

LAKE STREET COMMUNITY SERVICE SUSPENDS ACTIVITIES

By Geo. H. W. Bullock, Director.

On account of the lack of sufficient funds with which to operate, the board of directors of the Lake Street Community Service met Thursday evening, July 8th, and voted to close the work. For some time this organization has been operating in our city. It was financed entirely by its New York headquarters up until February 1 and until June 1 that office furnished two nationally paid workers something not done for any similar work in the entire country. For nowhere has national headquarters given two workers four months after it withdrew its general support. This was done in the hope that at least the colored people of Omaha would raise their own budget and keep the work going in their own interest. The New York office had assurance from the old War Camp Committee, headed by Mr. S. S. Caldwell, that this would be done and it was upon the strength of this assurance that it lent two of its workers to the colored and about five to the white people. This Committee made up a budget for the white and colored workers amounting to \$23,240 for the operation of the works for one year beginning February 1, \$8,240 of which was to be devoted to the colored department. Plans were made for the raising of this money and the colored people were told not to make any attempt to raise any part of their quota until the whites had raised theirs, "so that," as the chairman put it, "the white people could thoroughly convince the colored people of their genuine interest in them by doing their part." In the meantime the colored directors began forming their committee, but took no definite action toward the raising of money, until May 1, at which time they were informed by Mr. Caldwell that the money which was being raised by them was not to be devoted to the colored Community Service at all, but to the support of a labor bureau which was to be operated by the colored Commercial Club. By this date there had been debts already accumulated to the amount of \$871.69, not including furniture. Many of these bills were far past due when the colored committee took over the work and the creditors pressed them immediately upon this committee to settle at the risk of serious embarrassment. All of these have been paid at the date of this writing except \$80 in addition to their current obligations. When the committee was informed that the colored work was to receive none of the money then being raised by the white committee they were very much at a loss as to what to do, knowing how difficult it would be to get money from people to pay debts for which they were not responsible. They knew that they had to face the difficulty of persuading people to subscribe to the support of a work whose program was entirely new and with whose policy the people generally were so little conversant. However, they shouldered the task and have carried it on thus far. In next week's issue of this paper we shall publish the financial report in full. We trust that every colored person who has been at all interested in this work will get a copy of this paper in order that you may see exactly how the money we have raised has been spent.

I feel it my imperative duty as director to say a few words in defence of this organization because I feel a more or less personal responsibility for its conduct. Within the last few days there have come to me some criticisms concerning the conduct by the children in the halls. One person complained that the organization had not done anything worth while. All of these criticisms have come since the work has closed. First let us see whether we did our duty in giving to the closed organization those things which were needed to keep it open and whether we put our finger to the wheel to help it to accomplish those things which we say it ought to have done and did not do. If you have a horse and don't feed him, it would be foolish to blame him for not doing the work required. The same rule works in Community Service. We have published time and again our program which we contemplated and have made personal appeals to you for your support in order that we might carry it out. Our records do not show where a single one of these four critics has given one penny to the support of the work. We find also that only one of them has ever visited the Community Service except in connection with some club to which they belonged, which club or organization used the community halls for which its pays a monthly expense of over \$500, without cost at all to the club. Some of them have children for whom we have provided recreation to the best of our means. We confess our shortcomings. We have done our best with the means given us. We hardly believe our critics would have done more

under the same circumstances. But we are not able to very deeply impress ourselves with the criticisms which have come to us when our records show the critics have neither morally nor financially supported us. "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her." He that is among you who feels that he has done his full duty to ameliorate the condition of which he complains, let him first cast a stone at the work. We have tried to do our duty by our city and people. Have you done yours? Let us not forget that all of these children that come to our care are not members of the most cultured families, but are nevertheless your children and must be served. Community Service would be deprived of its usefulness if it attempted to discriminate. We came here to render service to those who need our services. But all of these children are a part of our community and race and we as workers have drawn as much help as we could from an entirely disinterested source to aid you in doing a work for yourselves which has no substitute in Omaha. If we are so far in advance of almost every city, town and hamlet in this country that we don't need this service, then we are justified in closing.

IT HAS WELL SERVED THE PEOPLE
Since March 10th, the date of the present directors' administration, these two humble rooms alone have

served 9,478 boys and girls, men and women in some way. If these had been different persons on every occasion, we would have served the entire colored population of Omaha. During the four months 24 different clubs and organizations have had the use of these rooms absolutely free of any charge. These organizations represent over 5,000 colored people. Our records show that only three of those clubs have subscribed to its support. These subscriptions total \$129. Thus far we have received subscriptions from 57 persons and organizations together amounting to about \$1,300. This includes all efforts such as tag days and sales. Of this amount we have received from all sources \$1,130.77. In a later statement we shall publish our records. We fail therefore to see the reason for the close of this service. We know it can be run by the colored people themselves, if they go about it in a business-like way. We believe the people of this city will eventually reopen the work. We feel keenly the mistake that we have made in allowing it to close. But if it is to be closed, fellow citizens, for heaven's sake let us not go about excusing our mistake by hurling criticisms at a work whose shortcomings are the direct result of our negligence. The best that we can say is we had a glorious opportunity with national help to do a great work, an opportunity which will never come to us

again, and we failed to measure up to it. Let it rest in its grave at that. We wish to thank those who have co-operated with us in doing your own work and for the encouragement you have given us by your warm friendship while in your midst. The director will be in your city for some time and will be very glad to do whatever he can to help you. Call upon him at 2723 Miami street. Webster 2677.

Talking "To" and "With."
To talk to a person is to address words to him; to talk with a person is to speak and listen alternately—to carry on a conversation; to talk of or about a person is to say things concerning him; to talk at a person is to address words to another or others for the purpose of having them heard by the one for whom they are meant.

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