

Washington's Colored Citizens

A careful survey of the state would show at least a ten thousand population, who enjoy all the public privileges as any other class or group of citizens. The same survey would likewise show 95 per cent of them living in some hamlet, burg or city, and dependent on the other fellow for their daily bread. Of the 5 per cent not living in some municipality, but in rural districts, not to exceed 1 per cent of the five are self-supporting, from a real farmer's viewpoint. Startling as it may be, of the ten thousand in the state not one in 1,000 is engaged in commercial pursuits; or in mining, manufacturing and milling on their own hooks, hard to admit, but absolutely true. In King County, where truck gardening is the most lucrative rural asset, not one of the four thousand of the county is raising anything to sell. In Seattle not one of the probable 3,500 is engaged in commercial pursuits, not even to a neighborhood grocery store. A hand to hand existence is therefore an undeniable summary of all of these notes, and the whole resolving itself into a state of dependent uncertainty, with demoralization as its chief cornerstone.

In condonement of this state of absolute dependentness, the limited number, in comparison to the whole population, is set up. It is further argued, being so widely separated both in the city and the country from each other, there is no group incentive and color prejudice makes independent activity impossible. Owing to previous condition these contentions are not wholly devoid of merit, but, if the front page's Past and Present is a true reflection of the actual situation, then the above arguments fall flat.

Numerically speaking the Japanese residents of this state are about the same as that of the Negro. The former are more or less despised and dreaded Orientals, living here by sufferance, while the latter are full fledged citizens with something of a white man's chance, hence has a three to one handicap over the former, but they woefully lag, both in the city and the country, in the first heat to say nothing of the home stretch. In the country the Japanese can neither own or rent farm lands and yet by subterfuge they are supplying Seattle and Tacoma with more than half of their products. In Seattle 75 per cent of the vendors at the market places are Japanese and more than one thousand places of business of all kinds and classes common to this country are controlled by the Japanese to say nothing of the grocery business as being almost monopolized by them. It is safe to say, if they were not working under a despised alien Oriental handicap the horticultural and the agricultural products of the Northwest and the Seattle retail business, including the public markets, would absolutely be under their thumbs and fingers.

The Japanese is respected by the white man because he is feared by him and he is feared by him because he is aggressive, which is due to him duplicating the white man's activities. The laboring Japanese does not en-

joy a hundredth part the kindly consideration by the white man as does the working colored man, but, on the other hand, the banking Japanese, the wholesale merchant Japanese, and the general business Japanese are fondled and feated by the white man because, for sooth, it pays to do so.

It takes money to make the mare run and when you are without the money your mare will not run, her color or complexion to the contrary notwithstanding. The theory of living in colonies in order to give some one a chance to go into business and be patronized by the group; and, likewise, the theory of racial prejudice will militate against one having choice articles for sale and a little bit cheaper than his competitor, is as foolish as it is falacious. The cheapest and the best are the watchwords of the buying public and little or no attention is paid to the color of the vendor. Multiplied thousands teem to the public markets each day and trade with the Japanese because they, for the most part, have better vegetables and always a bit cheaper.

Comparisons are always more or less odious and the above may not be appreciated by either, but the one herein brought out is backed by the records and it often happens that it is the truth which hurts.

If, therefore, the colored citizens would enjoy more local prosperity, become more firmly fixed in the affairs of Seattle in particular and the State of Washington in general and, finally, an integral part in the upbuilding of the City of Seattle, they must become better acquainted with the Seattle Spirit, which is constantly sweeping the whole city onward and upward to the goal of everlasting success. They must make jobs for themselves instead of hunt jobs for themselves. Good farmers, leaning on pluck instead of luck, can find the proper inducements near Seattle to enable them to accumulate sufficient money and means to live at ease when old age makes them unfit to longer provide their daily sustenance. There is far less strife in the rural districts between man and man than in the city, and traveling along the lines of least resistance should be the plan of those at the foot of the ladder, but who desire to go to the top. Idle minds are the devil's work shops and where persons find it difficult to get an opportunity to earn money honestly it is perfectly natural for them to take advantage of any opportunity to earn money dishonestly. While you may not do so, yet, it must be admitted, it is a temptation for many to do so.

Hear the conclusion of the whole matter, go into business, if it's only a peanut stand, go into farming, go into dairying, go into anything that will bring about a state of independtiness and thereby save you from the life of a parasite. Jobs are all right if, while you have a job, you will make the necessary preparations to hold yourself up, when you get out of a job.