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RESEARCH BULLETIN

UNEMPLOYABLE RELIEF CASES IN THIRTEEN SELECTED CITIES

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SERIES I No. 19

## PREFACE

This bulletin presents data on unemployable and employable relief cases obtained from The Survey of Current Changes in the Urban Relief Population in thirteen selected cities—Atlanta, Baltimore, Bridgeport, Butte, Chicago, Detroit, Houston, Manchester, Omaha, Paterson, St. Louis, San Francisco, and Wilkes-Barre. The number of cases admitted to and separated from the relief rolls, both employable and unemployable, is shown monthly throughout 1935, with cases new to relief in a given city distinguished from the reopened cases. Included also is an analysis (for May and October) of reasons for closing unemployable cases. As the term is used in this report, unemployable cases consist of (1) cases with no person 16-64 years of age and (2) cases with no person within these age limits working or seeking work.

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## UNEMPLOYABLE RELIEF CASES IN THIRTEEN SELECTED CITIES

This report presents an analysis of (1) turnover of unemployable relief cases and (2) reasons for closing unemployable cases, in thirteen selected cities during the calendar year 1935. Turnover data on employable relief cases are included for purposes of comparison.

### I. Turnover of Unemployable Relief Cases

The relief load of unemployable cases<sup>1</sup> is far from static. The turnover<sup>2</sup> of unemployables on relief in twelve of the thirteen<sup>3</sup> cities was about 4 percent per month in 1935, while for employables (prior to the inauguration of the Works Program when a sharp increase occurred) it was only 6 percent per month.

Accessions of unemployable relief cases (except in December) were almost as numerous in the study cities in 1935 as the separations. The unemployable case load in November was only 2 percent less than in December 1934. A sharp drop (8 percent) occurring in December 1935 is almost entirely accounted for by Works Program closings<sup>4</sup>. In fact, except for the Works Program closings in the last three months of the year, the

thirteen cities' unemployable case load in December would have been 2 percent above the July 1935 figure (Chart 1 and Table 1).

The twelve months' record indicates that a large proportion of the unemployable closed cases never return to the relief rolls of their city. Of total unemployables admitted to relief, three fifths (59 percent) were new to the agency. This indicates that except for two fifths (which according to the 1935 experience may be expected to appear again on the relief rolls as reopenings) the closed cases represent a permanent separation<sup>5</sup>. Of employable cases admitted to relief in 1935, reopened cases comprised three fifths (59 percent), indicating that the proportion of employables returning to the relief rolls is greater than the proportion of unemployables (Table 2).

With two exceptions—Chicago and Manchester—separations of unemployable relief cases in the 13 cities occurred in greater numbers in 1935 than accessions. In Atlanta, separations were eight times as numerous as the accessions. Manchester, at the other extreme, had only one half as many separations as accessions.

<sup>1</sup> Relief cases termed "unemployable" in this study are (1) cases with no person 16-64 years of age, and (2) cases with no person within these age limits working or seeking work.

<sup>2</sup> Relief turnover, as the term is used here, is the ratio of (a) one-half the sum of cases admitted to and separated from the relief rolls to (b) the number of cases on the relief rolls.

<sup>3</sup> Omaha is excluded due to lack of sufficient data regarding unemployables in the total case load.

<sup>4</sup> Works Program closings of unemployable cases have occurred in considerable numbers since persons 65 years old or over (not included as employable in this study) are eligible for assignment to Works Program projects. Persons under 16 years of age are not eligible for Works Program employment.

<sup>5</sup> By definition of new and reopened cases, no account is taken of relief received in other cities.

