

Oct. 25, 1939

Dr. Barnes

Charles A. Shorter

Information Re: The Negro Population of Philadelphia
And Sub-standard Housing Conditions

Concerning the Negro population and sub-standard housing, I am setting down the following statements:

In light of the fact that Negro families constitute 35.3 per cent of the City's total families living under sub-standard conditions, it is significant to note that this percentage is far greater than the percentage which Negro families represent of the City's total number of families, this being 11.1 per cent.

It is also significant to observe that while 56 per cent (28,569) of the total Negro families (50,997) of Philadelphia live under sub-standard conditions, white families living under similar conditions constitute only 12.8 per cent (52,327) of the total white families (406,826) of the city.

A further break-down of Negro conditions as compared to that of the whites reveals that for every Negro family living under sub-standard conditions there is approximately only one Negro family living under standard conditions. As compared to white, figures show that for every white family living under sub-standard conditions there are approximately 7 families who live under standard conditions. Stating it in another way: The Negro proportion of families according to figures in Mr. Harte's letter, which live under sub-standard conditions bears to the total number of Negro families out-number the proportion of white families which live under sub-standard conditions in the ratio of about 7 to 1.

The Philadelphia Real Property Surveys (released 1936) revealed that doubling up was 8.0 per cent among Negro families (perhaps today still higher.) The figure for the total of white and Negro families was only 4.4 per cent, the percentage being still smaller for white families alone.

When taking into consideration the evils brought about by sub-standard housing conditions, one has only to review the status of delinquency and health among Negro families to realize the necessity for better housing conditions and the need for larger participation in the housing program. For the past three years, Negro youth while representing approximately 11 per cent of the total number of youth in the City, composed 39 per cent of all the juvenile delinquency cases

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in 1936, 43 per cent in 1937 and 43 per cent in 1938. In 1937 the delinquency ratio of Negro children was over four times as great as in the case of white children. As to health, the infant mortality rate per 1000 population among Negroes was 74 persons in 1936 while it was 41 persons among whites. In 1937 the death rate from Tuberculosis (all forms) per 100,000 population was 171.1 persons among Negroes, while among the whites it was 47.2

Economically, Negroes represent the City's most marginal group, they constitute the highest percentage of unemployed roll and they compose 40 per cent of the total relief clients of the city. It is doubtful whether private enterprise will ever build for the marginal economic groups; as for sub-marginal, one is perhaps safe in saying private enterprise will never build. This very definitely points to the fact that this group should have large participation in governmental low cost housing programs.

Negroes in many instances in Philadelphia pay a good deal more rent than white persons pay for the same accommodations, although they constitute the low income bracket group. Likewise, in considering the Negro and the housing situation, one must not forget the difficulties which confront members of this group in making financial arrangements in purchasing homes.

Omit { From the facts which have been previously set forth it is obvious that the present outlined program of the Authority is a step in the direction where the need cannot be questioned. Although as outlined in the present program, Negro families receive 52 per cent of the units while the whites receive 48 per cent, it is well to keep in mind that 56 per cent of Negro families live under sub-standard conditions while only 12.8 per cent of the white families live under similar conditions.