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MONTHLY BULLETIN NATIONAL URBAN LEAGUE

Southern Division -:- Atlanta, Ga.

Vol. 1

JULY, 1944

Number 8

PROGRESS

Reading time: 2 minutes

Housing is among the most difficult and complex problems confronting the American people. Significant progress has been made in establishing a more equitable and socially sound financial system in connection with home ownership. No longer is the home owner confronted with short term mortgages, bonuses before the renewal of these mortgages, second mortgages of high interest and frequently shorter terms than first mortgages. These and other practices made ownership frequently a nightmare for many. The F. H. A., with its arrangement of long term and insured mortgages and amortization has lent great impetus to home ownership and brought needed protection to buyers.

There are many thousands of people who because of income are unable to buy homes. Before the war, low-rent housing projects were being built and slowly meeting the demands of this class of families. For the higher income groups those capable of paying economic rent, progress was being made through limited dividend projects to meet their needs. The Negro has shared in this general advancement especially in relation to publicly financed low-rent housing, he has received just consideration. In the F. H. A. there are some problems still to be met for the Negro to fully profit by its procedures.

Since the war much of the housing plans have had to be deferred. Cities are now confronted during the period of the war with making their old and obsolete housing livable for the time being. New York City is now experimenting with an organization that is attempting to meet this latter need. The Urban Management Association of 202 W. 136th Street is an agency which is demonstrating competent management of old buildings in the interest of both the landlord and the tenant. Its program includes adequate repairing, proper rents, rehabilitation and the securing of tenant cooperation in management. Progress also includes institutes for real estate brokers for instruction with reference to management of properties of this class. The project is being well received both by organized philanthropy and financial institutions. Other cities interested in meeting this aspect of its housing problem could well afford to study this significant project.

INCREASING IMPORTANCE

Reading time: 2 minutes

The program of the Urban League movement will become increasingly important in American life. Certain trends in the general economy of the nation seem to suggest a gradual and inevitable increase in urban and village population. One of these is the agricultural situation. O. E. Baker, population specialist in the Department of Agriculture pointed out that 17% of the total population is living on American farms. Agricultural authorities state that about half the farms in the United States produce 90% of all marketing produce. Mr. Baker suggests that only between 6 and 10% of the American population will be permanently needed in commercial agriculture. If this estimate is correct migration of a certain class of Negro agricultural workers seems inevitable. This is bound to increase and complicate problems involving welfare, social and economic adjustments. This combined with a certain amount of dislocation brought about by industrial and military requirements will place an extra burden upon agencies like the Urban League movement. It may be well also to call attention to the need for more understanding of the economic and welfare status of Negroes in village life.

In another column there is an announcement of the appointment of Mr. William Y. Bell, Jr., as director of the Southern Field. Mr. Bell brings to his new responsibility the training and experience that inspires confidence that the work in the southern area will continue to expand. The task is a challenging one. The Urban League movement with its emphasis upon program for advancing the economic and welfare interests upon Negroes and the improvement upon race relations is not obviously dramatic. It is a prosaic and difficult job. Therefore, it is assuring to have one of Mr. Bell's intelligence, character, and imagination to assume responsibility for this work.

The local Urban Leagues are cooperating with the Business Study Project. Their activities are proving to be most helpful in the application of essential schedules. It marks another manifestation of the interest of the Urban League movement in cooperating for raising the economic status of Negro people. It is hoped that this Study will indicate additional potential opportunities for a closer relationship between Negro business, departments of business education and the Urban League movement.

"Not Alms, But Opportunity"

DO YOU KNOW

Reading time: 2 minutes

WILLIAM Y. BELL, JR. TO HEAD URBAN LEAGUE'S SOUTHERN FIELD

New York.—The National Urban League announced this week the appointment of William Y. Bell, Jr., as the League's Southern Field Director. Mr. Bell will take over his new duties at the Southern Field Headquarters, Atlanta, Georgia, on June 1. He comes to the position from the United Service Organizations (USO) where, for the past year, he served as Assistant Director of its work in the southeastern region. Previously he served as Executive Secretary of the Atlanta Urban League and of the Booker T. Washington Community Center in Hamilton, Ohio. Mr. Bell was an Urban League Fellow in 1937-1938, and studied at the University of Pittsburgh, during which time he received field work experience with the Pittsburgh Urban League.

In announcing the appointment the Executive Secretary, Mr. Granger stated that, "we feel that there should be not eight but eighty Urban Leagues in the South. There is where the bulk of Negroes live, and where race relations are most in need of strengthening. Mr. Bell will devote his talents to organizing for stronger interracial leadership and improving employment, housing and other social conditions among Negroes of the South."

USO AND THE NEGRO COMMUNITY

USO is one of the most significant factors in Southern Negro community life because of at least seven main contributions:

1. It has provided a building which is usually the first recreational and community center facility available to Negroes.
2. It has provided a director, usually the first professional Negro worker the community has had to be concerned with recreation and the social problems of servicemen and their families.
3. It has given Negro lay members of USO operating committees their first opportunity to participate in social agency and direction. It marks the first time many Negro groups have been accorded official status by local civic officials.
4. It has given club volunteers the chance to learn social graces, take part in wholesome recreation, and expand their knowledge through broader social contacts.
5. Through its staff and board members it has interpreted to civic officials the housing, health and other problems affecting servicemen, war workers and their families.
6. It has let white communities see that Negroes can supervise funds, manage buildings and administer an effective program by their own efforts. The comment "Negroes will only tear it up" is proved without foundation. It has also provided white persons with a chance

LOCAL URBAN LEAGUES

Reading time: 2 minutes

Franklin O. Nichols reports an interesting visit to the Urban Leagues of Louisville, Saint Louis and Memphis. At Saint Louis, he met with the board of directors and indicated that this was an inspiring experience. The Saint Louis affiliate has a budget approximating \$38,000.00 a year with a comprehensive program and a competent staff of some fifteen workers. Among its outstanding activities are its Industrial Relations Program and its community organization work. It has great influence on the development of welfare activities in that city.

The Louisville League under the direction of Secretary Black is meeting its community responsibility with vigor and imagination.

Memphis Urban League, after a difficult period is beginning to dissolve its difficulties and has appointed a new Executive Secretary, James McDaniel.

Mr. McDaniel is a graduate of Talladega College, has worked in the field of welfare in connection with FERA and WPA. He has had long experience in race relations and comes to the Memphis League from pastoring the Bethel Presbyterian Church in that city.

He will spend the first session of the summer school at Atlanta University in conferences with Ira Reid, Chairman of the Planning Committee, W. Y. Bell, Jr., Director of the Southern Field Work and Franklin O. Nichols as part of the orientation course to better enable him to meet his responsibility at Memphis.

The Baltimore Urban League reports that in that city organized labor showed a steady increase during 1943, as various plants secured contracts with the A. F. of L. and C. I. O. Unions. The League has been concerned with strengthening and encouraging race relations in the organized labor movement.

The Loumet Project for Negro war industrial workers in New Orleans is developing rapidly. Nearly five hundred Parochial and public school students took part in the contest for selecting a name for the Project. When the decision of the judges is rendered, the student presenting the name selected will be awarded a twenty-five dollar war bond. The New Orleans Urban League made the survey for the Project and conducted the contest.

to meet socially informed Negroes with whom they may deal on a plane of mutual respect.

7. Through Negro participation in USO Councils and professional staff conferences, USO demonstrates that interracial action for mutual welfare is possible and successful.

Contributions to the National Urban League are deductible for income tax purposes.