

### PROBLEMS IN PACKING HOUSE NEIGHBORHOOD

Paper Read by Mrs. M. L. Rhone Before Nebraska Conference of Social Workers.

The problems that we are attempting to outline in this brief discussion are not new. Probably every one engaged in social work knows that the vast differences in the home conditions of the packing house neighborhood require various methods of approach in dealing with the problems. The point of view of this paper is largely that of a brief review of a few of these problems.

Close your eyes for a few moments! Imagine a neighborhood in which there are (quoting from Headworker's 1928 annual report) "within one-half mile radius of the Social Settlement and its branch, the Negro Cultural Center, the following:

Four packing plants employing a minimum of 6,000 people, Union Stock Yards, second largest in the United States, small shops of various kinds, 30 soft-drink parlors and pool-rooms, one public school, three parochial schools, five white churches, eight Negro churches, one small ball park. No public playground or gymnasium, no adequate playground. One night school (financed by women's organization), one citizenship class at Armour's (for packing house foreigners), conducted by the Y. M. C. A., 31 foreign nationalities, 2,500 Negroes—now you have a picture of this neighborhood. The problems presented herewith, chiefly concern the 2,500 Negroes."

Compared with other groups in the community, it is interesting to note that the percentage of Negro workers in the four packing plants is as follows:

In Armour's, between 16 and 18 per cent of workers are Negroes.

In Swift's plant, 14 1/2 per cent of the workers are Negroes.

In Cudahy's plant, 21 per cent of the workers are Negroes.

In Dold's plant, 8 to 10 per cent of the workers are Negroes.

#### Homes

In most of these packing house homes, the father is a common laborer, and oftentimes the mother must necessarily work, in order to meet the family budget. When there is an older child, he stops school at the earliest age legally permissible, and begins his career as a wage earner; thereby contributing to his own and his family's support.

#### Rent

In many cases the income is inadequate to meet the high rent which the Negro family is forced to pay. Investigation shows that some of the families are paying first class rent for third class houses. His foreign (white) neighbor leaves a third class house, for which he paid third class rent. The Negro family moves into the same house, or similar kind of dwelling, and pays first or second class rent.

#### Sanitation

Sanitation is at a low ebb among the poorer Negro families. These people must live somewhere. Do we marvel at the existing unsanitary conditions, and yet know that the landlords willfully neglect to remedy conditions, causing some of the tenants, saying that certain sanitary houses are for rent, but not to Negroes?

Young people in the packing house neighborhood have their own problems. Like most communities, the girl's standard is higher than that of the boy, who is forced to become a wage earner, or who loses interest. In some cases the boys argue lack of opportunity for advancement, either during high school or after its completion, saying that there is no need to complete a high school course to become a packing house butcher. Perhaps this incident will bring the problem closer to us.

Two boys, James and John, were joshing each other last Monday evening during a checker game. Says John: "I'm going to leave Omaha." "What for?" asked James. "To become a school teacher," answered John. "I don't want to be a school teacher," said James. "Why?" asked John. "Well—you see, I'm going to stay in Omaha."

We find in some of these packing house homes a lack of income, lack of education, lack of physical and mental health, a lack of vision and a lack of hope. We are encouraged, however, by the number who are ambitious, who are seeking constructive leisure hours, and who are making more opportunities for themselves.

Few occupations other than that of common labor are open even to the skilled workers. Most of them, therefore, seek jobs in the packing houses, or become janitors, porters, maids, cooks, etc.

The Cultural Center attempts to meet some of these problems. The Center Branch of Social Settlement, is an organization for the practical

non-sectarian expression of Christianity. Its business is to aid in every way possible to the development of a fuller life among the Negroes; giving opportunities for a broader expression of the cultural values of the group.

The essence of the Center is that it belongs to the people, to serve them, not on special occasions, but on all occasions. Its program is elastic, and changes to meet the changing needs of the people.

Its organized activities include the making of toys, handcraft, art class, library, story-telling, group and table games, playground sports, sewing, dressmaking, cooking, folk-dancing, glee club, music, dramatics, scouting, Negro history, community gardens, improvement club, and parent-teacher association.

Through these activities is sought a wider range of interest, which shall develop creative imagination, initiative, the joy of self-expression, of group expression, and of new sympathies.

Better race relations have come mainly through the improvement club of the Settlement and Center. These clubs working together have secured more street lights, cleaner alleys, in summer conducted Home Improvement contests with prizes for excellence of home premises. These clubs met the board of education several times in an effort to improve conditions of the Westside school.

