

January 31, 1915

## SOUTHERNER URGES EQUALITY FOR NEGRO

**Noted Educator Says Social Repression of Blacks Is a Growing Menace to Whites.**

### POINTS WAY TO REFORMS

**Dr. C. H. Brough, in Report of Race Problem Commission, Says Situation in South Is Perilous.**

LITTLE ROCK, Ark., Jan. 31.—Dr. Charles Hillman Brough, Professor of Economics and Sociology in the University of Arkansas, who is the Chairman of the University Commission on the Southern Race Question, the members of which are among the South's most distinguished educators, drawn from the Faculties of eleven of the leading universities and colleges of the South, has submitted his annual report to the commission. The report, which takes in the negro problem from all angles, is admittedly one of the most interesting yet submitted on that subject, and is of peculiar interest because of the high standing of Dr. Brough among Southern educators.

"In the Southern States," says Dr. Brough, "there are today no points of social contact whatever where the two races meet and exchange ideas. Separate schools, separate churches, separate telephones, the Jim Crow car, restrictions of ballot, not to mention violent anti-negro political agitation in at least two of the States, have produced an alienation of the two races without a parallel. Everywhere throughout the South, despite physical contact in a business way, the two peoples live and move in totally different worlds of thought and feeling."

The effect of this social isolation of the negroes, says Dr. Brough, is of the greatest importance to the white as well as the black man, and in a note of warning he adds that "the closing of the door of equality of opportunity to the negro and his persistent intellectual and moral pauperization must in the end react upon the civilization of the white."

"In my humble opinion," he continues, "it is better to admit the negro to all the stimulus and the inspiration of the white's social heritage, so far as it applies to economic equality of opportunity given through industrial education, in so far as it does not endanger the integrity of the social heritage itself, than to encourage an ignorant and debased citizenship by his neglect and repression. It is, of course, plain that every murder, or lynching, or cowardly terrorizing of a weaker race sets in motion subtle educational forces which react upon both groups. It furnishes 'social copy' for the rising generation of blacks, brutalizing and barbarizing their own souls and ultimately cheapening the whole tone of the



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civilization of the future.

"In a far deeper and more tragic sense, however, does the repressed and isolated negro become the Nemesis of the white. For by being a winning partner in a process of repression the white voluntarily surrounds himself with a group of 'lower economic efficiency, less exacting moral standards, unsanitary homes, and an outlook on human life devoid of the stimulus of hope and the goad of ambition. Lower the tone of the environment, and it becomes an easy matter to take a 'moral holiday,' without any 'moral insurance.' Murphy, in 'The Basis of Race Ascendancy,' puts this argument very strongly, when he says that 'to say that the stronger tends to become more brutal because the weak is brutal, or slovenly because the weak is slovenly, is to touch the process only on its surface. The deeper fact is not that of imitation nor yet that of contagion. It is that tragedy of recurrent accommodations of habitual self-adjustment to lower conceptions of life and to feeble notions of excellence, which is nothing less than education in its descending and contractive forms.'

"The South feels, however, that race integration and solidarity in a social

sense are absolutely necessary to promote the best interests of both races. While willing to concede equality of opportunity in an economic sense, she is unalterably opposed to the miscegenation of the races, and views with genuine alarm the increase in the number of mulattoes from 1,132,060, or 15.2 per cent., in 1893, to 2,050,686, or 20.9 per cent., in 1910. The fundamental incompatibilities of racial temperament and tradition which operate to make the great majority of actual unions between the two groups unhappy, and the fact that many of those who do enter upon these unions belong to the criminal or anti-social elements of both groups, would seem to indicate that the condemnation of such unions by the better elements of both races has a substantial basis."

Following a laudatory reference to the economic progress of the blacks of the South since the civil war, a progress that Dr. Brough describes as both commendable and rapid, the educational progress of the race is described as remarkable. Morally and religiously they have also made progress, says Dr. Brough, "yet in both these respects," he adds, "they are still lamentably weak."

"Criminal statistics," he says, "for the negro are not very reassuring. In 1890 the number of negro prisoners per 100,000 of the population was 325; in 1904, 277; in 1910, 378. There is a much higher rate of crime among the negroes in the North than in the South. This is to a large extent due to the fact that seven-tenths of the negroes of the North live in cities and are of an age when persons have the most tendency to crime. It is interesting, however, to find that the negro has a relatively lower percentage of crime than the immigrant races which are now coming to the United States. The commitments to prison in 1902 per 1,000 of certain nationalities were: Mexicans, 4.7; Italians, 4.4; Austrians, 3.6; French, 3.4; Canadians, 3; Russians, 2.8; Poles, 2.7; negroes, 2.7."

## The Preacher's Influence.

Much should and can be done, says Dr. Brough, in improving the character of the average negro preacher of the South. He refers to the great influence of these men over the negroes, and deplores the fact that the average black preacher is "selfish, avaricious, and ignorant to an unbearable degree."

"In practically every community."



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says Dr. Brough, "he is recognized as the leader of his race, so that his education and moral training are of vital importance in any plan looking to the betterment of the negroes.

"It is the duty," Dr. Brough continues, "as members of the more intelligent race to teach the negroes that health improvement is the best preparation for efficiency, that there is no iron law of mortality, that length of life increases wherever sanitary science and preventive medicine are applied, and that a sufficient amount of pure air, pure food, and pure water would add at once ten years to the average negro life, which is now about 35 years. It should be a matter of serious moment to the white people of the South as well as to the negroes that there are 450,000 negroes in the South seriously ill all the time, representing 18 days a year for each negro inhabitant, a loss in annual earnings of 112,000 negro workers of approximately \$45,000,000, and an annual cost of sickness for these negroes of \$75,000,000; that 225,000 negroes in the South die annually, representing funeral expenses of about \$15,000,000, when 45 per cent of these deaths are preventable; that 600,000 negroes of the present population will die from tuberculosis alone, 150,000 of whom could be saved by better sanitation and preventive medicine, and that the annual loss to the South in potential earnings because of preventable deaths among the negroes is conservatively estimated to be \$170,000,000, the average economic value of a negro's life being \$1,700.

"Practically the only cloud on the horizon of race adjustment is the problem of segregation. But time, wisdom and patience will solve this question. Social solidarity is inexorable. Segregation in the departments of public service, railway and street cars, and even in cities, may be exceedingly just, but the idea of farm segregation, as proposed by Clarence Poe, editor of *The Progressive Farmer*, in my humble opinion, proposed as a means of giving the white man a better chance in agricultural and industrial competition with the negro, seems a travesty upon Anglo-Saxon superiority and an injustice to the negro.

"I believe that the members of this commission, engaged in impartial, exhaustive research, can accomplish a lasting good for the members of both races. I believe that our highest duty is to rationalize the impulses of an inferior and alien race by impressing upon them the necessity of maintaining the racial integrity of both races, securing an industrial education, and attaining equality of economic opportunity."