

the net white outmigration.⁴ The outmigration of Negroes continues today; few Negro high school students, the Commission learned, look forward to employment careers in the 16-county area.

The marginal economic existence of Negroes who remain was illustrated by a number of witnesses who testified at the hearing.

For example, Mrs. Rebecca Ward and her 10 children are presently supported by a combination of welfare payments and earnings from her work as a domestic. She told the Commission that for 12 years, until November, 1967, she had been employed as a domestic by one employer, working seven days a week from 7 a.m. to 1 p.m. for \$1.00 a day, and that at the end of that time she was fired with one day's notice. Another witness, Mr. Willie Smith, told the Commission that after six years in the Army, from which he was honorably discharged as a Staff Sergeant, he is now employed as a "handyman"; his monthly take-home pay is approximately half his pay while in the Army.

There is much in the lives of Negroes in the hearing area which tends to perpetuate their poverty from generation to generation, by curtailing their employment opportunities. Malnutrition undermines their ability to study and to work,⁵ inferior all-Negro schools give rise to low levels of academic achievement and inadequate vocational preparation,⁶ and there is pervasive racial discrimination.

II. EMPLOYMENT DISCRIMINATION

Much of the unemployment and underemployment of Negroes in the hearing area is attributable to racial discrimination.

Retail and industrial employment

Shortly prior to the hearing, Commission staff members surveyed the employment practices of retail businesses in 21 cities and towns within the 16-county hearing area. Almost none of these businesses are covered by the requirements of Title VII the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which is applicable only to companies with 25 employees or more. Evidence of discrimination by these employers was ample.

The survey showed that of a total of 2,504 jobs in retail businesses, only 497, or about 20 percent, were held by Negroes (even though Negroes represent 62 percent of the area's population).

Thirty-one percent of Negro employment was part-time employment while only 16 percent of white employment was part-time. The predominant position of Negro males was porter or janitor. At a department store in Greenville, Alabama, a Negro was hired part-time, a staff member was told, because "he's working out a debt;" all of the other eight employees were white.⁷

The discriminatory attitudes of employers interviewed revealed themselves in some of the following statements:

"don't hire Negroes to clean up because I do my own Nigger work" (Demopolis)

"Negroes can't weigh things nor figure prices, we tried" (Butler)

"problem with Negroes is not their education but their dependability" (Union Springs)

In private industrial employment in the 16-county area, Negroes have traditionally been restricted to the most menial positions. Only with the Civil Rights Act of 1964 has this begun to change. For example, Vanity Fair Mills, a major manufacturer of women's garments with a number of plants in the hearing area, acknowledged that it did not hire Negro sewing machine operators until the enactment of the Civil Rights Act. The company still employs Negroes in these

⁴ During the 1940-1950 decade net migration from the South reached an all-time high of over two million, of which about two-thirds was Negro. The pull of jobs in war industries and the displacement from agriculture resulting from mechanization coincided to precipitate and sustain the heavy outmigration. Especially large numbers of nonwhite sharecroppers and other tenants left the land.

⁵ See accompanying staff report, *Health, Welfare and Food Programs*.

⁶ See accompanying staff report, *Education*.

⁷ Though a number of proprietors expressed the view that employing Negroes would be disastrous to business, the manager of a food store in Livingston, Alabama, told the Commission that six of his thirteen employees, including a cashier, were Negroes. A Negro girl was moved from another department to the cash register in response to picketing by the Negro community; the manager indicated he had feared the white reaction before he made this transfer. However, he said, there have been no problems and no business lost.