The courageously lived, simple lives, bring us who live and work in this packing house neighborhood, daily inspiration. It is only this personal daily contact with life—with the rough, and the smooth, that gives understanding of the basic realities of life.

When people of a neighborhood can acquire the habit of not only going to the Center for class, lecture, or music, but of strolling there during leisure hours to enjoy anew, the things that are familiar and dear. When they can do this, and then, come out to view the old familiar commonplaces of their lives in the glow of a new appreciation and understanding of values, then and only then are we solving some of the problems of a packing house neighborhood.

A poem by a colored girl in closing:

#### A PRAYER

Dear God,  
Since time immemorial  
There have been race prejudices;  
And since time immemorial  
We have heeded the dictates of ugly conventions;

And we, the Youth of the world,  
Have been in the background,  
And now  
We want to come forward  
And think for ourselves,  
And rule our own lives;  
And we feel  
That the happiness of the world  
Rests on the shoulders of Youth.  
It's up to us to sweep aside all race prejudices  
And to break down barriers everywhere

Between color, race and creed;  
And it's up to us to say,  
"There shall be no more war."  
Dear God,  
We believe this, our greatest fault  
Is race prejudice,  
For it holds more baseness and cruelty  
Than any other fault.  
In the wide world.

If we, the Turks, had not nursed it,  
There would have been no atrocities  
Which horrified the world.  
If we, the British, had not nursed it  
There would be  
No Indian situation.  
If we, the Americans, did not nurse  
the Negro problem,  
No book such as "The Martyred Race,"  
Could be the best seller in India today.

Dear God,  
Help us to overcome these, our faults.  
Help us to forget our international suspicions,  
Our animosities and hates,  
Help us, the Youth of the world,  
To bring all nations together in peace;  
Help us to meet the world as brothers;  
Help us to walk joyously in the open  
sunshine of world friendship.

#### CHINESE AND NEGRO WOMAN CANNOT WED

Danville, Va.—(By the Associated Negro Press)—L. W. Moon, a Chinese of Greensboro, N. C., is waiting to hear from the attorney-general of North Carolina, as to whether or not he can marry his fiancée—a full-blooded Negro woman—of the same place. The young woman accompanied Moon here, and the two were kept waiting for some time in the clerk's office while the law was debated and were finally told that they would have to await the attorney-general's replies to a letter asking for his construction of the law.

#### DR. DU BOIS SPEAKS AT ALLEN UNIVERSITY

Columbia, S. C.—(By the Associated Negro Press)—Dr. W. E. B. Du Bois, editor of The Crisis, and noted writer, addressed a large audience here Friday night in the chapel of Allen university. The audience was composed of students of the university and citizens of both races who listened with rapt attention to the discourse.

Selecting as his subjects, "Achievements of the Negro in the Literary Field," Dr. Du Bois reviewed the history of the Negro race in literature, singling out the outstanding accomplishments in this field of endeavor, emphasizing especially the work of Phyllis Wheatley, Paul Cuffee, William Nelson, Frederick Douglas, Chestnut, Paul Laurence Dunbar, Countee Cullen, and many others.

He urged the students to make a special study of literature and to develop their talents in this direction. "Publishers are anxious," said the speaker, "to use manuscripts from young Negro writers, now more than ever, and many of the young writers are making names for themselves. We want to live and interpret life. In doing so, we must realize the fact that we are not getting all out of life that we may but if we do our best we will serve well our race and country in preserving records that mean much to our history."

#### RETURNS FROM PAVING JOB IN BLACK HILLS

Mr. William H. Alexander, who has been with a paving gang in South Dakota, has returned to his Omaha habitat. The Spearfish Mail published the following item concerning this versatile and peripatetic—for he has been a veritable globe trotter—Omahan:

"During the process of paving Sixth street many people noticed a big black boy on the job. He was known as 'Bill.' After the paving job was finished he was employed to put the final polish on the new Chevrolet Garage. Now he states that he is on his way to Omaha, to the Black Broadway (North 24th street) where he can see a parade of African blondes and brunettes, roughed, marcelled, water-waved, bob-curl'd; and also hear Paul Whitman's orchestra at the Auditorium next Sunday night. 'Bill' was much impressed with the Hills. He said that if the Black Hills is the Switzerland of America, that Spearfish is Berne. In his 40 years of globe trotting he has never seen people more kind or polite. He is leaving with no regrets and hopes to be back in Spearfish next spring when Paving District No. 2 will have been arranged for."

