

THE FACTS IN OUR NEWS

THE MAYOR'S NEW INTER-RACIAL COMMITTEE Last week Mayor Jeffries asked the Common Council to approve an interracial committee with a budget of fifteen thousand dollars (\$15,000). The Common Council approved this request without hesitancy. Thus, we have an official interracial committee of Detroit for the first time in its recent history. The appointment of this committee is a very significant step for all of the citizens of Detroit.

The composition of the committee is worthy of note at this time. It is made up of six city department heads and five public members (citizens). It has been long recognized by Negro leadership that government must set a good example of fair practice in employment and treatment of all of its citizens before it can demand that private industry employ people without regard to race and color. The way this committee is now set up, whenever there is a problem involving discrimination and unequal treatment in the city government on account of race and color, it can be thrown directly into the laps of the city department heads from the interracial committee itself because, as is obvious, the interracial committee and the city department heads are one to a very encouraging degree. The idea of putting city department heads on an interracial committee showed great insight and awareness of the Negro problem on the part of Mayor Jeffries. It would have been easier for him to have asked the council to appoint and establish officially an interracial committee of citizens who have no official connection with city government. Such a committee's hands would have been tied as far as handling some of the very knotty problems Negro citizens face in this community. The present committee can deal with matters of race discrimination and unequal treatment in the police department, in the Board of Education, Department of Public Welfare, Housing commission and Board of Health.

The five public members on the committee are in a position to bring to the whole committee the thinking and feeling of the citizens of Detroit about any program or lack of program that the city departments may be pursuing at any given time. Negro representation on the committee is adequate and intelligent. The Negro representatives on the committee are concerned actively about the welfare of the 200,000 Negro citizens of Detroit. These Negro representatives on the committee are intelligent enough to see that any program carried on by the city of Detroit must serve all of the people without regard to race, creed and color.

The committee also, because of its composition, gives for the first time Negro organizations an opportunity to pin down some of their complaints and to have their complaints and charges considered by the City of Detroit. Heretofore, the complaints of Negro organizations and leaders have been flung out at the public in a nebulous manner. This is not altogether the faults of these organizations and leaders because there was no definite clearing house where the truth or falsity of these charges could be tested by the facts. Further, city department heads have in the past been able to dodge their responsibility by pointing to the evils in another city department. Now, with the arrangement worked out by the Mayor, all city department heads are in a position to be forced to face their individual sins and the sins of their departments simultaneously, providing Negro organizations and leadership use sagacity and responsibility where the matters of race are concerned in the advancement of our people.

There will be those in leadership among Negroes and liberal groups who will say the committee will do nothing, and they will be right if the critics themselves do nothing. A committee of this composition will be very happy to do nothing if the active and responsible individuals and organizations leave the whole course of the committee to its own ways. This present committee can be the most effective instrument for justice, progress and good will among the races in Detroit if the citizens who are really concerned give it work to do, be-

cause these citizens see wrongs that must be corrected by all the people. The success of this committee will, to a large extent, determine some of the techniques for interracial activity in Detroit after this war.

No one with any comprehension about Detroit's manifold problems growing out of racial misunderstanding will see the committee as a cure-all. Everyone, however, who is sincerely concerned about the unity of our great city will appreciate the judgment and concern shown by the mayor in appointing the type of committee he appointed.

RACE MEMBERS SAY GROUP HAS 'BRIGHT FUTURE'

Hardin Wants Flaws In Education And Police Depts. Corrected

Full cooperation in any effort and with any organization working for better relations between racial and minority groups and the general moral uplift of the city of Detroit was the pledge of three Negro members of Mayor Edward J. Jeffries' recently appointed Interracial Commission who were interviewed by Michigan Chronicle reporters this week.

At the same time, one member of the commission, Walter Hardin, international chairman of the UAW-CIO Interracial Committee, said that he would be reluctant to continue with any group unless some attempt is made to get at the basic causes of friction between the races.

None of the appointees had been officially notified of their appointments or the date of the commission's first meeting when we went to press Tuesday.

Education, Police Hit

In a statement to this reporter Monday, Hardin pledged "fullest cooperation" with the mayor's effort to bring about better understanding between the races and predicted a "bright future" for the commission.

