

SOLUTION TO A PROBLEM

One of the causes of the recent riots in the Puerto Rican community on the near northwest side was said to be the language barrier. Few Chicago policemen speak Spanish, the language of most of the migrants from Puerto Rico.

In an effort to overcome this barrier, the Robert R. McCormick Charitable Trust has contributed funds which will enable the Chicago police department to expand greatly its program of teaching Spanish. The gift will pay a major part of the cost of classes for 150 policemen for two months.

Along with this program, greater efforts ought to be made to induce Puerto Ricans to enroll in the English language classes which the Chicago board of education has conducted for many years. The classes are held in churches, libraries, and other gathering places in areas of Spanish-speaking people. The board of education will supply a teacher for any group of as many as 15 persons wishing to receive instruction in English. Eleven classes are now being held in the area where the recent riots occurred.

The Puerto Ricans are only the latest of many migrants to Chicago who have been handicapped because they spoke a foreign language. Each group has managed to overcome the handicap, and we have no doubt that the Puerto Ricans also will do so. They ought to be helped to learn English as quickly as possible. Meanwhile, those who fail to take advantage of free English classes have no right to complain about the communications barrier. Communication is a two-way street.