

VOTES



MAKE no mistake: the greatest Negro problem is Votes for Negroes. Everything else is secondary. Moreover, we have votes. There are two million Negroes in the North and another million in Border States who have the franchise. With woman suffrage, present and in the near future, this means a million voters. It is this mighty million in whose hands the destiny of the Negroes of the Nation and the world rests.

They are the ones who prevent further disfranchisement; they are the ones who curb the power of the white South in Congress; they are the ones who have stopped the march of "Jim-Crow" legislation. They are the ones who yet will bring real Democracy to this land.

And they are beginning to know their power. The old type of Negro politician was satisfied with a bread and butter job for himself or his friends. The new type has raised his price: he wants freedom. He wants what other forward-looking men want, who are seeking to make America a land of real opportunity.

Today Negroes are sitting in the Legislatures of eight states; they are members of the Legislative Councils of seven of our largest cities; they are occupying dozens of important positions on Commissions and Administrative bodies. Only yesterday the largest city in the land seated two Negroes on her Board of Aldermen; the second largest already had one; and the third largest put one on her Select Council.

Not only are we getting into positions of power, but we are learning how to get our friends there and how to punish our enemies. In Philadelphia the notorious contractor-boss, Vare, tried to soft-soap his colored followers with talk and turned down their candidate for councils, while

the managers of the Moore Campaign nominated a Negro. The result was that in one Negro ward the Vares lost 3,000 votes and Moore won nomination and election.

This is tremendously encouraging, but it is only a beginning. Every Northern State with a considerable Negro population and every Border State must have black Legislators. Negro Congressmen must re-appear—first, from New York and Illinois; then from the Border; then from the South. Remember and never forget: disfranchisement in the South is contrary to law and public policy and cannot endure. With a vote in our hands, we are freemen.