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Miss Ida Graves, Says, No Race Prejudice in Barbados

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A stitch in time

TOLEDO, OHIO, expects to save the expense, suffering and violence of many strikes with the help of its new, trouble-shooting Relations Board. The board operates somewhat as the League of Nations does, arbitrating between employees and management before, instead of after damage has been done. Already three strikes have been prevented, and more than three similar permanent strike councils have been organized in other cities.

Miss Ida Graves, Says,
No Race Prejudice in Barbados

BARBADOS... jungle... tropical wilderness... enchanting words, but often misassociated ones, according to Miss Ida Graves, graduate student of economics and a native of Barbados.

Her island, the West Indies, as the brown-eyed student described it in her room at Margaret Hall, is far different than most Americans imagine it.

Somewhat larger than four Iowa counties, the 166-square mile track of water-bounded land is a strictly agricultural area, providing sustenance for about 200,000 people, or 1,100 per square mile. Although the whole population derives its living directly or indirectly from the soil, the people depend on only one crop, sugar.

The sugar is raised on large plantations resembling those of the old South, except in the use of slave labor—the planters pay colored labor a very low wage. The sugar is shipped to Canada and England in the form of raw crystals or molasses. Only the amount needed for domestic use is refined on the island.

Naturally, the towns are few and small, the chief of them being Bridgetown, a port where many cargoes are transferred between ships.

But it does not follow that the colony lacks modernity. Far from it. Unlike people of other West Indies islands, enough of the people of Barbados have high standards of living that they can demand and support public utilities—lights, gas, water and roads. Automobiles there are many, and radios are almost as thick as in the States.

The cause is the social condition for which, more than anything else, Barbados is remarkable. Although all but 5,000 inhabitants have African ancestors, there is no race problem. What caste distinction exists is founded, as is ours, on economic status. A person of African descent who proves himself professionally competent is accepted in any society, and, by century-old precedent, racial intermarriage is frequent. Therefore, Negroes have the opportunity to rise socially and economically and to enjoy modern progress.

Free public education is offered to all Barbadians, and for those who can afford there are secondary schools throughout the island. There are also two boarding schools for young people of nearby smaller islands.

The colony does not boast a university. For that reason, all professional training must be acquired abroad, said Miss Graves. She added that Barbadians who go abroad to learn professions almost never return home excepting for vacations, wherefore the island is deficient in professional service. The government offers many foreign scholarships each year.

When asked about the climate, the southerner said, "Oh, I love to talk about the climate." It is no wonder, for the trade winds which blow nine months of the year keep the country warm but comfortable. The summer weather is never so oppressive as in the North American cities, and Barbadian winters would be delightful to even Californians.

Miss Graves, whose studies have taken her to McGill University in Montreal, to Radcliffe and Bryn Mawr colleges and to the London School of Economics, says that with others of her land she must stay abroad to work, but concludes, "I'll always go home for vacations."