

Colored Employing Emporiums

Though the avenues of permanent employment in Seattle for the particular group, in whose interest this review is issued, is more or less limited and even more uncertain, yet there are opportunities for them in a few avocations of which they take appreciative advantage. It is estimated that about one hundred men, who live in Seattle and maintain homes here, are regularly employed by the various railroads running into the city, in the capacity of porters and waiters. This number is probably doubled during the summer months. In addition to these it is further estimated that, during the summer season not less than two thousand visiting porters and waiters put into Seattle. All of which means that those out of employment can sooner or later find work on the railroads, which, under the system for such work, means they are able to own good homes, comfortable automobiles and other luxuries common to a metropolitan city.

Waterfront employment is probably the most lucrative, which to a limited extent, has been opened to the group. Out of the 2,000 waterfront employees it is estimated that some 100 or more come from this group and they receive an average wage of \$150.00 per month, though those who desire to run a little faster and work a little harder, can earn almost twice that amount, at least during the busy shipping season. It is only within the past seven or eight years that it was possible for any one of them to get any employment on the waterfront, but an arbitrary strike gave to them the opportunity, which they eagerly grasped and has held on to ever since. An organization now controls this work and each member thereof has a consecutive number and employment calls begin at one and go as far as men are wanted for that call and the next call takes up the number where the first left off and so on until the entire list has been exhausted and the routine is repeated. By this method all the members are given an even break at employment. The men here em-

ployed are more or less men of families and they use their earnings on, in and for their homes. The stranger seeking such work and will report often enough will eventually get employment and then, from a work standpoint, he is fixed for all time to come.

Steamboating is another avenue that of recent years has been opened up to this particular group and from the manager of the Colored Marine Association it is learned that in the neighborhood of 500 get more or less regular employment during the year. While the winter work is not very lucrative, yet the men can do so well during the summer season that, if they husband their earnings, that is, lay by for a rainy day, they can afford to work for poor pay during the winter season. This association, like the waterfront mentioned above, has a comfortable lounging hall, where the men may assemble and await their calls for outgoing. Often local calls for help come to the hall and one or more pick up extra work and even permanent city employment. In the city the S O S calls for colored help are few and far apart, however, portering in barber shops, shoe shining parlors and a few janitors are among the avenues of earning a livelihood. In spite, however, of the uncertainty in obtaining employment, yet there are upwards of a thousand families in the city, who own commodious homes, which are located in almost every residential district of the city, and the most of them have an automobile of some make, but whatever make quite able to get them "where I's gwine" almost as rapidly as the high powered car.

In the mechanical line the members of this group find little or no work on "big jobs," but their failure to get such employment in any degree of regularity has moved them to make jobs for themselves and among those, who have been more or less successful as independent contractors, are H. Hood and George H. Anderson, carpenters and builders.



SEATTLE WATERFRONT