

CANADIAN SLEEPING CAR PORTERS

American Negroes who escaped to Canada in the days before slavery was abolished, found new jobs open to them outside of farming. But today many of their descendants are making a good livelihood as sleeping car porters. As such, they are part of the Canadian scene.

During the war, railways were forced to hire a few white porters, but found that as a rule they were seldom as satisfactory as colored people. If the white man's prejudices have made it difficult for the Negro to find employment in other fields, here at least is one realm in which he reigns supreme.

Between seven and eight hundred porters work in Canada for the Canadian Pacific Railway Company alone, and an equal number work for the government-owned Canadian National Railways. The majority come from farming land around Chatham, Ontario. In the old days this district, between London and Windsor, Ontario, was at the end of the underground route which brought many slaves into freedom. Uncle Tom's Cabin still is in the locality, and arriet Beecher Stowe once lived near by. Today, Chatham is the centre of a prosperous beet and farming area, and the Negroes have proven themselves good farmers, too. They also provide porter recruits for the railways of Canada.

Other sources within Canada for colored labor are at Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, and a small settlement near Edmonton, Alberta. The remainder come from the West Indies or from the United States.

Travellers in Canada often remark about the cultivated accents of Canadian sleeping car porters. Few realize, however, that a good number are really "boys earning their way through college!" This is particularly true during summer months. To many a colored professional man, service on the railways has been the stepping stone to a degree in his chosen field. Salary and tips added together go a long way to meeting tuition fees. It is estimated that about one-third of the extra staff taken on during the summer months are students—both colored and white serving a meriod of jobs.

For example, of the 130 extra men hired by the Canadian Pacific Railway Company this summer, there were about 10 medical students in addition to 30 students from Morris Brown College in Atlanta, Georgia; about 20 from Fisk University at Nashville, Tennessee and 3 from Howard University, Washington, D.C.

What makes these recruits particularly interesting is the fact that a good percentage are veteran students. One example is W. H. Thomas, a pre-law student operating out of Winnipeg. A pilot and former member of the famed 99th Pursuit Squadron, he saw action in North Africa, Sicily, Italy, France, Holland, Germany and Luxembourg. Now his flying days are over, and he intends to specialize in corporation law.

The ages of these men vary generally from 22 to 35, although during the war younger men were accepted. According to CPR Instructor Cyril A. Wood of Toronto, it takes five years to make a good porter, but many of them do well enough to serve under competent guidance after ten days' instruction. Not only must they master the intricate technique of making up berths, but they also have to learn to regulate railway air conditioning equipment.

There are about sixteen veterans among the Canadian-born colored porters in Toronto alone. One of these is Captain L. T. Lightfoot, who was with the Canadian Army Dent-

al Corps. Another is Sergeant Seymour Tyler, veteran of the last two great wars. Instructor Woods himself is a veteran of the Boer War.

Thirty-five year old F. W. Roche, Toronto, was a store clerk before he joined the Royal Canadian Ordnance Corps in April, 1942. Born in North Bay, Ontario, he is married and has one child. He was in the army for 3 years and ten months altogether—3 years and 6 months of which he spent abroad in the United Kingdom. None of his relatives have been porters and this is his first job on the railways.

Jerry Bates of Toronto was a musician before he joined the services in Ottawa in August of 1941. A private with the R.C.A.S.C., he saw action in Italy, France and Belgium. He now is working as a porter for the first time. He is married, has no children.

Thirty-nine year old S. Prevost of Toronto was born in New Glasgow, Nova Scotia, but had lived in Toronto for 7 years before going overseas. He was a chauffeur before the war. A corporal in the Royal Canadian Dragoons, he was in the army for 34 months, during which time he saw service in Italy, France, Belgium, Holland and Germany.

Cyril A. Wood, instructor of the School for Porters maintained in the Toronto yards of the CPR is one man who has helped to make service a by-word along Canadian Railway lines. A distinguished flutist and veteran of the Boer War, he has seen over 40 years of continuous service with the CPR. In 1928 he became part-time instructor to other sleeping car porters. For the past five years he has been a permanent instructor. It is also his duty to check on the work of the men as the cars come into the Toronto yards.