"This group can do a lot of good sound work for the general moral

uplift of the city," Hardin declared. "There are great possibilities for building sound racial relations if the commission has confidence in and cooperates with other groups already working toward that end.

"I am anxious to see the commission get at the roots of some of the trouble in Detroit, such as correcting flaws in the educational system and attempting to overhaul the behavior of the Police Department."

Others Pledge Cooperation

Neither Attorneys Edward A. Simmons, recent candidate for the Common Council, nor Cecil Rowlette would discuss the work of the commission at length until officially notified of their appointments save to pledge cooperation and predict a bright future for the city through the work of the group.

"I haven't been officially notified of my appointment," Attorney Simmons declared, "so I don't know what I am supposed to do. However, I will serve the best way I can to make the work of the committee a success."

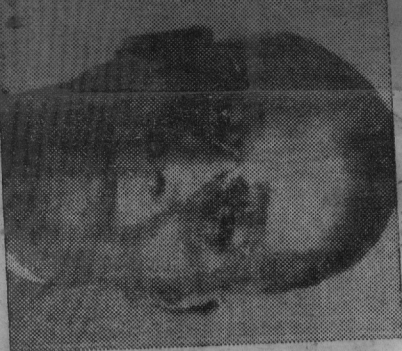
Declaring that he is already busy in other civic work, Attorney Rowlette said that "my appointment to the commission came as a complete surprise. I will do my best to aid in the mayor's effort to iron out some of the difficulties affecting the relationship between the various groups in the city."

Others Appointed

Other members of the committee will be Police Commissioner John F. Ballenger; superintendent of the department of parks and recreation; Charles F. Edgcombe, director-secretary of the Detroit Housing Commission; Dr. Bruce Douglas, health commissioner, and Daniel J. Ryan, superintendent of the Welfare Department.

Formal approval of the mayor's committee was registered by the

Above are the three colored members of the new interracial committee named last week by Mayor Edward J. Jeffries. They are, from left



to right: Atty. Cecil Rowlette, Walter Hardin, member of the CIO, and Atty. Edward Simmons, recent candidate for the Common Council.

MEMBERS OF INTER-RACIAL COMMITTEE

common council last Thursday when the body appropriated \$15,000 in the mayor's budget to aid the work of the group. The mayor agreed that quarterly reports of the work of the committee should be made to the council.

Norton Declines

So far as could be learned this week, the committee is still without a chairman. William J. Norton, who headed the old committee following the June riots, said he would be unable to serve.

"I am entirely in sympathy with the work; it is important and it needs to be done," Norton said. "But I have neither the time nor the strength to take on the additional work and responsibilities." Norton is executive secretary of the Children's Fund of Michigan, chairman of the State Hospital Commission and chairman of the Detroit chapter of the Red Cross.

Atty. Cecil Rowlette Accepts City Post

Attorney Cecil Rowlette, prominent lawyer, last week accepted his appointment made by Mayor Edward J. Jeffries as a member of the new interracial committee for the general uplift of the race and pledged his support to the "good and best interests of all the citizens of the City of Detroit," in a letter received this week by the Michigan Chronicle.

Rowlette, along with two other Race members, Atty. Edward A. Simmons and Walter Hardin, international chairman of UAW-CIO had their appointments announced last week by Mayor Jeffries.

Text of Atty. Rowlette's letter to the mayor follows:

January 21, 1944

Hon. Edward J. Jeffries,
Mayor of the City of Detroit,
City Hall Building,
Detroit, Michigan.

Honorable Sir:
Beg to acknowledge yours of the

19th inst., notifying me of my appointment on the Committee to study conditions and to develop a specific program toward bringing about a greater degree of harmony between the racial groups of this community.

I want you to know that I am deeply grateful to you and your Executive body, the Common Council, for this recognition.

I realize the magnitude of the program which is assigned to this Committee, and the responsibility which it carries. I shall, however, do my best to carry out the duties imposed upon me with honesty, sincerity and integrity, at all times having in mind the good and best interests of all the citizens of the City of Detroit and this community.

Very truly yours,
(Signed) CECIL L. ROWLETTE.

