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OFFICE FOR EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

WAR MANPOWER COMMISSION

WASHINGTON, D. C.

Chairman

PAUL V. McNUTT

FEDERAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATOR

February 17, 1943

My dear Mr. Secretary:

The problem of induction of Negroes into the Army and the Navy is acute. Negroes constitute approximately ten percent of our population. They constitute less than six percent of our armed forces. The percentage of Negroes in the Army is much greater than in the Navy. The Selective Training and Service Act of 1940 prohibits discrimination in the selection of men on account of race or color. The low percentage of Negroes in the Army and in the Navy has resulted in a higher percentage of Negroes in the civilian population. This situation is made more serious because of the geographical concentration of Negroes and because nearly all of the men involved, Negro and White, have been single.

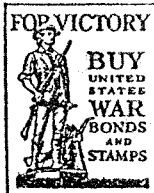
The control of admission of Negroes into the armed forces has been exercised by severe limitations on the numbers permitted to enlist, and in Selective Service by the use of Negro and White calls. The use of Negro and White calls compels the local board to disregard the order numbers of registrant in order to fill White calls. It is estimated that approximately 300,000 Negroes have been passed over to fill White calls. x 51

This condition has been the cause of continuous and mounting criticism. It possesses grave implications should the issue be taken into the courts, especially by a white registrant. The probability of this action increases as the single white registrants disappear and husbands and fathers become the current white inductees, while single Negro registrants who are physically fit remain uninducted.

This subject was discussed with the War Manpower Commission on January 20 and January 27, 1943. A recommendation was made by the Staff of the War Manpower Commission that beginning April 1 calls contain no reference to Negroes or to Whites.

It was my understanding that representatives of the War and the Navy Departments were to report on the reaction of their Departments to this recommendation. This report has not been received.

The practice of placing separate calls for white and colored registrants is a position which is not tenable, and it is now necessary to begin delivering men in accordance with their order number without regard to race or color.



The Honorable
The Secretary of War
Washington, D. C.

CC: General Hershey

x 1413-B

Sincerely yours,

/s/ Paul V. McNutt
Chairman

(Identical letter sent to Secretary of the Navy)

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