A STATE PROBLEM?

Mrs. F. A. Parker, editor of the Prentiss Headlight down in Jefferson Davis County, has written: "A man in an adjoining county, who is getting along in years but who still likes to farm, says it seems like he will have to give it up because it is next to impossible to get any help on the farm in these days of 'the welfare.'"

"This man says there is in one house in his county SEVENTEEN illegitimate children. For their keep the mothers are drawing a total of $187 700 per month in addition to the piles of groceries hauled to them.

"How do you like for your tax money to be spent in support bastardy and encouraging more and more of this kind of sinning?"

The Prentiss editor may have spotlighted a new record for Mississippi illegitimates living under one domestic roof, if the figure is accurate.

A NATIONAL RECORD

The U. S. Public Health Service in a recent report recorded 43,681 illegitimate births set a new all-time record in 1958 with 203,700 babies born out of wedlock, an increase of 7,000 over the previous year.

Among whites, one out of every 88 babies is listed as illegitimate. Among non-whites, better one out of every five births is illegitimate. The District of Columbia, where the population is predominantly colored, leads the nation. Of every 1,000 babies born there, 292 were illegitimate.

Mississippi is in second place with 272 illegitimate births among every 1,000 babies. Figures show the great majority of these are colored.

LOUISIANA HEADACHE

In neighboring Louisiana, Gov. Jimmie Davis last week urged a pre-legislative conference to give serious consideration to the possibility of reducing welfare expenditures for support of illegitimate children.

"I can overlook one or maybe two mistakes by most any body," Governor Davis reportedly said, "because we have sinned and come short of the eyes of the Lord."

"But when these women wil- fully and intentionally have a baby every nine months and two days, for the purpose of making welfare which you and I must pay, it's nothing short of a disgrace."

MAJOR OBSTACLE

Throughout the South there is strong sentiment for restricting welfare aid where unwed mothers have more than one illegitimate child. Regulations have been a major obstacle to state restrictions. Washington puts up matching funds for much of the state welfare benefits and Uncle Sam appears to be considerably more interested in the programs than in the people. His "chosen people" are the farmers: 1960

A CASE IN POINT

White newspapers are often plain-spoken in discussing this problem. The nation's Negro press, however, generally soft-peddlers the subject, undoubtedly because Negroes are so prominently in what has been called "tax-subsidized bastardy."

"(In protest against "second class citizenship," illegitimacy is never mentioned.) At least one colored newspaper has defended it, expressing a candidly immoral viewpoint which may or may not be typical race thinking.

The St. Louis Evening Whirl recently aired the case of one Evelyn Brown, colored mother of nine being supported by Missouri taxpayers to the tune of $185 monthly in child aid. After her ninth child was born, out of wedlock, welfare officials cut her allowance to $110 and Evelyn feels "discriminated against."

"SHE CANNOT STOP"

The St. Louis colored newspaper reported facts in the Evelyn Brown case, then remarked editorially:

"Mrs. Brown thinks that she is entitled to live a normal life with a boyfriend and not have to waste money running around hotels and rooming houses. They can't afford it."

"Mr. Brown is young and normal. She is only 29. She can't stop having a boy friend and romance now. She believes that poor people are entitled to social pleasures, normal and otherwise."

"This newspaper agrees with this version of living. The rich have everything they want. Why can't poor people have a little fun? A lot of our readers would change.

"We do not condemn Mrs. Brown. We rather praise her. She is living proof of a good woman; one who is promoting the race."

"When our race increases in number to a much larger ex- tent, we can demand more, get more and show our power and pride by our example."

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MISSISSIPPI NOTEBOOK

By TOM ETHRIDGE