GROUP HELD FIRST MEETING LAST THURSDAY

Detroit C.C.R.
Mich. Chron 6/13/42

In its initial meeting at the Central Y.W.C.A. Thursday the Subcommittee on Interracial Fellowship, Department of Public Affairs of the Detroit Council of Churches proposed, in a resolution the formation of an Interracial Commission by the Mayor of Detroit. The Rev. Charles A. Hill, chairman of the group presided.

The Fellowship lauded the amicable settlement of the Sojourner Truth Housing dispute and discussed other phases of housing, employment discrimination and the possibility of the formation of an Interracial commission. New developments in the Colonel Hamtramck housing situation in Hamtramck which threatens another Sojourner Truth situation were discussed but no course of action was planned.

It was decided in view of small attendance at this meeting, to submit the following resolution to the entire committee by mail for ballot (approval or otherwise) and then to present the results through the chairman of the Public Affairs department as the judgment of this committee before the board meeting, June 11.

Resolution

The Interracial Fellowship, being a sub-committee of the Public Affairs department of the Detroit Council of Churches, at its first meeting on June 4, at the Detroit Downtown Y.M.C.A., takes this occasion to express appreciation of the just and on the whole amicable solution of the problem of the Sojourner Truth housing project. This, we feel, is in keeping with the Christian spirit and that of American democracy, and it is salutary that in this period of national and international crisis such problems can be handled without racial discrimination.

With this outstanding example of what may be accomplished through interracial understanding and cooperation as background, we express it is our judgment that the present is an auspicious time for the appointment by the Mayor of Detroit of an Interracial commission, to study and assist in the solution of the many remaining problems confronting white and Negro peoples in the city.

Call For New Bill of Rights

One such area of possible friction is that of discrimination in employment, even in war production industries which purport to represent the nation as a whole and where civic unity is most necessary at the present time. Another sphere of discrimination is in respect to community housing, and we would call attention to such projects as the "Colonel Hamtramck" unit where in spite of assurances to the contrary, the Negroes though most needful, of low-cost housing accommodations are in danger of being excluded from housing built upon land formerly occupied by Negroes as well as whites.

These and all such difficulties, we are convinced, can only be solved with credit to a democratic nation in the spirit of the New Testament and of our American Bill of Rights.

Members of the committee receiving these minutes are asked to give a reply by the enclosed postcard as to support or objection to the above resolution, together with any comments thereon.

Plan Interracial Meeting Series

It was suggested that in Autumn and winter it would be well

to have a series of interracial meetings, perhaps with dinner and with speakers and discussion on pertinent problems. A need is felt for genuine experiments in interracial fellowship and cooperation, and nowhere more so than among students and youth whom the church should be reaching with a program of universal brotherhood beginning at home.

It was also proposed that all members to whom these minutes are sent be urged to submit by

return mail any suggestions they may have to make the work of our committee more effective.

Members of this Interracial Fellowship committee are:

Rev. Charles A. Hill, chairman, Hartford Baptist church; Mrs. G. Gladsoe, 4531 King avenue; Mrs. Frances Comfort, 4712 Lawrence avenue; Russ Cowans, the Detroit Tribune, 2146 St. Antoine; Rev. Henry Hitt Crane, Central Methodist church, 23 East Adams; J. Hartley Fowler, Northeastern Y.M.C.A.; Rev. Owen Geer, Mt. Olive Methodist church, Dearborn, Mich.; Mrs. Philip Gentile, 16871 Berwood avenue; Dr. Edgar DeWitt Jones, Central Woodward Christian church; Rev. Owen Knox, Bethlehem Methodist church;

Marion Kellogg, 2450 Penobscot building; Rev. J. R. McClain, St. John Colored M.E. church; Rev. Tracy Pullman, Church of Our Father, Cass avenue; Rev. Marshall church; Rev. S. D. Ross, Shiloh R. Reed, Nardin Park Methodist Baptist church; Rev. C. Lebron Simmons, 585 Gratiot avenue; Rev. Horace White, Plymouth Congregational church; P. J. Woods, 568 Palmer avenue; Dr. J. J. McLeod, 503 East Warren avenue; Rev. Benjamin Jay Bush, Westminster Tull, business institute; Rev. T. T. Presbyterian church; Arthur F. Brumbaugh, executive secretary, Detroit Council of Churches.

