

RURAL DEEP SOUTH ELECTS 10 NEGROES

U.S. Observers Give Report —Their List May Grow

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WASHINGTON, Nov. 11—

The Justice Department reported today that at least 10 Negroes were elected to public office Tuesday in rural areas of the Deep South. With very few exceptions, Negroes have not won offices there since Reconstruction.

The figure of ten may not represent all the Negroes elected. It was compiled from reports turned in by Federal election observers, who fanned out across rural areas of Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana and Mississippi. No Negroes were elected in South Carolina.

Two cases of physical violence against Negroes were reported—the beating of a Negro election worker in Lowndes County, Ala., by a group of whites and an Amite County, Miss., Negro poll watcher who charged he was struck by a white person.

A department spokesman said these incidents were being investigated, along with scattered reports of irregularities in contests involving Negro candidates.

Turnout Hailed

John Doar, head of the department's Civil Rights Division, described the participation by registered Negroes as "just great."

However, he pointed out that only 47.8 per cent of the Negroes in the Deep South were registered. In August of 1965, when the Voting Rights Act of 1965 went into effect, the figure was 28.6 per cent.

In Macon County, Ala., three Negroes were elected: Lucius Amerson, sheriff; L. A. Lockair, tax collector, and Harold Webb, member of the board of education.

In Greene County, Ala., the Rev. Peter J. Kirksey defeated a white write-in candidate for a school board post.

A final tally of votes in Hancock County, Ga., which was not completed until last night, showed that James A. Smith had been elected county commissioner and Robert Ingram had won a school board seat. Both are Negroes.

In West Feliciana Parish, La., two Negroes, Raymond Minor and Alvin White, were elected to the school board.

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Francis Joseph Atlas, who complained to the Civil Rights Commission in 1960 that he had been trying unsuccessfully to register for 10 years, was elected to the school board in East Carroll Parish. The parish has more white voters than Negroes on the rolls.

Robert Lee Williams, the first Negro to be elected to public office in Mississippi since Reconstruction, was elected to the school board in Jefferson County.