

THE MONITOR

A WEEKLY NEWSPAPER DEVOTED PRIMARILY TO THE INTERESTS OF COLORED AMERICANS

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We, as publishers, MUST comply with the law or pay the penalty.

NO JIM CROWING, PLEASE

It has been reported to us that the new Orpheum theatre has magnanimously set apart a separate section for colored people.

We would respectfully call the attention of the management of the Orpheum theatre to the fact that this solicitude upon their part for the accommodation of their colored patrons is entirely unnecessary. Not only is it unnecessary, but it is UNLAWFUL. It is in direct violation of Nebraska's Civil Rights Bill which expressly provides that "all persons within this state shall be entitled to a full and equal enjoyment of the accommodations, advantages, facilities and privileges of . . . THEATRES and other places of amusement; subject only to the conditions and limitations established by law and applicable alike to every person." Furthermore, this statute provides a penalty for violation of this law.

It must be apparent to all that if theatres and places of amusement can provide separate places for colored people, "public conveyances," and other places of public accommodation, named in this statute, can do the same thing. This principle, once submitted to, how long will it be before the advent of jim crow cars, and other like abominations?

Our advice to the management of the Orpheum and any other theatres that are trying to introduce and maintain jim crow provisions for the humiliation and embarrassment of respectable and law-abiding colored citizens, is to abandon such efforts and cease violating the law of Nebraska, and to treat all patrons as the law provides. There will be no trouble or loss of patronage. This policy will avoid trouble, while that of segregating or attempting to segregate will invite and provoke trouble.

Our advice to our own people who are theatre patrons is this: Do not submit to any policy of segregation. Do not accept the principle of a "separate place for colored people." Always be well-behaved, conducting yourselves as people of good breeding and training should. Do not permit yourselves to be betrayed into losing your temper or to becoming loud and boisterous. If you are refused the "equal privileges clearly contemplated in the Civil Rights statute, bring suit. In your suit you will have the backing of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, of the Citizens' Committee and like organizations.

This jim crowing evil is going too far and now is the time to check it. If Nebraska's Civil Rights Bill is a mere scrap of paper, the sooner that fact is known, the better. If it be the law of this state, as we contend it is, then those who violate it should be made to pay the penalty.

It may be well to point out that it has been held, we believe invalidly, that this law applies only to citizens of this state. Be sure then that you are a citizen of this state, if it

becomes necessary at any time to bring suit. Play safe. Let there be no loophole or technicality which may weaken your case.

We hope the theatre managers of this city will not make it necessary for any of our citizens to resort to law. We believe that every effort should be made to promote amity and good will among all our citizens with all co-operating in making Omaha a well governed, liberal minded, progressive going city, of which all can be justly proud. There should be no backward or reactionary move, such as the policy we oppose is, in pleasant race relations. We hope that theatre managers will recognize the wisdom of this.

If, however, we are forced to go to the courts for the protection of our civil rights there must be no hesitancy in doing it. Self-respecting colored people, knowing their rights, cannot be expected to tamely submit to embarrassment, humiliation, discrimination and violation of those rights without lawful protest. They who will not contend for their rights are not worthy of them and will eventually lose them.

Negro citizens of Omaha have too much self-respect and manhood to tamely submit to jim crowing which is in direct violation of the laws of Nebraska.

RACES Jim Crow, Jr.

TIME, a widely circulated weekly news magazine in its issue of October 10, contains the following suggestive and thought compelling article on the recent Gary school case, in which a pusillanimous school board and city council supinely surrendered to the demands of striking school children who insisted that Negro children be excluded from the Emerson public school.—The Editor.

Youth is brave, but youth is cruel.

Last week, two dozen young Negroes of Gary, Indiana, were mortified by 1,357 young whites of Gary, probably more painfully than any adult Negro ever lynched by rabid adult whites.

The thing began when the pupils of Emerson High school returned to their classes and found the 24 Negroes enrolled in their midst. Emerson High school is in the "nice" residential section of Gary. It has never before had more than four or five Negro pupils. But during the summer, Gary's school districts were redefined. Because they lived where they did, the 24 Negroes were entitled by law to attend Emerson High school.

Law or no law, the Emerson pupils whispered, gestured, glowered at the dusky newcomers. They told their parents, who protested to Supt. William A. Wirt and Principal A. E. Spaulding, who said nothing could be done. "Segregation is impossible because of economic reasons," said Mr. Wirt as tactfully as possible.

