

BIG NEGRO TURNOUT HELD UNCERTAIN ELECTION FACTOR

Commenting on what he terms "uncertain factors" of the coming election, Mark Sullivan writes in the Herald-Tribune:

"---Another novel factor in this campaign is the Negro vote. It is novel in two respects. It is going to be much larger than ever before, and apparently it will be distributed among the two parties in new proportions. Formerly the Negroes in the North (they hardly vote at all in the South) voted overwhelmingly Republican. This year, however, the Democratic leaders are conducting an aggressive drive, first, to get a much larger number of Negroes to the polls; and second, to have most of them vote Democratic. Many of the Negro voters, or their spokesmen, are telling the Democratic leaders they will vote Democratic. But here, too, there is an element of concealment. Many Negroes are on relief, and in some communities half of all on relief are Negroes. These Negroes, like all on relief, have a motive for being deferential to the Democratic officials who handle the relief funds. If they think their relief bread and butter will come easier if they say they are going to vote Democratic, it is human nature, Negro or white, for them to say so. But the ballot in November is secret, and the Negroes have a strong sentimental attachment to the Republican party...."

THE NEGRO VOTE TODAY

In the Akron Beacon-Journal and other papers appears a feature article by Oswald Garrison Villard, quoted here in part:

"In no previous presidential campaign has the Negro voter counted as in this one. This is not merely due to the awakening of politicians to the fact that the Negro now holds the balance of power in seven or eight states, for he has long been in that position in at least three states. Nor is it altogether because of the Negro's slowly developing self-consciousness, his increasing awareness of his power.

"In part it is due to the treatment he has received from the New Deal and the consequent reaction upon the Republicans who have so long felt themselves the sole electoral holders of the black race because of their physical emancipation 73 years ago. It is strange that light and aid should now be coming to the Negro from the party which has always stood for his political subjugation and economic exploitation after it was compelled to abandon his enslavement, but such is the fact.

"In the administration of Woodrow Wilson the Negro clerks in the departments of Washington were for the first time segregated--with William G. McAdoo taking the lead in the Treasury department. Yet today the colored people are turning to the Democrats in large numbers because under Mr. Roosevelt the Negro has been given relief and WPA jobs on terms of absolute equality with the whites--with occasional exceptions. There was at first some discrimination in New York's Harlem, for instance, but this has been corrected. So far as the administration was concerned there was every advantage in its desire to treat all the Negro needy fairly...."