OLD COMMITTEE TO BE REPLACED BY NEW AGENCY

1-13-44 M-Chron
Detroit C.C.R.

Mayor Jeffries Seeks Way To Iron Out Racial Problems

A major step toward better race relations in Detroit may be taken shortly by the city administration according to informed sources from City Hall.

It is generally known that the Mayor's Interracial committee which was hastily created following the riot last year has not had an official meeting since the election. It is believed that this committee which is composed of six whites and six Negroes will be replaced by a commission along the lines of the Chicago commission recently created by Mayor Kelly of Chicago.

Some of the suggestions embodied in the report of Dr. Selling of Recorder's court may be incorporated in the new commission. Dr. Selling recommended a municipal commission which bore many resemblances to the President's Fair Employment Practice committee.

The new interracial body will no doubt have a budget and be empowered to take such action as the conditions warrant. It is no secret that Mayor Jeffries wishes to remove the blot on his administration caused by the breakdown of race relations last year and is listening to a variety of advisers on what is best to do.

A NEW COMMISSION

Mich. Chron 6/13/42

Mayor Jeffries has been asked by the Interracial Fellowship of the Detroit Council of Churches to appoint an interracial commission "to study and assist in the many remaining problems confronting white and Negro peoples in the city," and he was commended for the "just and on the whole amicable settlement" of the Sojourner Truth controversy.

Some leaders in the past have expressed skepticism over the actual value of varied interracial groups, committees and commissions. Most of us will agree today, however, that every new interracial group that comes into being now will of necessity have a greater social value than at any time in the past. Much of the old opposition to interracial commissions of the sort contemplated in the resolution of the Detroit Council of Churches resulted from a feeling that such commissions never really accomplished anything concrete, nothing that you might point to as a job well done.

We insist, however, that somebody has got to begin a serious study of the issues between racial groups and that if this commission resolved itself finally into merely a study group, it would still be worthwhile. Behind the hand of prejudice and discrimination is too often a colossal ignorance, a lack of knowledge of the basic causes of conflicts, a frightful misconception of the democratic process and a misunderstanding of minority problems. In other words, an interracial commission composed of sincere students of our social problems would have a tremendous educational value besides being an instrument for positive action when occasion demanded.

It is a mistake to believe that any sort of commission can work miracles. There is, nevertheless, a definite need in our city for some organized attempt to get to the bottom of the issues which are creating unrest and to study them objectively with the hope that some course of action might suggest itself which would preclude the possibility of riotous action. It seems to us that such a commission would be a welcome addition to our existing agencies in the field of race relations in this arsenal of democracy we call Detroit.

THE FACTS IN OUR NEWS

Det. C.C.R.
6-17-44 m-chron

GIVING THE MAYOR'S Interracial Committee a Chance — Many people have thought that my studied criticism of Mr. Harold Thompson, the newly elected executive secretary, of Detroit's Interracial Committee was impolitic and previous in its import. There are others who know me well enough to know that I am unconcerned about being politic and that even though I am concerned about politics, I never decide an issue for myself, nor for my people on the basis of politics. These same people know that I take the business of leadership very seriously, and would not issue a statement based on snap judgment, and without a pretty thorough investigation of the facts.

Mr. Harold Thompson is a good man personally. His character nor his motives can be successfully challenged. He is totally unfit for the job he has been elected to do, by Detroit's Interracial committee. The majority of the people on the mayor's committee, who voted for him, know full well that he is unfit for that job. He is unfit for the job because he does not understand its implications, even superficially. He believes in some mystical process, by which men are made to love their neighbors, and to respect their neighbors rights to earn a living, and to reside in a decent house. He believes in getting people to keep quiet about wrongs, is an answer to the race problem here in Detroit. He thinks you can "sell" people right race attitudes, by just talking to them. Of course we know this is childish and to some extent very naive.