#### HARLEM FETES AFRICAN MONARCH

New York City.—(By the Associated Negro Press)—King Amoah III, ruler of some 75,000,000 subjects in the African Gold Coast, Nigeria and Sierra Leone, who is visiting this country, is getting a concrete idea of just how Harlem entertains celebrities and notables. It has been just one round of luncheons, dinners and banquets ever since the African monarch arrived here.

While refusing to state his real mission to this country, the 63-year-old ruler did divulge that he was anxious to establish more amicable relations between his subjects and American Negroes and to interest promoters in the development of his country. The king is well educated and speaks with a distinct Oxford accent.

He is accompanied by a retinue of secretaries and expects one of his sons to join him at an early date. He has spent much time conferring with prominent citizens and business men here and will be one of the principal speakers at the mass meeting to be held December 10th, under the auspices of the Native African Union of America, Inc., at which such leaders as Dr. Raymond Leslie Buel, former Harvard professor, and Dean William Pickens, are scheduled to speak.

#### CIRCLE OF FRIENDS PRES. TOURS JURISDICTION

Chicago, Ill.—(By the Associated Negro Press)—More than 6,000 miles have been covered by Dr. R. A. Williams, supreme president and founder of the Royal Circle of Friends, and a party of the supreme officers of the order, who started out October 15th at Washington, D. C., on a tour of the order's jurisdiction to conduct state and district meetings. These meetings were largely attended and more than 500 Royal Friends were elevated to the universal degree.

The reports of officers show that in 19 years the organization has grown from a membership of 20 to 160,000 with assets of nearly one million dollars, and that during this

time it has paid out nearly three million dollars in sick and death claims, and charity.

#### GIRL JOURNALIST GAINS RECOGNITION

Long Beach, Cal.—(By the Associated Negro Press)—Revealing such exceptional talent and originality that she has attracted the attention of local literary critics, Miss Eleanor Washington of this city has been offered an opportunity to do some feature work on a local white daily. She is a graduate of Polytechnic High school, Los Angeles.

#### POST TROOPS AT ALABAMA PRISON

Mobile, Ala.—(Crusader News Service)—Three companies of the Alabama National Guard, stationed here, were on duty at the Mobile jail tonight as a precaution against possible mob attacks upon seven Negro workers who are accused of murdering a white insurance man. Local newspapers have been trying to work up mob spirit against the accused men.

#### BESS' LAWYERS EXPRESS HOPE

Columbia, S. C.—(By the Associated Negro Press)—The battery of lawyers, headed by Attorney N. J. Frederick, fighting for the freedom of Ben Bess, expressed the opinion that a favorable decision would be handed down by the South Carolina supreme court.

The case, which has attracted the attention of the entire country, was argued before the state supreme court on November 12th, and since that time the attorneys for Bess have been hopeful that their client would be freed.

Bess was convicted 13 years ago on a charge of committing rape and a few months ago through an affidavit of his alleged victim was set free, only to be reimprisoned when the white woman denied that she had declared him innocent. He has been in the state prison since that time, but there is a strong sentiment here that he is innocent of the crime for which he is serving time.

#### SOUTH AFRICAN MINISTER DENIES NEGRO CLAIMS

Cape Town, Africa.—(Crusader News Service)—Because his minister of posts and telegraph, M. Madoley, received a deputation from the South African Trades Union congress, General Hertzog, premier of South Africa, resigned in order to be able to reconstitute his cabinet. Madoley is leader of the national council of the labor party.

Madoley stated that he felt "bound out of recognition of the principle of collective bargaining, to consider the natives' claims." At the same time he took no definite action on these claims.

#### Notice by Publication on Petition for Settlement of Final Administration Account.

#### IN THE COUNTY COURT OF DOUGLAS COUNTY, NEB.

IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF JOHN Q. GREER, Deceased.

Persons interested in said matter are hereby notified that on the 15th day of November, 1928, Rufus C. Long filed a petition in said county court, praying that his final administration account filed herein be settled and allowed, and that he be discharged from his trust as administrator and that a hearing will be had on said petition before said Court on the 3rd day of December, 1928, and that if you fail to appear before said court on the said 3rd day of December, 1928, at 9 o'clock, A. M., and contest said petition, the court may grant the prayer of said petition, enter a decree of heirship, and make such other and further orders, allowances and decrees, as to this court may seem proper, to the end that all matters pertaining to said estate may be finally settled and determined.

BRYCE CRAWFORD,  
County Judge.

H. J. Pinkett, Attorney  
PROBATE NOTICE

IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF MILFORD HALL, Deceased.

