

... "Negroes must learn to risk their capital"

come tax on over \$100,000. How else could a sixth grade scholar have a job in America that paid him over \$100,000 a year unless he was in business for himself?

Q Why are Negroes reluctant to get into business? Are they afraid to assume responsibility, do you think?

A Yes, I do think so. There have been some failures in Negro business; there are failures in all businesses. But Negroes must learn to risk their capital—not put it in other people's banks and draw 3 or 4 per cent on it, when they could use it among themselves and make 10 or 15 per cent.

Q Would you say that today it is still possible for a Negro with a high-school diploma to make good?

A Oh, yes. It's still possible for a Negro with a grammar-school education to make good. I have a young Negro who sells—he's 24 years old. He came from Lexington, Miss., and I've taught him to sell, and he's averaging now from \$10,000 to \$12,000 a year selling from door to door.

"LAWS DO LITTLE GOOD"—

Q Will laws passed in Washington assure the Negroes the things they really want?

A The laws are going to do very little good, because in the North the Negro has every legal right that anyone else has. In the South, there is legal segregation—but in the North we don't have it. So when the white people in the North keep away from the colored people, it is because it's not an economic advantage to get together.

Q What about the Negroes in the South?

A The only way the Negro in the South can solve his problem is to continue to press for the ballot—not for sit-ins and not for eating at the lunch counter and not for the other rights. First, there must be the right to vote. Once he starts voting, you will find the racial issue in the South will disappear.

Q Is the racial conflict in this country going to spread? Will it result in bloodshed?

A No, I think the racial conflict in this country is at its height right now. From now on it's going to have a trend downward.

Q Do Negroes still tend to feel inferior?

A Yes, Negro people are just as good as anybody else. This they must know. But they cannot convince others until they convince themselves.

I have found no barriers to me in business. I am a member of the National Association of Manufacturers, of the Chicago Association of Commerce and Industry, of the Illinois State Chamber of Commerce, of the National Association of Direct Selling Companies. I serve on committees, I can be elected to any office that I aspire to in these organizations. There is no discrimination that I find in these organizations.

Q What about the charge that well-to-do Negroes tend to ignore the rest of the Negro community and its problems? Is there any truth to this?

A No, I don't think so. I am working with the churches and all the civic organizations in Chicago. I am a member of the board of the Chicago Association of Commerce and Industry, I'm a member of the local Chamber of Commerce, I work with the YMCA, I work with the Urban League, I work with all of the civic organizations in the community.

I am trying right now to organize a group to buy a hospital in the Negro community, and I'm also the treasurer of the Midwest Baptist Home for the Aged. I am in civic affairs and I find all the other Negroes here in business are doing the same thing.

Q What would be your advice today to a young Negro coming out of school?

A My advice today is, first, go to school and get a good education. It's not up to the teacher to see that he gets it. It's up to the student. When a Negro child goes to school, he must concentrate on his work.

Then, when he comes out of school, come out with something to offer, a talent that he can sell.

Q But we hear that the schools available to Negroes often are inferior, that they don't offer a good education—

A Well, I think that the schools that the Negroes attend here in Chicago have about the same facilities as other schools. Anyway, it's not so much the facilities of the school that count as the attitude of the student.

Q Will demonstrations encourage Negroes to work harder, become more self-reliant?

A No, I find that the Negro today does not have as much ambition as he had 25 years ago.

Q Why is that?

A I think the trouble is that no one tells the Negro that he's responsible for himself—being unemployed. When I was a boy nobody helped us. You had to help yourself, and you had to learn to "do." You had to have the know-how plus the do-how.

My mother died when I was 17 years old. She left six besides myself. The relief people came and offered us some relief, but we did not accept it, because it was something of a shame for people to receive relief in those days. We were embarrassed just because the relief woman came to talk to us. We did not want the neighbors to know we couldn't make it for ourselves. So we youngsters made it for ourselves.

Q What kind of work did you do?

A I sold from door to door. I started selling from door to door when I was 9 years old, and have been selling ever since.

Q Do you feel that some races have more of an aptitude for business than others or more of an ability to sell?

A No, it's all in the desire. Any time that you can create a desire in the Negro to sell, he's just as good a salesman as anybody else.

Q Do you have Negro salesmen serving white customers?

A Yes, in some places we do.

WHY OUTLOOK IS BRIGHT—

Q Are you generally optimistic on the future of the Negro race in this country?

A Oh, yes.

Q Is America, do you think, a good place for Negroes?

A America is the best place for the Negro in the world. America is the best place for any man in the world.

Q Is the Negro basically unhappy, do you think?

A I think the Negro is very unhappy, but it's not from segregation. He's unhappy because he is unemployed.

Some of the leaders will tell him he's unemployed because he's a Negro, and that segregation is the cause of his being unemployed. But that is not true. We have unemployment in America, and the Negro is the last hired and the first fired because he doesn't do any of the hiring or the firing.

Q What is the answer, then, to the Negro's future?

A Work. And not only that: He must work and he must save his money and he must pool his money. If he wants integration, he must hire white people just as he wants white people to hire him.

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