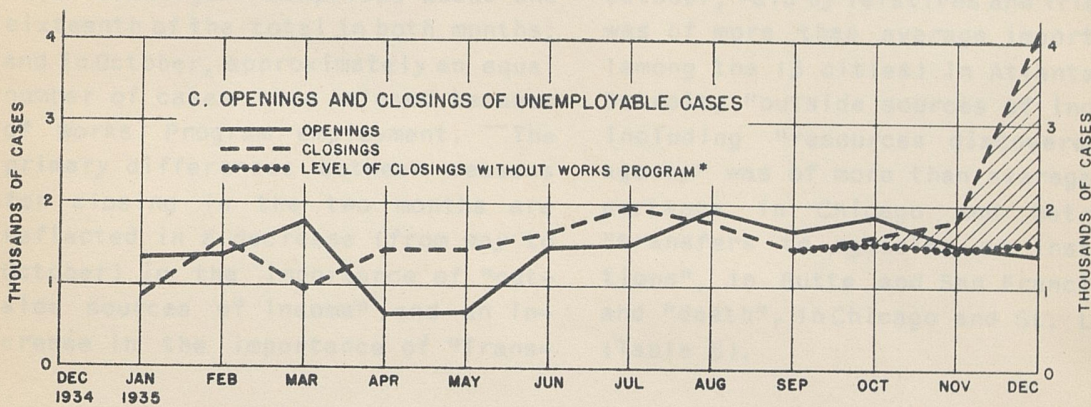
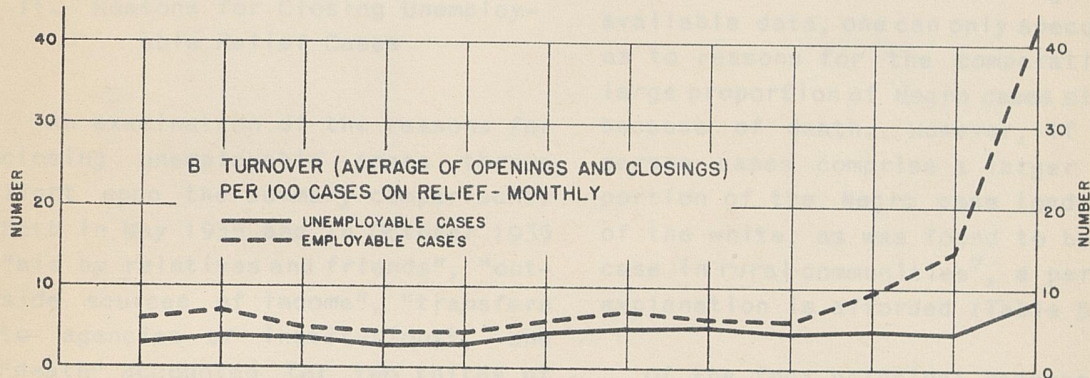
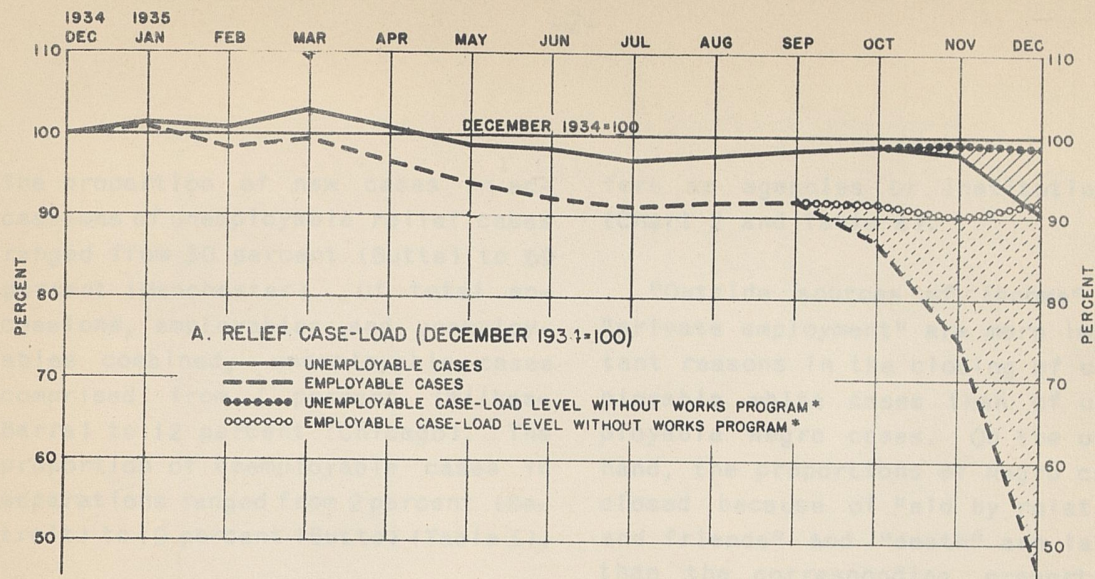


