

Dawn of Tomorrow

Published weekly in the interests of and for the Advancement of the colored people of Canada.

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Subscription Rates
One year\$2.00
Six months 1.25
Three months75
Single Copy05

Entered in the post office at London, Ont., as second class matter.
The Dawn of Tomorrow Publishing Co
London, Ont.

Editorial

LIBERIA and SLAVERY

It has transpired, through a committee appointed by the League of Nations, working in conjunction with a committee from the U.S., that slavery and forced labor are in vogue in Liberia. The history of Liberia and the reason for its coming into being is so well known that it is unnecessary for us to repeat it here. Mr. Stimson of the United States Government, in taking the matter up with the Liberian Government, among other things, said: "International public opinion will no longer tolerate these twin scourges of slavery and forced labor. Unless they are abolished and unless there is instituted by the Liberian Government a comprehensive system of reforms, loyally and sincerely put into effect, it will result in the final alienation of the friendly feelings which the American government and its people have entertained for Liberia."

None but the most callous mind could find but the highest praise for the Secretary's note to the Liberian government and for the humanitarian spirit expressed therein. Forced labor and slavery are a curse both to the slave holder and to the enslaved. No people on earth should know this fact better than the people who make up the government of Liberia. That President King and Vice-President Yancey have been forced to vacate their respective offices is only right and just and as it should be and it is to be hoped that their successors will strive zealously to carry out the promised reform.

However, we are wondering if the humanitarian reformer, Secretary Stimson, could extricate himself from foreign affairs long enough to give a little attention to affairs at home? Just about the time his memorable document was being penned to Liberia a mob took a Negro prisoner from the authorities in the State of Missouri not far distant from the seat of government at Washington, chained him to the roof of a school house and burned him alive. The annual report on lynching compiled by the N.A.A.C.P. for the year 1930 shows that 23 Negroes were lynched during that year. The charges levelled against the Negroes but not proven, ranged from unknown insults to white folk, to rape and murder. The bodies of these victims were burned, mutilated, dragged through

the streets, followed by a procession of shouting, yelling men, women and children. Why is it that the Secretary "tolerates" this "scourge" in his own house? Why does he seek to eliminate a "scourge" thousands of miles away and in a foreign land when there is a more cancerous disease besetting his brethren? Perhaps the tribesmen of Liberia, although unlettered, would answer the Secretary's protest in these words: "It is better to be a slave in Liberia than live in America where black folk are lynched with impunity."

We are pleased, highly pleased that the League of Nations has begun to investigate slavery and enforced labor but we trust that its activities will not cease with the case of Liberia, for other countries are painted with the same stripe. Just a little more than a year ago a member of the Belgian government brought charges against his government of cruelty to the natives in the Belgium Congo. He stated that enforced labor and virtual slavery were being practiced there, that natives who could not be made to work in the mines and on government roads were prevented from securing proper food-stuffs, that those (the natives) who did work in the mines and as road builders were fed so poorly that they were utterly unfit for manual labor and because of this fact the natives' constitution was so impaired they were dying at a rate which presaged the early extinction of the entire tribe. The accusing member demanded an investigation into the affairs of the Congo. This was not granted, although the government admitted that part of the charges were true. It seems to us that here also was a case in which the League could have served humanity. More cruelty is charged in the case of the Belgium Congo than was in the case of Liberia. The question naturally arises in our minds therefore is what constitutes a case for investigation or of interference by the League?

Shall the errors and misdeeds of the weaker and the darker peoples be closely scrutinized and criticized and shall the transgressions of the strong go unnoticed or winked at?

No one need construe anything which we have said into an approval of ex-President King and his government for aiding and abetting the institution of slavery. With all the force of our nature we join the world in condemning him and his regime. Of all the countries in the world Liberia should have been the last to practice slavery, for Liberia was meant to be a haven for the ex-slaves. Be it so, her guilt is no more deep dyed than others who practice forced labor and slavery. If we are somewhat suspicious that Liberia has been singled out simply because it is a black republic we have just reason for our suspicions. Recollection of America's intervention and occupation of Haiti, "to save Haiti from internal destruction" when at the same time President Wilson refused to intervene in the affairs of Cuba and Mexico which countries had a revolution about every other week, has caused us to look askance upon the whole proceedings.

And finally may we hope that soon "International public opinion" will no longer tolerate" lynchings in the United States, in which men, women with babes in their arms, and little inno-

Letters to the Editor

66 Temperance St.,
Toronto 2,
Mr. J. F. Jenkins, January 3rd, 1931
95 Genwood Ave.,
London, Ont.

Dear Mr. Jenkins:

I just want to congratulate you on the Christmas number of "The Dawn of To-Morrow."

Both editorially and typographically it is a credit to you and your associates.

With best wishes for the New Year.

Yours sincerely,

E. R. DENNIS.

LONDON NOTES

Miss Florence Drake and mother attended the funeral of an uncle in Buxton. They were accompanied by Mr. and Mrs. Poindexter and Miss Gladys Stafford.

Mrs. Brooks attended the funeral of her sister in Cleveland, Mrs. Duncan, her death is sadly mourned throughout the family.

Mr. Richardson was called to Toronto because of the ill luck that his mother's house and contents were practically burned.

Misses Washington are visiting friends in Brantford.

A farewell entertainment was held by the young people in honour of Harold Cooper, at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Jenkins. Covers were laid for twenty.

Mrs. Grace Groat and family visited Mrs. Eliza Groat of Trafalgar St.

New York. —The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People has received copy of the October issue of "Cahiers du Sud," containing translations of a number of the Negro sermons in verse from James oeldon Johnson's "God's Trombones". The remaining poems of the volume are to be published in translation in the November issue of the magazine.

An introductory essay tells of the struggles of the Negro in America, his contributions in the arts, and of the success attending the performance of "The Creation," set to music by Louis Gruenberg and rendered by the League of Composers in New York.

Daytona Beach, Fla. —Wrat was described by old residents as "the largest funeral ever held in Daytona" marked the obsequies last week for Oscar Louis Tanner, colored patrolman on the city police force. Both races seemed to vie with each other in paying tribute to the fallen guardian of the law who had been killed a few days previously in an automobile crash.

Among those present at the funeral ceremonies were the mayor, the city manager, the chief of police and the fire chief. Each made commendatory speeches.

ent children revel in the burning of human beings, are filled with glee and mirth at the stench of broiling human flesh.

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