

"Signs Of the Times"

THREE WRITERS, Major Robert R. Moton, W. E. B. DuBois and Lester A. Walton, special reporter on the World, have contributed articles dealing with the migration of the Negro from the South to the North. Writing in to-day's issue of the Nation Magazine. Dr. DuBois, under the heading, "The Host of Black Labor" says:

We may envisage four hosts who must deal with them—the planter, the manufacturer, the union laborer, and the Northern Negro. The planter inherits a tradition from which he seldom escapes. The tradition regards the Negro laborer as a serf, without a vote, with little education, low wages, and medieval conditions of work. The manufacturer, North and South, has as his ideal a surplus of common labor, whether black or white, which will keep wages low by severe competition and periodic unemployment. The union laborer proposes so to restrict and monopolize skilled labor as to compel the employer to grant a living wage. These three hosts are pretty well known; but there is a fourth who is not so often thought of. He is the Northern Negro, the representative of the 1,725,141 Negroes established in the North either a generation or more ago or by more recent migration, who have, except in the case of the newest comers, found an industrial place and a racial philosophy and who are the first to be affected by a widespread migration from the South.

The Northern Negro, therefore, faces a similar dilemma. He knows that his Southern brother will and must migrate just as he himself migrated either in this generation or the last. He feels more or less acutely his own duty to help the newcomer, and the Negro churches and charities of great cities like Chicago and New York have done a marvelous work in this direction even though it has fallen far below the need. But on the other hand, the black Northerner knows what this migration costs. In the years from 1900 to 1922 there has been an average of a race riot in the United States every year, half of them in the South and half in the North. Serious encounters have been threatened in a half dozen Northern and several Southern centers. In these same years, 1,563 Negroes have been lynched; since the war thirty-four Negroes have been burned alive at the stake. In other words, the race war is not simply a future possibility—it is here.

DR. DUBOIS concludes his article with the assertion that the South must reform its attitude toward the Negro and that the North must reform its attitude toward common labor.

Turning to Major Moton's article in last Sunday's Times, we find a more cheerful and optimistic presentation of the effect of the continued movement. Says Dr. Moton:

A calm investigation both of causes and results will disclose this fact: that the migration of Negroes to the North has undoubtedly produced beneficial results to the North, to the South and to the Negro himself in spite of whatever conflict or confusion has been incident to the readjustments made necessary by the movement. It has not been without some disorder and some friction, which must inevitably attend so large a movement under such varied circumstances; but it is safe to say that the problem of the Negro in the North does not begin to be as serious in that section as the problem of the foreign born emigrant and the non-English speaking elements of Northern population. From all reports the Negro has proved himself as capable, as dependable and as tractable a labor element in the North as he has been in the South and as efficient as the foreigner he has replaced. His Americanism is just as pure as that of any element in the nation's population, and perhaps a little purer than some. He is not unresponsive to the larger opportunities that are accorded him in the North.

THE ARTICLE of Lester Walton which is more in the nature of a special report, states that the small farm "cropper system" is the primary cause of insurgency and unrest and that empty stomachs rather than crowded Jim Crow cars have been the chief motive impelling thousands to move to Northern industrial centers.