CHART I. CHANGES IN THE RELIEF CASE-LOAD IN 12 CITIES-1935

CROSS-HATCHING REPRESENTS WORKS PROGRAM CLOSINGS

\* ASSUMING WORKS PROGRAM CLOSED CASES TO HAVE REMAINED ON RELIEF

The proportion of new cases in accessions of unemployable relief cases ranged from 30 percent (Butte) to 69 percent (Manchester). Of total accessions, employables and unemployables combined, unemployable cases comprised from 1 percent (Wilkes-Barre) to 12 percent (Chicago). The proportion of unemployable cases in separations ranged from 2 percent (Detroit) to 10 percent (Butte) (Table 3).

#### 11. Reasons for Closing Unemployable Relief Cases

An examination of the reasons for closing unemployable cases throws light upon the summary comparisons. Both in May 1935 and in October 1935 "aid by relatives and friends", "outside sources of income", "transfers to agencies or institutions", and "death" accounted for two thirds of all cases closed. "Private employment" closings<sup>6</sup> comprised about one sixteenth of the total in both months; and in October, approximately an equal number of cases were closed because of Works Program employment. The primary differences between reasons for closing in the two months are reflected in a decrease (from May to October) in the importance of "outside sources of income" and an increase in the importance of "Trans-

<sup>6</sup> "Unemployable" cases may be closed because of the employment of persons under 18 years of age or 65 years of age or over.

fers to agencies or institutions". (Chart 2 and Table 4).

"Outside sources of income" and "private employment" are more important reasons in the closing of unemployable white cases than of unemployable Negro cases. On the other hand, the proportions of Negro cases closed because of "aid by relatives and friends" and "death" are larger than the corresponding proportions of white cases. In the light of available data, one can only speculate as to reasons for the comparatively large proportion of Negro cases closed because of death. However, if one-person cases comprise a larger proportion of the Negro case load than of the white, as was found to be the case in rural communities<sup>7</sup>, a partial explanation is afforded (Table 5).

Of the four principal reasons for closing unemployable cases in May and October, "aid by relatives and friends" was of more than average importance (among the 13 cities) in Atlanta and Detroit; "outside sources of income" including "resources discovered by agency" was of more than average importance in Chicago and Detroit; "transfers to agencies or institutions", in Butte and San Francisco; and "death", in Chicago and St. Louis (Table 6).

<sup>7</sup> Source: An unpublished study of the Social Research Division, Works Progress Administration.

