

'Injustices' Halting Halifax Negro Employment Program

Halifax — "You're asking us to accept a new style of life, that is, accepting Negroes to work. Do you feel that is right?"

"My policy has always been open — but I have second thoughts about hiring Negroes."

"The boss . . . expects you

to be superhuman, or rather slaves."

"I don't give a damn about the white man any more — if he pushes me, I'll push him."

These candid comments by employers and Negro youths were expressed during last summer's drive to find employment for 200 Negro students here.

This initial attempt by the Nova Scotia capital to tackle the problem of unemployment among the 11,000 Negroes in the Greater Halifax population of 200,000 met with moderate success. More important, it served to illustrate the schism between the races.

"There is a problem," said Jules Oliver, who spearheaded the search for jobs, in a report released recently. "A problem that can be summed up in two words — social injustice."

The report he compiled while serving as executive secretary of the Halifax Negro Employment Interim Committee said in part: "Five years ago, this society had a frustrated uneducated Negro who . . . was not so concerned about the matter of social mobility, but today, this society has a frustrated educated Negro who is concerned about this factor."

Mr. Oliver, 23, a student at Dalhousie University, got

128 jobs for young Negroes, 75 of whom will be retained on a part-time basis during the school year.

The committee used a three pronged approach to solicit the co-operation needed to carry out the project, entitled Give a Damn.

The news media were used constantly "to awaken the society as to the dynamics of the problem." Meetings were held with trade and merchant associations throughout the city to stress the need for more Negro employment. The committee made regular visits to employers throughout the summer to seek openings, assess attitudes and discuss problems.

"I was both pleased and disappointed" says Mr. Oliver after assessing the program. "Pleased that we placed 128, but disappointed at the attitude of many white employers."

"Many Negroes are better qualified than whites, but don't get good jobs. They end up doing domestic work or janitorial duties. Many employers refuse to put Negroes out in front as sales personnel for the ludicrous rationalization that it will damage their business."

"The first thing they ask is whether the Negro is honest, whether he drinks and if he's clean. They don't even consider his qualifications."

It was to overcome this hard-core discrimination among employers that the committee was established last April on the recommendation of the African Baptist Association.

Mr. Oliver's report, an outgrowth of the committee's five-month inquiry, now is before the city's social planning committee.

Alderman L. E. Moir, chairman of the committee, said in an interview following receipt of the report that the next step would be to set up a permanent body by early

1969, encompassing neighboring Dartmouth and the county to assist Negroes seeking jobs beginning next spring.

"I'm satisfied with the interim committee did all it could do," he said. "But I'm not satisfied with what we as citizens did to overcome discrimination. We have not faced up to the situation."

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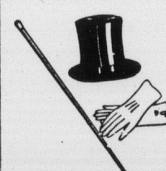
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The first Christmas card known, was printed and hand-coloured in England 123 years ago. In 1843, Henry Cole who was behind in his correspondence, commissioned an artist friend—J. C. Horsley, to make him a greeting card. It was a single page rectangular in three panels. The outer two sections showed acts of charity: feeding the hungry and clothing the naked. The large centre panel pictured a jolly family toasting each other with wine. This convivial scene so upset the temperance faction of England that the Christmas card idea didn't catch on for almost 25 years. Only 1000 of the Cole Cards were printed, of which just 12 originals are still in existence. Three of these are in the famous Coutts Hallmark Antique Card Collection of some 50,000 items.