special annual project that will become one of the outstanding yearly events of the community.

To develop programs that will create an active interest in civic affairs on the part of all groups.

George L. Thomas
Director, Department of Race Relations
Portland Council of Churches
307 Y.M.C.A. Bldg.
Portland, 4, Oregon

COMMUNITY RESOURCES

There are established in Portland several organizations with programs having to do with certain phases of racial relations. While each of these groups has a constructive program in a limited field, there is need for coordination and overall direction of these several efforts. It is felt that this could be accomplished through the establishment of a city-wide committee made up of recognized civic leaders.

ORGANIZATIONS CONCERNED WITH HUMAN RELATIONS PROBLEMS

American Civil Liberties Union: Gus Solomon, Attorney
National Association for the Advancement of Colored People: Rev. J. James Clow, Chairman
Urban League: Edwin C. Berry, Executive Secretary
Portland Council of Churches; Commission on Race Relations: Dr. Lansing E. Kempton, Chairman; and George L. Thomas, Director
Interracial Commission, Inc.: Father Thomas J. Tobin, Chairman
National Conference of Christians and Jews: Mrs. Betty Britton Sale, Executive Secretary
Anti-Defamation League: David Robinson, Director
Council of Social Agencies: Elizabeth Goddard, Executive Secretary
Y.W.C.A.: Miss Gertrude Eakin, General Secretary
Y.M.C.A.: Clair Johnson, Metropolitan Program Secretary
Federated Jewish Societies: Mrs. Issac Swett
Neighborhood House
Multnomah County Council of Parents and Teachers
Oregon Mental Hygiene Society
Oregon Baptist State Convention: Miss Isabelle Gates, Christian Friendliness Director
Social Action Committee of the Congregational Conference of Oregon: Dr. Cyril K. Gloyn, Director
Civil Rights Committee, Oregon Conference, Methodist Church: Dr. Ray S. Dunn, Chairman
Program in Education of the Methodist Church: Miss Pearl Sherlock, Director of Christian Education
Social Education and Action Committee of Portland Presbyterial: Mrs. William H. Gonne, Chairman
Committee on Social Education and Action of Portland Presbytery: Dr. John M. Paxton, Chairman
Fellowship of Reconciliation: Miss Mabel Downs, Secretary
International House: Rev. Donald Baldwin, Chairman of the Board
Portland Christian Youth Council: Franklyn W. Scott, President
Methodist Federation for Social Service
Vanport Interracial Committee: Rev. Ennis Whaley, Chairman
American Council on Race Relations: Laurence E. Hewes, Jr., Regional Director, San Francisco
C. I. O.: Stanley Earl, State Director (program of CIO National Committee to Abolish Racial Discrimination through his office)
A. F. of L.: Miss May Darling, State Educational Director

RECEIVED
JAN 10 1944

Government Agencies:

Portland Housing Authority: Project Services Advisor, Mr. Ralph Carman
War Manpower Commission: Tom Sheridan, Minority Problems Advisor,
Portland
Fair Employment Practices Committee: Bernard Ross, San Francisco
War Relocation Authority: Mr. C. W. Linville, Director

City Club of Portland

Multnomah County Bar Association Committee on Civil Rights for Japanese-
Americans: Mr. Vern Dusenberry, Chairman
Committee to Aid Relocation: Dr. Blair Stewart, Chairman
League of Women Voters: Mrs. Henry L. Corbett
A. A. U. W. Race Relations Group:
Vancouver Civic Unity League: Rev. Helliwell, Chairman
Portland Police Department **

** There are no Negroes employed as policemen in Portland, though a few Negro special police of the veterans guard and patrol are used in Negro districts. Chief Niles stated Negroes are eligible for police duty on the same basis as whites, and may take civil service examinations for police force positions. Recently made public has been a request for one hundred new policemen.