

*Miss Bowen*

*Miss Artemisia Bowden*

ARE WE GIVING NEGROES EQUAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES?

The wording of the question demands none other than a negative reply. No, Negroes are not being given equal educational opportunities.

Sections where public educational opportunities are available for all citizens are on the debit side of the ledger.

Major factors involved in equal educational opportunities are:

1. Physical Plant and Equipment
2. Teacher-Personnel
3. Adequate Compensation for Teachers
4. Instructional Material
5. Length of School Term

These factors are dependent upon numbers. Hence, if from the business aspect Negro schools were staffed, equipped, and maintained in proportion to the Negro scholastics, it would be utterly impossible to afford equal educational opportunities.

The per capita basis of distributing funds make for inequalities.

Democracy bases its hopes for continuity upon the education of its masses, however, practices do not take into account that educational opportunities are not equal for all citizens. Inequalities in educational opportunities make for inequalities in citizenship status.

We are a nation of 130,000,000 people, living together, under what we term a Democratic form of government having as its claimed objective, the best interest of all the people.

In a democracy, the best interest of all the people, depends upon the intelligent participation of everyone; not the nine-tenths of the people, but of all the people. And to participate intelligently, all must be capable of coping with facts and situations, as the result of adequate education.

Let us pause a moment and look at this picture of adequate education, as it relates to the Negro.

In 1944, the following figures were released by the United States Office of Education: "The average expenditure for education for each child for the country as a whole in 1943-44 was \$116.99.

In the 31 states where there was no segregated school system, the average amount spent on each child was \$134.36.

In eleven states where there is a segregated school system \$84.79 was spent for the education of each white child and \$36.97 or less than half was spent for the education of each Negro child. In Mississippi, \$71.65 was spent for the education of each white child and \$11.96 for the education of each Negro child.

In Texas--\$92.69 was spent for each white child and \$63.12 for each Negro child."

A survey of teachers' salaries and of school buildings in eleven states of segregated system, showed inequalities to be equally as great.

Other surveys made by leading sociologists point out that Vocational training for Negro students of our public schools can be had only to a limited degree and that students interested in professional education, other than teaching, find it necessary to attend universities in other states, at great expense and inconvenience--where the dual system of education is not operative.

A growing sense of the injustices of this situation is gradually taking form in educational and religious groups-- as they seem to realize more and more that an active concern for the welfare of all, is essential to the success of Democracy. { That as long as we have discontent and ignorance which enslaves-- there will be less freedom and less security for all.

In a democracy, there must be a minimum standard of security, below which no one will be expected to live.

This means that everyone should have equal opportunity to achieve this security through adequate educational preparation.

The hope of this democratic way of thinking and living lies in our youth. They need to be schooled in social living. They need to have it impressed upon them again and again that democracy is rooted in the Christian, cooperative way of life, and that their highest happiness and security rests in the happiness and security of all. More and more the privileged young people in our colleges and throughout the land should be

led to understand that the restlessness and discontent of minorities, because of unfair treatment, is a challenge of their ethical standards and of the manner in which they use their advantageous position as a means of exploiting the weaker--or in the best interest of a better world order-- (Quote Rayford Logan, Professor of Howard University, Washington, D. C.)

"The American character, whatever its shortcomings, Abounds in courage, creative energy and resourcefulness, and is bottomed upon the profound conviction that nothing in the world is beyond its power to accomplish." (Unquote).

And may I add--Every soul has an inherent right to all possible aid to perfect his character. We need democracy that in essential needs makes no differentiation between rich and poor nor black and white.