Also Mr. Harold Thompson has been connected with an organization that has practiced in its business dealings certain race discriminations. Your correspondent has in his files, letters from people saying that the organization Mr. Harold Thompson formerly represented, was most flagrant in its mistreatment of minority groups. The handicap of Mr. Thompson's to overcome his former connections, as far as the great masses of working people is concerned, is a task bigger than he has conceived it to be at this moment. He may brag about his giving up a better job, to take this job at a lesser salary, shows his good intentions, all that he wants. But the plain cold facts refute any claim to a profound interest in the job. Certain people within his own organization promoted him to his present job, through certain influential people on the Mayor's Interracial committee. I have heard Harold Thompson talk, and his concept about interracial conflict is so far from reality that it will take him a long time to get himself in a frame of mind where he can serve the best interests of Detroit in matters having to do with race conflict. Mr. Thompson is frightened by a real discussion of race conflict, not to speak of working constructively to alleviate race conflict.

The chance we must give Mr. Thompson lies not in waiting for him to make certain disastrous blunders, but rather to point out the blunders he will make unless warned of them beforehand.

The Negro people in Detroit, are in no frame of mind to accept a dodging of the things that mean most to them. The working people of Detroit will not understand the executive secretary of an interracial committee trying to use sweet meaningless words to deter them from the struggle to arrive at the position in their community, where they are not the victims of unemployment, bad housing, inadequate medical care, and a boastful, and brutal police department. The common people of Detroit are expecting Mr. Thompson to deal with a Board of Education, which permits its music teachers to teach a song to its children entitled "Feed Them Darkies on Shortnin' Bread."

These things are at the core of race conflict. Mr. Thompson just as well prepare himself to deal with these matters in a realistic and constructive manner. Any other course will spell his defeat, and certainly will mean tragic moments in the life of Detroit.

There is some hope, however, for the committee's doing a real job,

in that they have selected a progressive well equipped assistant, Mrs. Beulah Whitby. She knows the problem, knows its implications and she knows that a program has to be outlined and practiced to meet some of these problems. If our executive secretary can learn by working with Mrs. Whitby he can serve our interracial interest in Detroit.

LOCAL JEWISH, NEGRO LEADERS ASK FOR UNITY

Plan Joint Committee To Press For Improved Conditions

A committee of six outstanding citizens representing two minority groups, Negroes and Jews, was appointed last Monday at a joint meeting of Negro and Jewish leaders to draft proposals to present to the Mayor's Interracial committee which will promote interracial goodwill.

The luncheon meeting which was held at the Lucy Thurman YWCA was sponsored by the Eastside Merchants Association which usually alternates with the NAACP in holding brotherhood luncheons each year. Dr. J. J. McClendon presided over the meeting at the invitation of Samuel Leiberman of the Eastside Merchants Association.

The six-man committee which was appointed at the suggestion of Horace White includes Joseph Ellman, L. C. Blount, Rabbi Frahm, Gloster Current, Attorney Rosenberg and Father Dade. Immediately following the luncheon, Dr. J. J. McClendon called upon Rabbi Frahm and Father Dade to make the principal speeches. Both stressed the importance of celebrating brotherhood week each year and expressed hope that the ideals of our democracy would be made to work in our every-day life.

Horace White bared the social and economic conditions under which Negroes chafe and castigated the half-way measures of the city government in dealing with them. He charged that neither the director of the Mayor's committee nor the chairman were prepared to deal adequately or realistically with the basic problems facing minority groups.

David Elman of the Jewish Community Council stated that the community leadership must not take a defeatist attitude toward municipal or civic agencies dealing with race relations but must push a progressive program with all their might. Mr. Blount of the Booker T. Washington Association stated that a small committee from his association would be happy to exchange business methods and views with a similar committee from the Eastside Merchants Association.

Mr. Frazier of the Detroit Round Table of Catholic, Protestants and Jews spoke of the work of his organization and Alonzo Parrish of the Twelve Horsemen described some of the work being done at the new civic center. Greetings were extended by Prather Hauser

of the YMCA and a short summary of the discussion was made by Louis Martin representing the Negro press.

Among those present were: Rev. and Mrs. Peck, John R. Williams, Charlotte Perry, John Miles, Carlton Gaines, Madeline Fowler, Raymond Hatcher, C. B. Moore, A. H. Roth, Isaac Franck, Hyman Weiner, Fred Hart Williams and those whose names have already been mentioned. Dr. J. J. McClendon invited the group to attend a similar luncheon which will be given by the NAACP next month.