Notice is hereby given: That the creditors of said deceased will meet the administrator of said estate, before me, county judge of Douglas county, Nebraska, at the county court room, in said county, on the 11th day of January, 1929, and on the 11th day of March, 1929, at 9 o'clock, A. M., each day, for the purpose of presenting their claims for examination, adjustment and allowance. Three months are allowed for the creditors to present their claims from the 8th day of December, 1928.

BRYCE CRAWFORD,  
4t-11-9-28 County Judge.

#### Musical Names Given Land and Sea Winds

The various winds which sweep land and sea, have, some of them at least, very musical names. The wind that blows so strongly at times along the coast of France and ruffles the blue waters of the Mediterranean is called the Mistral. Another violent, cold wind is the Bora, which those who have been much on the northern shores of the Adriatic have experienced, greatly to their discomfort. Then there is the Sirocco which is as scorchingly hot as the Mistral and Bora are cold. The Sirocco, in fact, is like a violent succession of gusts from a hot oven. It has proved a terrific enemy to travelers in the Sahara. The Sirocco is much the same kind of scorching wind. Romantic-sounding enough is the name Khamshin, but those who have encountered this hot, dry wind on the Egyptian plains do not have very pleasant memories of it. The Harmattan is similarly unpopular among the inhabitants of western Africa and those travelers who have been unfortunate enough to encounter this desert, dust-laden wind. Fohn is the name of another dry, hot wind, which has an enervating effect upon the valley dwellers on the northern side of the Alps. The name of the Pampero has a glamor about it which belies it in reality. This fearful combination of violent wind, rain, thunder, and lightning is only too familiar to the residents of the Argentine and Uruguay.

#### Drugs in Modern Use Familiar to Ancients

Thirty per cent of the drugs used by modern medicines were known in remote antiquity, reveals Dr. Charles Slinger in his book "A Short History of Medicine," published by the Oxford University Press.

The Egyptian medical papyrus mention, among other drugs, he writes, "Aloe, caraway, castor oil, coriander, dill, fennel, juniper, mint, myrrh, and turpentine. Among Egyptian mineral remedies still in use are salts of copper and lead. Assyrian medical tablets refer to most of the Egyptian drugs as well as to a number of others, among which are almond oil, aniseed, galbanum and licorice. Among Assyrian mineral remedies that are used by us to this day are alum and bitumen." Early Indian medicinal herbs are also still in use in scientific medicine, according to Doctor Slinger.

#### Wind and Fish

It is reported that a singular correspondence exists between the prevailing direction of the wind on the coast of New South Wales and the average catch of fish.

It appears that the winds which influence the ocean currents influence, in turn, the course of the fish. These influences have periods of three or four years. Thus, in 1919, there was a general scarcity of fish, but afterward they became more and more abundant up to the year 1922. In 1924, there was another scarcity of fish, but the next year they returned in increasing numbers.

The cause of these variations was regarded as a mystery until the coincidence with the prevailing direction of the coastal winds was noticed. Now, it is thought, by the study of the winds, the prospects of the fisherman may be predicted two or three years in advance.

#### Made Hurried Exit

A Podunk man who had been missing meat from his smokehouse for several weeks and suspected one of his neighbors, set a trap by killing an old family dog and dressing the carcass to resemble mutton. Sure enough, it was stolen at night, and the next day about breakfast time, dropping in on the suspects, he found them devouring the "sheep." Being invited to take "pot luck," he declined, saying he had just had breakfast, and then told them of the joke he had played on "somebody." The family listened without a smile and then suddenly they all bolted for the back door.—Pathfinder Magazine.

#### Paper From Corn

As early as 1765 a German, Jacob Schaeffer, called attention to Indian corn as a possible source of paper. The first American patent on paper to be made from corn was taken out in 1802 by B. Allison and J. Hawkins for a process of making paper out of corn husks. Twenty years ago the Department of Agriculture conducted extensive experiments on paper making with cornstalks and carried the work into actual mill operation.

#### Sound Effects

A lady motorist whose car had swerved across a street and crashed through a plateglass window was being questioned by the local police sergeant after the accident.

"Surely on such a wide street as this," said the interrogator, "you could have done something to prevent this accident?"

"I did," the delinquent assured him quite earnestly; "I screamed as loud as I could!"

#### Copies Red Cross Work

The American Blue Cross society is an organization to do for animals what the Red Cross does for humanity. A blue cross is the emblem. It was founded in Springfield, Mass. It promotes animal protection on a scientific as well as humane basis.

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