Progress of Organization

While individual members of the Niagara Movement in the State of Pennsylvania have been as active as usual in the propagation of the principles of the Movement, the organization as such has not been conspicuous in the matter of public gatherings. The Secretary for Pennsylvania, therefore, can only summarize and report upon the general activities of the people as they come under his own observation and the observations of those from whom he has sought information from time to time.

The National Negro Political League

The National Negro Political League was organized in Philadelphia on April 7th, 1908. This initial meeting was well attended by the people of Philadelphia as well as by delegates from various parts. The purposes of this organization as announced by its promoters were to emphasize the objections of the colored people to the treatment accorded to our colored soldiers and to oppose the nomination and election of Mr. Taft. Some of the men, especially the clergy, who encouraged and attended this meeting and lustily protested in unison with the common voice, are now zealously advocating the election of Mr. Taft. No other meeting of consequence has been held in Philadelphia nor in the State during the past year.

The Public School Question

The fight against segregating colored children in the public schools of Philadelphia which the State Secretary for more than a year has been waging almost single handed after trying in vain to get the cooperation of others, was finally taken up with a flare by some of our clergy who had manifested indifference to our appeals. It appears that they had digested neither their subject nor their arguments and were put to confusion when they came before the school authorities as a committee into which they had constituted themselves. It seems that these gentlemen have no further effort in this direction as their failures were criticized by some portion of the colored press.
It was observed that some of these gentlemen were endeavoring the be on both sides of this question. They were known as leaders in the movement to have the State appropriate money for some separate institutions which they were trying to found or had founded and were easily put to rout when they came up to protest against separate schools in Philadelphia. Besides such open blunders on the part of these leaders, there seems to be much honest difference of opinion among the rank and file as to whether or not they want separate schools or whether they would not be best if it being agreed all around that we should have more colored teachers. They seem willing to sacrifice the opportunity for a larger number of teachers in future by a continuance of the pressure for their appointment in the mixed schools, for the certain appointment of a few in the immediate present. The State Secretary has been contending for the appointment of teachers on merit alone, a thing which we believe would surely be done sooner or later if his attitude should be supported.

The Out-Look

Politically, things are muddled and confused in our section. While it is apparent that a number of our prominent men are coming out for the Republican ticket, many equally prominent are openly indifferent and others are still declaring their opposition to the party. The united voice with which these gentlemen have been preaching against the Republican party during the past two years has made deep impressions upon the minds of the honest yeomanry. Many of the rank and file have thrown off the shackles of the Republican party never to be chained again. The certainty is, therefore, that the Negro voters in Pennsylvania will scatter this year as never before in the history of the State. They are beginning to realize that they should regard the platforms of political parties as a declaration of what is proposed to be done and a musty record of what is supposed to have been done fifty years ago. They are beginning to see the difference between the party of Sumner, Julian and Hale and the posthumous bastard political organization which now claims these men as its father.

Some of our local clerical leaders who were front tier members of the indignation meeting that have been protesting against the Republican party have recently met and organized a Civil Rights League.
The declared purposes of this organization are to press questions of our rights before National, State and Municipal Legislative bodies. The real purpose of the organization, however, is to work for the election of Mr. Taft, as we are reliably informed. Though it seems difficult to establish efficient local branches of national organizations already in existence, it seems that the program outlined might well be carried out by some of our national organizations with local representatives where it not considered a hopeless task to enlist them in the service of Mr. Taft.

Meeting Places

Another thing that seriously handicaps free action on the part of the layman leader is the lack of adequate places for meeting outside of church. While it is doubtless well for these secular movements to be assisted by the clergy, it would be better if the clergy would co-operate with laymen than to have laymen co-operate with the clergy. In resettling to churches for meetings, sentiment has to be tempered because some times the minister is not in honest accord and always because some of the good church members are not in accord. To have an efficient propaganda, there should be meeting places thoroughly identified with and dominated by the sentiment of the organization.

John Brown Memorial Committee

While the Niagara Movement has achieved much in organizing and giving expression to opposition to toadism, the suggestion looking to the erection of a memorial to JOHN BROWN, if carried out or seriously attempted, will tend to concretize and perpetuate the sentiment. The Boston Conference gave the matter some consideration last year and authorized the Secretary for the State of Pennsylvania in connection with the General Secretary, to organize a committee to take charge of matter of promoting the enterprise. Much time and considerable money has been spent by the chairman of this committee in the endeavor to get this work definitely under way. By advice of the General Secretary some 27 persons were invited to become members of this committee. After much correspondence, unqualified acceptances were received from less than a half dozen. The chairman personally assumed liability for a number of engravings of John Brown made from the famous Sartain plate which the Movement owns,
with the idea of using them as premiums in the hope of stimulating interest. It was intended to place these engravings at the disposal of members of the committee to facilitate their work in attracting the attention and interest of the general public in connection with the sale of Certificates of Membership in the JOHN BROWN MEMORIAL ASSOCIATION.

Owing to a lack of funds in the Treasury of the Movement, however, the chairman of the Memorial Committee was unable to secure these Certificates. It will be utterly impossible to promote this work under the plan outlined by the committee without these Certificates.

We believe that the Niagara Movement may not only build this monument but in doing so will build a monument to itself.

It is hoped that this meeting will take up this matter in earnest and make arrangements to put this work on foot so that we may dedicate our memorial to John Brown and other anti-slavery heroes in 1913, the year of jubilee.

[Signature]