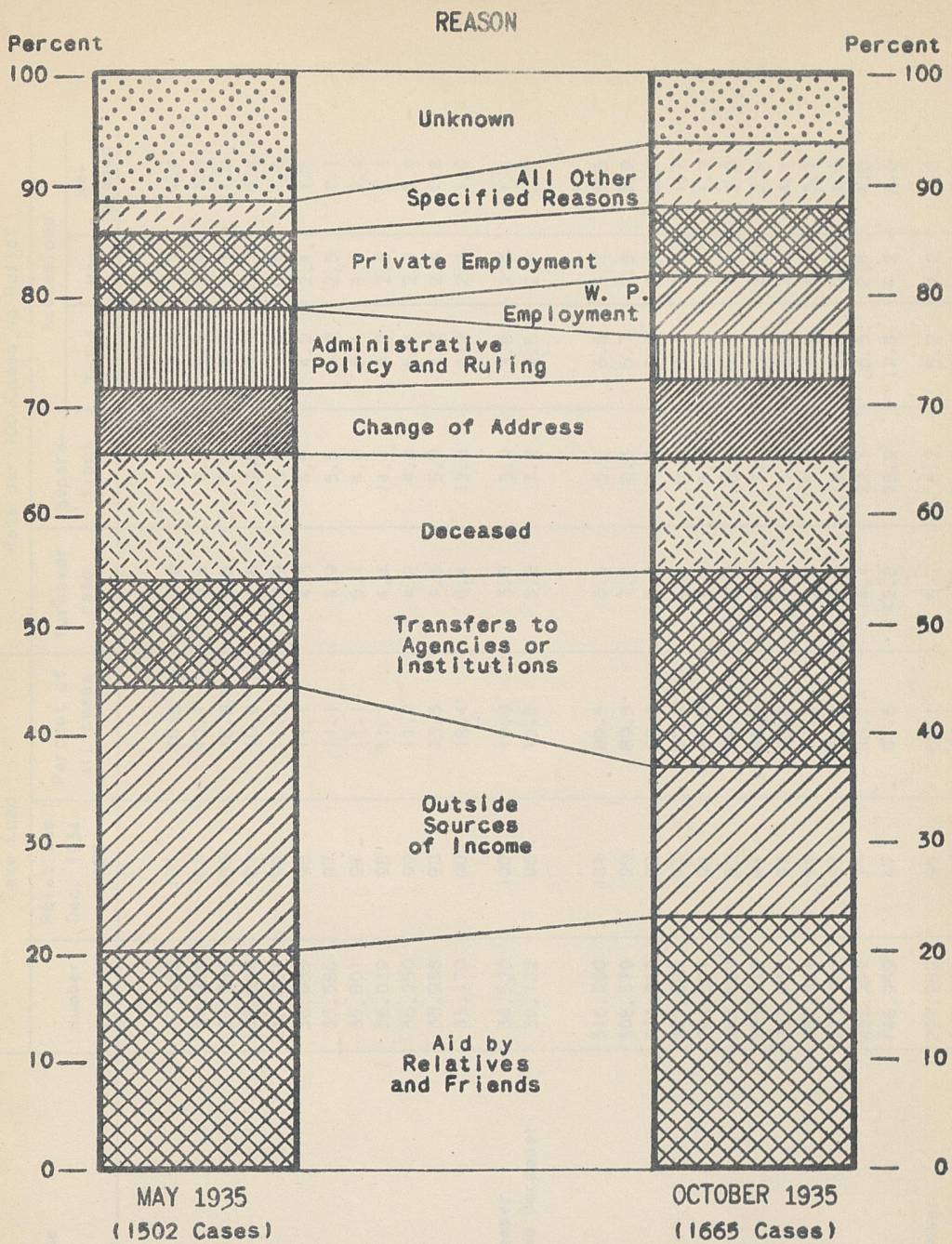


CHART 2. REASONS FOR CLOSING UNEMPLOYABLE CASES ON RELIEF  
 13 Selected Cities for May and October 1935

