

POLITICS ON A HIGH LEVEL

IT is often said that politics is a crooked game and cannot be practiced above a low ethical standard. We do not believe that this is true, because of the fact that politics grows out of the social habitation of mankind; and mankind through institutions has always endeavored to raise his standard of living from the earliest existence of social behavior.

The practice of politics changes just as other social phenomena as civilization moves on. The Negro has not been considered a great factor in the political life of the nation until recent years. The migration of the Negro into the North where he can vote has increased his price at the polls. But still today, there are many who look upon the Negro citizens as just a bloc of votes that can be bought on election day by some ward heeler or political henchman. A new day has gradually unfolded itself in the realms of the political life of the Negro and a new Negro has emerged from behind the clouds of hope to refute the theory of the politicians of the old school who advocate politics on a low ethical basis.

A FEW years ago the writer of this editorial read a book entitled "Dark Princes", by Dr. W. L. B. DuBois. One part of that book told a beautiful story of a Chicago politician. One particular lesson revealed in that portion describing the Chicago politician was this:

A political boss on the South Side who had built himself up and thrived from giving protection to policy wheels, dice games and houses of prostitution was advised one day by his competent secretary, who had a better vision into Negro life and saw that politics would rise from a low ethical basis to a high level, to change his tactics and methods and to build more substantially. The politician's answer to his secretary was that the underworld, people who conduct prostitution, gambling devices, etc., are in the majority and as long as he could deliver a bloc of votes he would be king. Votes are what count. At this point he was reminded by his secretary that there was a new Negro coming on the scene who was educated and who had different slants on life, and that the Christian church was gaining more influence into the everyday life of the Negro race, and that other organizations, social and civic, were advocating their reform programs, and even though they were considered a small minority, they would determine the sentiment of the community and for any man to be a big man in a changing world he must have the support and backing of the best people in the community. The story goes that the Chicago politician took the advice of his competent secretary.

THERE are so many politicians of today in our local communities throughout the nation who need to take the same advice as was given the Chicago politician described by DuBois in his book, "Dark Princes". A new Negro is here who has vision into life on a high economic and political level. Today we have a Negro who cannot be bought on election day for a few dollars. We have Negroes today who have studied the election day pay-off and calculated it in such a manner as to prove that they are at a greater loss from accepting small election day fees than they would be if they refused and sought to better their conditions on a high political level so as to have a voice in Government, employment in the great industries of the country and to sit in public offices and dictate the policies of better Government.

In some communities let us assume that several thousand dollars are spent for election workers and to get certain candidates elected. Let us look into this thousand dollars as spent and see what the Negroes in any given ward actually profit. Let's assume that in a given ward there are forty precincts with each receiving fifty dollars to be divided by the ward heeler to the precinct committeemen and from the precinct committeemen to the workers. Political money has a tendency to shrink. By the time it reaches the ward heeler from the big bosses and from the ward heeler to the precinct committeeman to the worker there is very little left and it has to be divided into two and three dollars which is not enough money for any one individual to do anything with. Consequently it ends up over a bar for beer and whiskey or is thrown to the winds in some other manner. The sum total of the situation means that in a given ward the ward heeler and precinct committeemen and workers will bring about the election of men to high public office to receive thousands and thousands of dollars as public servants and to dictate and determine the policies of Government all for two thousand measly dollars which profited the Negro voters nothing and reduced them to a low ethical standard in the realm of politics, so much so that they are even cheapened in the eyes of the men whom they helped to elect until they cannot get decent consideration in the matter of employment and in the matter of even discussions on vital public issues affecting their welfare.

But it is encouraging to know that a new Negro has come on the scene and is able to distinguish between low ethics and morality and has a vision to the greater things of life. We have a new Negro who is able to see that when the present world conflict is over, strong minded men and women will be needed to guide the destiny of the nation. We have a young Negro who is preparing himself spiritually and morally to occupy such a place in the life of his nation when that day comes.