THE FACTS IN OUR NEWS

Det. C.C.R.
4-1-44 m-chron

By HORACE A. WHITE

When Will The Mayor's Inter-Racial Committee Begin to Talk About A Program?—The Mayor's Inter-Racial Committee has been toying with its job. To date, it has not seen fit to present the public, any idea of a program. It has been hearing reports from the various departments in the city of Detroit. It has heard a "perfect" report from the recreation department. One would feel that as far as the recreation is concerned, Detroit has a paradise in its mass recreation activities. Nonsense! It is nothing of the kind!

The Police Department is shot through and through with inefficiency, ignorance and selfishness, on the part of its many directors of police divisions. The only hopeful sign in the Police Department is that John Ballenger is realistic.

The Detroit Housing Commission is soon scheduled to review its program. One hopes the Detroit Housing Commission will not come out with so much lack of insight on its part as some of the other departments seem to be escaping with. The Detroit housing program has been short-sighted and bigoted, and in many respects, anti-democratic.

The Mayor's Inter-Racial Committee might just as well face the fact now, that summer will produce an increased number of interracial conflicts, unless something definite is done to prevent these conflicts. Our people are living in rat-infested houses; they are living on top of one another; they are bitten night after night, in an unrelenting manner, by bedbugs.

Housewives cannot prepare a decent meal without the interference of cockroaches. Hundreds of people will be escaping this condition by going to the parks. They will be escaping on crowded streetcars and buses. The Mayor's Inter-Racial Committee should understand that race conflict is not created in a vacuum. Race conflict is possible because of the lack of physical surroundings and objective conditions under which people are forced to live.

Already, Negro workers are beginning to feel the sting of discrimination in some of the "temporary" lay-offs that have been coming to workers in the city of Detroit. The committee ultimately has to take this matter to the authorities in industry and in government, with a positive program dealing specifically and forthrightly with the matter of discrimination. Negro youth has only one way to show its resentment to being discriminated against, and that one way is through violent protest.

The Mayor's Inter-Racial Committee will try to meet these problems of discrimination with talk to the people. A seeking out of a few isolated incidents on the part of a few people and saying, "This is the crux of the problem." When actually, this is not the crux of the problem, but this is a manifestation of the very deep underlying problems of discrimination in government, education, recreation and health.

If one visits a Negro neighborhood, he can see very easily, how people would have certain hostility, and how fear and anxiety would cause them to want to create trouble. In other words, the Committee better quickly make up its mind that rats and bedbugs equal race riots in the summer time.

Inter-Racial Committee Maps Policy Program

Civil Rights - Mich.
6-17-44 m-chron

Responding to many requests for a statement regarding future activities, the Detroit Inter-racial committee unanimously adopted a policy and program at its regular meeting last Friday.

Harold Thompson, director of the Committee, emphasized that the policy and program adopted was a directive for the future and did not give a full report of what has been done since the office was opened last March 1.

The program submitted included plans for action in the following fields: popular education, law and order, housing, transportation, public education, welfare, health, parks and recreation, economic opportunity, and Negro and white responsibility.

The Committee establishes the practices of its body as:

1. To perform none of the functions of existing city departments or private organizations, but to cooperate with such agencies in developing policies or programs affecting interracial relationships.
2. To refer requests for service from individuals to appropriate service agencies.

Thompson Quits As Inter-Racial Group Director

Civil Rights - Mich.
2-17-45 m-chron

Harold Thompson, director of the Detroit Inter-racial committee who has been under fire from Negro and white groups since early last fall, submitted his resignation to James K. Watkins, chairman of the committee, last Friday.

Mr. Thompson asked that his resignation become effective Feb. 28. He stated that he was resigning in order to enter private business.

Speculation over who would replace Mr. Thompson is widespread among civic and political leaders. He had directed the affairs of the committee for a year. Last month the Detroit Branch of the NAACP petitioned Mayor Jeffries to dismiss Mr. Thompson.

In a statement to the Michigan Chronicle, Mr. Thompson said that he will continue to work for interracial goodwill, and will give the committee his fullest cooperation at all times.

Mr. Thompson is an active lay churchman of the Episcopal church.

