

voluntarily, or who never worked before, or who decided to re-enter the labor force, all of whom are rightly counted as unemployed. About 40 percent of the unemployed new entrants or re-entrants, for example, were seeking part-time work, nearly all of the adult women and teenagers.

These data make clear that some unemployment arises when the worker has freedom to quit in order to improve his position, freedom to seek part-time rather than full-time work, and freedom not to take the first job that is offered. One of the benefits of full employment is that it makes it easier to exercise these choices—to shift jobs and to be selective. Quit rates are usually high when the job market is tight, and low when it becomes less buoyant. Similarly, the number of new entrants or re-entrants may rise and fall with job opportunities. For these reasons, a reduction in demand produces some partial offsets to the rise in unemployment through layoffs.

The current low unemployment rate, of course, masks wide disparities. Thus, although nonwhite workers actually accounted for a larger than proportionate share of the total unemployment decline in 1968—reflecting the tight supply of labor as well as special efforts to reduce discrimination—their rate is still slightly more than double that for whites. This is approximately the same ratio as in 1961.

The unemployment rate for teenagers remains stubbornly high. The current teenage rate is significantly below the rates of the first half of this decade, but it has changed hardly at all in the last three years and has not shown the kind of improvement that has been experienced by adult workers.

The situation of the Negro teenager requires special mention. The jobless rate for Negro 16–19 year-olds was 25 percent in 1968, as against 11 percent for the white youngsters. Negro teenagers have remained virtually untouched by the recent unemployment reductions where as their white counterparts have experienced a substantial reduction in joblessness. As a result, the ratio of Negro-to-white teenage unemployment rates has risen substantially in recent years. In 1954, the teenage Negro-to-white ratio was a 1.4 to 1; by 1968 the ratio has risen to 2.3 to 1. Negro girls have fared somewhat worse than boys. In 1968, their unemployment rate stood at 29 percent, as compared with 22 percent for Negro boys.

It is important also to note the absolute magnitude of the teenage situation. With the high rates, the total number of unemployed Negro teenagers averaged about 200,000 in 1968. Furthermore, over one-third were seeking only part-time work, mainly because they were still in school.

Another aspect of this diversity among rates of unemployment is highlighted by the findings of a new Department of Labor survey to measure unemployment and barriers to employment in a selected number of very low income areas in 6 large cities. This survey, known as the Urban Employment Survey, has two broad goals: first, to develop insights into the special social and economic characteristics of slums that affect employment conditions, including slum area residents' attitudes toward work, training, and other aspects of getting and holding a job; and second to evaluate the effect of various manpower programs.

This survey is being directed by the Bureau of Labor Statistics with the cooperation and financing of the Manpower Administration. The Bureau of the Census is conducting the survey in the Labor Department's Concentrated Employment Program areas of six cities—Atlanta, Chicago, Detroit, Houston, Los Angeles, and New York City. In addition to these low-income neighborhoods, the survey in Atlanta and Detroit will develop comparable information for the remainder of each of these cities in order to provide comparisons with the findings from the slum areas.

From this first report, being released today, I want to mention three findings.

1. High unemployment rates and low earnings characterize the employment situation of residents of these 6-slum areas, almost two-thirds of whom are Negro and another large proportion (18 percent) either Mexican-American or Puerto Rican. At 9.5 percent, the overall unemployment rate for workers in UES slum areas was more than two and one-half times the average for the total civilian labor force. About 15 percent of the full-time workers in these areas reported earnings less than \$65 a week, about the equivalent of the current Federal minimum wage for a 40 hour week.

2. As expected, the jobless rate for Negro workers in these areas was higher than in other areas, 10.4 percent. The comparable unemployment rate for white workers was also very high, about two-thirds of the Negro rate, partly because the white rate is affected by the large proportion of Mexican-Americans and Puerto Ricans in several of the areas studied. In contrast, for the country as a whole, the white unemployment rate was less than half the rate for Negroes.