

March 26, 1965

"...A Heck of a Town"

"New York! New York! It's a Heck of a Town." How well the composer of this song described the largest city on the East Coast! New York City is a main cultural center of the nation, with a long list of museums, theaters, opera houses, music halls, and historical monuments. New York has also been called the "melting pot" of the United States; it is host to thousands of immigrants, and even to Americans who find the city attractive. These people comprise a population of approximately eight million. With such a variety of people in one area, is it not inevitable that problems such as housing, discrimination, and social conflict should arise?

In recent years, old slum dwellings infested with rats and disease have come to the view of the public. Perhaps people have known of these things for many years already, but it is only now that action is definitely being taken to eliminate some of the existing unsanitary conditions. It remains to be seen, however, in this aspect as well as others, whether the plans of the city, or federal government will succeed. These buildings are being torn down and replaced with facilities more capable for living. Will this be successful? Although people do not at all like the unhealthy conditions that prevail, neither do they like the idea of having to pull out and transfer to an entirely different environment.

Secondly, with the immense mixture of races found in New York, discrimination is to be expected. The most recent and

delicate situation is that of the busing of school children to places outside of their neighborhood. Much to the protest of some parents, this method for the possible solution of the problem of racial imbalance is underway. Is relocation of the students the answer to an end of one part of discrimination? Or is a more effective and a more complicated solvent necessary?

In the area of social conflict, the most outstanding confliction is the crime scene of the jungle-like maze of concrete. All too often the radio announcer blares out the news of an attack or murder in the streets, subways, or even a "private" apartment. What has happened to the individual's respect and privacy? Where will it be in the future? Will New Yorkers advance to the point where they are terrified to unlock their doors, or what?

One can only speculate the outcome of these problems. Methods of solution are in progress. The City of New York holds a future that can be bright and worthy of expectation, but its direction depends on the action of men today. From the present outlook the future looks quite gloomy, especially if the problems increase at the present rate. The lever can be moved two ways. Of course, the question is, "how will the fulcrum act?"

The answer lies deeper than just cleaning up the city in a material sense. Perhaps a complete reformation of society is needed. To end the problems that stem from the people, the renovation must come from the source of trouble, the people themselves. If the methods now incorporated fail, what will become of New York? It seems the answer would be a change from within the people of the city itself, for sometimes the lives seem to be more barbaric than civilized. Yes, New York City has a

promising future if New Yorkers want it bad enough to end their discriminations, and will be willing to change for the better. Maybe then New York will truly be " a heck of a town. "

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