Winfield Eschelman of the Emerson senior class, glib talker, good swimmer, got together with Jack Keener, sleek cheerleader, and Sam Chase, smart debater, and some of the athletically "big men" of Emerson, to talk things over. Result: on Monday morning, instead of attending classes, some 800 Emersonians in floppy trousers, sporty sweaters, trim skirts and fetching blouses, went shouting and laughing through Gary's business section. Police disbanded them for "obstructing traffic" but many of them later stood around outside Emerson High school, hissing, gibing, cat-calling at non-striking students when school let out. Policemen saw to it that the 24 Negroes went home unmolested.

Next day the "nice" residential part of Gary was littered and scrawled with placards and signs: "WE WON'T GO BACK UNTIL EMERSON IS WHITE. . . . NO NIGGERS FOR EMERSON. . . . EMERSON IS A WHITE MAN'S SCHOOL," etc.

The strikers' ranks swelled to 900 that day. Then, emboldened by their elders' actions or kept at home by nervous parents, Emerson's seventh and eighth grades walked out, making a total of 1,357 strikers. Police broke up attempted Negro mass meetings. The school authorities threatened the strikers in vain.

Led by talkative Winfield Eschelman, the strikers formulated their demands at a mass meeting which the school officials attended: 1. Let all Negroes be segregated in corners of Emerson classrooms and in the school cafeteria. 2. Let no disciplinary reprisals be made upon the strikers when they should return. 3. Let the strikers not have to "make up" school work missed during the strike. 4. Let the Emerson Negroes be transferred to other schools as soon as possible. 5. Let an all-Negro high school be built in Gary as soon as possible.

The school authorities were helpless. President Ralph Snyder of the Board of Safety, representing Mayor Floyd E. Williams, arbitrated the situation and the strikers won all their demands. Magnanimous, Winfield Eschelman and friends permitted three Negro seniors to finish out the year at Emerson because they had been there all along, but the rest were transferred temporarily to an all-Negro junior high school elsewhere in town. The strikers returned to school.

The issue then shifted to the City Council, a special sitting of which was called to hurry through a \$15,000 temporary all-Negro high school. The

galleries were packed with "race people" who came to hear their viewpoint at last expressed without hindrance, by three Negro Councilmen. The Council has 15 members, and in the absence of three white members, the three Negroes were sufficient to block the passage of the \$15,000 temporary appropriation, which required a two-thirds council vote.

Negro Alderman A. B. Whitlock did not insinuate that Ku Klux Klanism lay behind the Emerson strike. Instead, he firmly said: "This appropriation is a useless expenditure of the taxpayers' money. We have plenty of room now for all the school children of Gary. This money would not equip a shack, and the site you propose is in a wilderness. There are no streets, no sewers, no facilities there at all."

White Alderman Merritt Martindale, senior Councilman, interrupted Mr. Whitlock. "Now, Bill," he said. "I hope you are not going to take a wrong view of us whites. The difference is there and it does no good to try to hide it."

"My people are taxpayers," protested Colored Alderman William Burrus. "They have a right to as good an education as anyone. You are setting an awful example by yielding to these striking students. "These young people are taking the law into their own hands."

The whites promised that a \$60,000 permanent high school would be built for Negroes as soon as possible. A Negro replied: "Even if you offered us a million-dollar school we would not take it. We're fighting for the principle of the thing."

Numbers won. When the three absent white members were obtained for another council meeting, the two-thirds vote went through. Gary is to have \$15,000 temporary quarters for the Emerson High Negroes. More suitable, permanent all-Negro quarters will probably be furnished in time.

Pondering this outcome, students of U. S. race problems reflected that 95 per cent of all U. S. Negroes are descended from slave stock, some of which has been in the U. S. even longer than genuine Mayflower stock. They also reflected that, whereas U. S. Negroes form 14 per cent of Gary's population, U. S. whites form 36 per cent, foreign born whites form 50 per cent. Thus a large majority of Winfield Eschelman and friends were—if representative of Gary's population—descended 14 per cent from Slavs, 10 per cent from Poles, four per cent from Hungarians, three per cent from Austrians, three per cent from Croats, three per cent from Italians, two per cent from Germans, one per cent from Greeks, one per cent from Mexicans, eight per cent from miscellaneous white races, one per cent from races of other colors.—Time, October 10, 1927.

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