

NEWS ARTICLES ABOUT WPA

REPORT REVEALS HOW COLOR BANS SENT SO MANY TO RELIEF ROLLS

The following article, written from a report by Alfred Edgar Smith appearing in the March bulletin of the FERA, was carried by the Afro-American. Other papers, including the Scripps-Howard dailies, carried similar articles from the same source:

"Relief figures grew from a number representing a little more than one-sixth of the total colored population of the country to approximately one-fourth within two years of the depression period and the greatest percentage of this disproportionate number of unemployed are in urban areas.

"These facts and others are brought out in the March report of the Federal Relief Administration by Alfred Edgar Smith, head of the colored labor section of the WPA. The report was released this week.

"In October, 1933, the percentage of colored on relief, according to the relief census, was 17.8, while that of all other persons was 9.5. When the unemployed census was taken in January, 1935, the percentage had grown to 25.5 for the former group and 15.5 for the latter.

"An analysis of 23 States," the article states, "each having a total of 100,000 or more colored, in 1930 showed the greatest urban disproportions occurred in Missouri, New Jersey, and Ohio, each having approximately four times as great a percentage of colored as of whites on urban relief rolls."

"It was also revealed by the findings that in ten States a greater proportion of whites than colored receive relief in rural areas.

"In Illinois, Ohio, and New Jersey, however, it was found that relief in rural areas among colored was three or four times as great as that of whites, and more than twice as great in Pennsylvania, New York and Michigan.

"Mr. Smith gives as reasons for the race's constituting one-sixth of the unemployed when it makes up only one-tenth of the total population of the country the following:

"The concentration of the workers in unskilled labor and domestic service groups which contributed heavily to relief rolls; lower wage scales than for the white workers; racial discrimination in lay-offs and re-employment; displacement by white labor; industrial color bans; color bans among organized labor;