Detroit, Commission on Community Relations

THE FACTS IN OUR NEWS

By HORACE A. WHITE

BARKING AT THE DETROIT INTER-RACIAL COMMITTEE

We all know that after the Detroit race riots, there was a demand on the part of many local people to have Detroit take some steps to prevent the recurrence of bloody race riots. To meet this demand, committees to deal with inter-race conflicts were set up. The Detroit Council of Churches set up one. The Mayor appointed one. These two had no official city sanction. They were good-will gestures on the part of church members, liberals and officials of the city government. It was decided, after a trial with these committees, that it was necessary for a committee to have some money and a paid staff if it were to deal adequately with the many problems confronting such a committee every day. To accomplish this, the Mayor appointed an official committee, and went to the common Council and asked for money for the support of the committee's work. The money was granted.

At the time the staff was selected to carry on the work of the Detroit Interracial Committee, many of us did not particularly like the person selected to guide the whole program. We felt that his background did not give him a clear enough grasp to function with meaning. It is no more than fair to say at this time that he has not done much of what should have been done. The other statement that must go along with this is that some things have been accomplished under his leadership. Certainly, he has seen that the idea back of the appointment of the interracial committee is sound. The committee has reviewed the programs of the various city departments. This review was carried on with the sole purpose of determining whether these departments were so rendering their services as to minimize the possibility of inter-race conflict growing out of the manner in which their services were being rendered to all the people of Detroit. This task was an important task, because it gave some measure of confidence in the city government to all of the people.

The committee then set up listening posts and "receptors" of rumors throughout the city. It is impossible to measure the good results of this program, but certainly the results were great. There is nothing that creates inter-race conflicts so readily and easily as rumor going unabated and unchallenged through a given community. If people have some place to take their complaints of mistreatment on the basis of race, the possibility of race conflict is cut down 95 per cent. These listening posts throughout the city served to keep the people of the city looking to their officials of the city for settlement of inter-race conflict.

There are those who would have Detroit's Interracial committee dive into a program of basic social change. Certainly, basic change we must have, but anybody with an iota of understanding as to how social change is brought about in our democracy, cannot demand of a mere interracial committee the program nor the action necessary for social change. Housing has been often mentioned as one of the things with which the Detroit Interracial committee should deal. Housing is bad, and especially bad as it affects the Negro citizens of our community. To change this condition will take much more power, political and economic, than the Interracial committee has and will ever get.

Every organization in the city of Detroit that has fought for an intelligent and more democratic deal in the police department knows that it was impossible to get anywhere on this program until the head of the police department was the kind of person who could accept that a new day was necessary if the police department was to

bring about the best work in terms of keeping the peace. Everybody knows that we are involved in basic economic problems, and these problems have to be solved in order to overcome much of the interracial discord that we see on every hand. To ask an interracial committee to outline a program to eradicate these basic economic problems, and to carry on the social action necessary to see that a program of change, economically, is put into effect, is baying at the moon. The Interracial committee can no more deal adequately with the deep underlying economic controls in order to effect economic change than the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People can cause basic economic change.

The difficulties confronting an interracial committee are the same as those confronting the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. They are that no one community organization in our democracy can, nor has the right, to dictate change. Economic change must come from the people. The men and the institutions that now control our society are not amenable to the ideas of justice and democracy because some people wish them to be. These institutions and men can only be made to do justice when the people are aroused to demand justice. It is not the business, therefore, of an interracial committee to carry on social action, but rather it is the business of an interracial committee to guide social action in order that justice can be accomplished for all of the people, no matter what that social action may be at any given moment.

It is the business of the NAACP, labor unions, churches, and other groups that are dedicated to the onward march of the people, to effect social changes. People all over the country are getting notoriety by insisting that the interracial committees take up the cudgels for social change. This is silly, and shows a lack of understanding. Interracial committees are remedial in character, while social change is being forced. They will be able to serve a great purpose in this transition period in our inter-race relations, so long as they keep this position. They will go out of existence, and will allow the going to be much harder, as a going relates to inter-race conflicts, if the leadership of these interracial committees fails to see this point.

3-10-45 m-chew Inter-Racial Funds Held Up By The Council

The Common Council agreed to assure funds for the continuation of the Inter-racial Committee despite protests of Councilman William Rogell and Charles (Gus) Dorais.