Born in Jamaica in 1881, he enlisted as a boy in a military band, choosing the flute as his instrument. Recognized for his outstanding ability, he was sent to Kneller Hall in England—a training school for the bands of the British Empire, irrespective of color or creed. Later he rejoined his regiment on the West Coast of Africa for the Boer War was in progress. (A West African medal with bars is cherished reminder of that service). Later he served in Sierra Leone and in Bermuda. After 10 years of military service, he came to Canada in 1906 to work for the C.P.R. He has been with them ever since.

His musical training has never been forgotten. Not a day goes by that he does not put in an hour at his instrument. He is the only colored member of the Flute Club of Toronto, headed by A. E. Semple. Needless to say, his musical tastes run along strictly classical lines. He has been heard over the air occasionally—In 1926 in one of the first musical programs broadcast from Toronto, he accompanied the soloist of St. Andrew's Church in "Lo, Hear the Gentle Lark"—a selection that only the most faultless performer would dare to attempt, as any flutist or soprano could tell you. He looks forward to finding a niche in the musical life of Jamaica, where he will eventually retire on pension next year.

He is a memorable figure, with his grey hair and golden-brown complexion and wrinkled countenance. In him the melancholy of his race is untainted by rancor, but tempered by wisdom and the firm knowledge that "in art there are no barriers." Mellow, philosophical, and with a fine simplicity of speech and of bearing, he represents the best traditions of a service that is little-known, unhonored and unsung—but a part of the Canadian scene, nonetheless.

NEGROES MAY VOTE IN DEMS' WHITE PRIMARY

Charleston, S.C.—Judge J. Waties Waring of the United States District Court, Easter District of South Carolina, issued a restraining order today in the suit filed today by attorneys for the NAACP against eighty-nine officers and members of the State's Democratic Party, who the complaint alleges, have sought to deprive Negro citizens of their right to vote.

This suit, filed on behalf of David Brown and other qualified Negro voters of South Carolina, follows by three months the victory won by the NAACP in the case of Elmore W. Rice.

In the latter case, Judge Waring held illegal the refusal of the Democratic Party of South Carolina to allow qualified Negroes the right to participate in the Democratic Party Primary.

Judge Waring's decision was sustained by the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals and the United States Supreme Court refused, last April to review the decision.

Pursuant to this aim, the party passed rules prohibiting any Negro from joining Democratic Party clubs requiring that every Negro upon registering present a general registration certificate, and requiring every member of the Democratic Party to take an oath to uphold racial segregation and oppose federal fair employment practices legislation.

NEGRO LAW SCHOOL INFERIOR SIPLE WITNESSES DECLARE

Norman, Okla. — After five days of testimony by experts branding the Jim Crow Langston Law School as "inferior" Judge Justin Hinshaw has announced that at a later date he would hand down his decision on admitting Mrs. Ada Lois Sipuel Fisher to the Law School of the University of Oklahoma.

The case, which was taken to the U.S. Supreme Court last January by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, was retried in the District Court of Cleveland County, Oklahoma on the basis of NAACP claims that the State of Oklahoma, by setting up a separate three-professor law school for Mrs. Fisher, had not complied with the Supreme Court's mandate to make available to her forthwith a legal education equal to that provided white students.

Headed by Thurgood Marshall, NAACP special counsel, a battery of legal talent including Amos T. Hall of Oklahoma, James Nabrit of Howard University and William Robert Ming of the University of Chicago carried the attack against Jim Crow in education. They sought not only to prove inequality between the facilities for legal training provided by the state for Negro and white students, but also to demonstrate the fallacy inherent in the "equal but separate" concept. The basic attack was against segregation.

INGRAM FUND STILL CLIMBING

New York — The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People received \$803.09 this week in contributions to the Ingram Defense Fund, bringing the grand total to \$31,783.61. Of this money, the largest amount, \$23,162.74 has been donated by NAACP branches; \$1,444.53 has come from individuals; \$1,214.43 has been contributed by churches; and organizations have given \$6,001.93. Among the organizations which contributed to the fund this week are the 82nd Transportation Truck Company (Pacific Ocean Area), Madison County (Indiana) Industrial Union Council, Order of Eastern Star Pride Chapter 609 (Alabama), Negro Women Incorporated (New York) and United Steel Workers of America (Indiana).

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