

Employment

... [M]en [are] forced to work for such menial wages, they are forced to come up and be reared with such kind of education until they have to be Uncle Toms all day long just to keep a raggedy job, to keep a roof over their head and some food in their family's belly; ... not being able to be men all day, they come home at night and they scold their wives, or they beat their children to prove to themselves ... [that they are men].¹

I. THE ECONOMIC CONDITION OF NEGROES IN THE HEARING AREA

More than three-fifths of the population of the hearing area is Negro, one of the highest percentages for any area of equivalent size in the United States. Poverty pervades the area, particularly among Negroes; in 1959 median non-white family income was \$1,279, or only 30 percent of the white median income. More than 90 percent of the Negro people have incomes below the poverty index.

Cotton farming through the plantation system, which for many years dominated the area, has been giving way to more diversified agricultural activities such as livestock and dairy farming, and the raising of crops such as vegetables, soybeans and peanuts. As machine replace hand labor on the farms, Negroes—especially tenant farmers—are being forced to give up farming in large numbers. From 1940 to 1960 the number of Negro farm operators declined by 24,700 or 60 percent.

While manufacturing industries, including pulp and paper, machinery, fabricated metals and chemicals, have moved into the area, Negroes have had relatively little share in the new jobs they have created. Negroes throughout the area are victims of severe unemployment and underemployment. According to reports filed with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, for example, Negroes accounted in 1967 for only 22 percent of the area's reported industrial employment though they represent 62 percent of the population. In the same year, Negroes made up just eight percent of skilled and white collar employment, but 63 percent of unskilled employment in the area.²

In the past two years, three large paper mills and a manufacturing company have begun operations in the area. Of the 782 new jobs they created, just 112, or 14 percent, are held by Negroes. Similarly, for all companies in the area reporting increases in male employment for 1966-67 in reports to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, less than one-quarter of the new jobs went to Negroes.³

As a result, Negroes—many of whom told the Commission that given a meaningful option they would prefer to remain where they were living—have had to leave the area to seek work. Many go to urban areas in the North. From 1950 to 1960 net Negro migration from the 16 counties was 94,420, more than four times

¹ Testimony of Hosea Williams, Director of Voter Registration and Political Education for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, *Hearing Before the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights*, Montgomery, Alabama, April 27-May 2, 1968.

² See additional information drawn from EEOC reports in Table 1 appearing at the end of this report.

³ The gulf that separates whites and Negroes in the job economy of the area is further illustrated by the fact that in 1960 the occupational group described as "sales workers", was comprised of 2,733 white males and 223 Negro males; similarly, the category "managers, officials and proprietors" was comprised of 4,974 white males and 351 Negro males. On the other hand, the category "laborers (except farm and mine)" was comprised of 1,610 white males and 6,829 Negro males. *U.S. Census of Population: 1960*, Vol. II, *Characteristics of the Population*, Part 2, *Alabama*. The dramatic differences between white and Negro employment are further reflected in data on job placements made through the State Employment Service. Nonagricultural job placement statistics for the offices which serve the 16-county hearing area, aggregated for December, 1967, show that the bulk of white placements, 45 percent, are in manufacturing, while only 14 percent of Negro placements are in manufacturing. Similarly, 25.5 percent of white placements, but only 10 percent of Negro placements, are in trade. The largest concentration of nonwhites, 39 percent, is in private households and other service jobs; only 2.5 percent of whites were placed in this category.