A heated discussion over the committee's work followed the request made Tuesday by James K. Watkins for \$50,000 for educational work.

Funds for the Inter-racial Committee of Detroit were held up this week by the Common Council. In a discussion of the appropriation of \$16,225 for the interracial group, Councilman William G. Rogell said he "would not vote for this appropriation until I have a report."

THE REQUEST for the report of the committee's work of the last year does not mean the request for funds is denied, according to Councilman John C. Lodge.

When the Detroit Inter-racial Committee was established in

See INTER-RACIAL, Page 4

Facts in the News

By Horace White
1-30-54
Mayor Cobo and
Mrs. Whitby

Mr. Albert Cobo, the mayor, found it necessary to reject both candidates recommended for the job of executive secretary to the Commission on Community Relations. This commission has been known as the Inter-racial Committee. The Mayor rejected Mr. Field on the basis that he had not been in the city of Detroit recently and therefore not conversant with the Detroit scene.

The Mayor rejected Mrs. Whitby, the second member recommended by the commission, on the basis that she had, in the past, worked with organizations "whose ideas were not in accord with our thinking." The Mayor then elaborated his statement to say "working with organizations in the past not in line with my thinking."

These messages were sent to the commission in a letter. One reading them is likely to get the impression that the mayor is inferring that Mrs. Whitby was connected with some subversive organization, even though the Mayor did not say it. The inference is all the more meaningful because one way of meeting opposition today is to declare some one subversive, therefore, Mrs. Whitby felt it necessary to answer that she had no connection with any Communist organization that she had fought Communism all the time.

One could hardly believe that the Mayor could possibly have meant that Mrs. Whitby's connection with the Urban League would be displeasing to the Mayor. Especially is this true when the Mayor stated that he has great respect for the director of the Urban League, Mr. John Dancy. The Community Services Committee of the Urban League was discussing the matter of housing and ways to reduce race segregation in public housing projects. Mrs. Whitby was chairman of this Community Services Committee.

There were two police officers present at this meeting and Mr. John Dancy himself was also present. The police officers reported to the mayor the action

taken by the committee. The sum and substance of the action was that they should work against segregation in public housing projects. Someone at the meeting jokingly made the remark that he was glad that the police were present because if any trouble resulted the police would know about it. The police officers present quoted this remark as if it were a part of the discussion and also as if it had some validity in regard to the Community Services Committee action.

In the same connection Mrs. Whitby apparently had attended some meeting sponsored by the NAACP to raise funds to help with a case now pending before the Federal Court in Detroit, relative to segregation in housing projects. The mayor had a written report on her attendance at this affair. The Mayor did not name the NAACP as the organization, but this happens to be the organization.

Now let's look at the developments: The Mayor knows that the Detroit Urban League and its committees do not work in a manner to stir up trouble. He is also well enough acquainted with the Detroit Urban League to have ascertained what the situation and circumstances were surrounding this meeting.

The mayor also demonstrated that he was not willing to play fair in this situation by releasing an ambiguous statement relative to Mrs. Whitby's unacceptability by him in the first place. If he were rejecting her because of her former connections with the Community Services Committee of the Detroit Urban League, all he had to do was to say so. He only said so after Mrs. Whitby had an appointment with him in his office. He told her he had these reports and this is why he was not appointing her.

The resultant publicity by the Detroit papers forced him to release the reports. Once the reports were released, even he saw how ridiculous he had been. Therefore, in order to justify his confusing actions, and to some extent, dishonest actions, the mayor had to say that Mrs. Whitby agreed with his housing policy. Of course, his housing policy was not even discussed in the conference she had with him.

Inter-Racial—

(Continued From Page 1)

January, 1944, it was appropriated \$15,000 of city funds to try and improve race relations. But that money has gone, and the committee has had no money since March 1.

The request for the additional appropriation of \$16,225 for the committee was made by David V. Addy, city budget director. Addy later made a request for \$8,225 to enable the committee to operate until June 30, the end of the fiscal year.

Harold Thompson, who recently resigned as director of the committee, was paid a salary of \$5,000. Mrs. Beulah Whitby remains as assistant director with a salary of \$4,000 a year, but the committee has no money to pay it.