TABLE 1. MONTHLY TRENDS AND TURNOVER RATES OF UNEMPLOYABLE AND EMPLOYABLE RELIEF CASES  
12 CITIES FOR THE YEAR 1935

Month and Type of Case	Case Load			Rate per 100 Cases on Relief				
	Number	Relat'ives Dec. 1934 = 100	Percent of all cases	Turnover rate	Separa- tions	Accessions		
						Total	New	Re- opened
<b>UNEMPLOYABLE CASES</b>								
January	37,168	101	10.5	2.9	2.3	3.6	2.2	1.4
February	36,984	101	10.7	3.9	4.2	3.7	2.4	1.3
March	37,788	103	10.8	3.6	2.6	4.7	3.3	1.4
April	37,014	101	10.9	2.8	3.8	1.7	1.1	0.6
May	36,261	99	11.0	2.9	3.9	1.9	0.9	1.0
June	36,055	98	11.1	4.3	4.5	4.0	2.4	1.6
July	35,586	97	11.1	4.9	5.5	4.2	2.5	1.7
August	35,801	98	11.1	5.1	4.8	5.4	3.0	2.4
September	36,019	98	11.1	4.4	4.1	4.7	2.6	2.1
October	36,250	99	11.7	4.8	4.4	5.1	2.7	2.4
November	35,938	98	13.3	4.6	5.0	4.2	2.4	1.8
December	33,179	90	18.4	8.4	12.5	4.2	2.3	1.9
Average January through September	36,520	100	10.9	3.8	3.9	3.8	2.3	1.5
Average October, November, and December	35,122	96	13.8	5.8	7.2	4.5	2.5	2.0
<b>EMPLOYABLE CASES</b>								
January	316,260	101	89.5	6.1	5.5	6.6	3.1	3.5
February	308,379	99	89.3	7.0	8.3	5.7	2.8	2.9
March	311,047	99	89.2	4.9	4.5	5.4	2.6	2.8
April	302,687	97	89.1	4.5	5.9	3.1	1.4	1.7
May	294,301	94	89.0	4.3	5.8	2.9	1.2	1.7
June	288,569	92	88.9	5.7	6.7	4.7	1.7	3.0
July	285,210	91	88.9	6.9	7.5	6.3	2.4	3.9
August	287,552	92	88.9	6.1	5.7	6.5	2.4	4.1
September	287,834	92	88.9	5.8	5.8	5.8	2.1	3.7
October	272,350	87	88.3	9.4	12.3	6.6	2.6	4.0
November	235,291	75	86.7	14.4	22.3	6.5	2.5	4.0
December	146,959	47	81.6	42.8	72.9	12.8	4.2	8.6
Average January through September	297,982	95	89.1	5.7	6.2	5.2	2.2	3.0
Average October, November, and December	218,200	70	86.2	18.7	29.5	7.9	2.9	5.0

Note 1 - Tables 1 and 2 are composites of data for the urban current change cities, excluding Omaha.

Note 2 - The case load presented in Tables 1 and 2 for a given month excludes cases closed during that month because of Works Program Employment.

TABLE 2. MONTHLY ACCESSIONS AND SEPARATIONS OF UNEMPLOYABLE AND EMPLOYABLE RELIEF CASES  
12 CITIES FOR 1935

Month and Type of Case	Number of Cases					Percent Distribution For Opened Cases		
	Case Load	Closed Cases	Opened Cases			Total	New	Re- opened
			Total	New	Re- opened			
<b>UNEMPLOYABLE CASES</b>								
January	37,168	850	1,327	820	507	100	62	38
February	36,984	1,542	1,358	888	470	100	65	35
March	37,788	966	1,770	1,239	531	100	70	30
April	37,014	1,421	647	399	248	100	62	38
May	36,261	1,429	676	331	345	100	49	51
June	36,055	1,638	1,432	866	566	100	60	40
July	35,586	1,964	1,495	901	594	100	60	40
August	35,801	1,708	1,923	1,057	866	100	55	45
September	36,019	1,464	1,682	927	755	100	55	45
October	36,250	1,610	1,841	989	852	100	54	46
November	35,938	1,813	1,501	855	646	100	57	43
December	33,179	4,151	1,392	763	629	100	55	45
Average 12 mos.	36,170	1,713	1,420	836	584	100	59	41
<b>EMPLOYABLE CASES</b>								
January	316,260	17,388	20,898	9,940	10,958	100	48	52
February	308,385	25,490	17,615	8,608	9,007	100	49	51
March	311,053	14,017	16,685	8,000	8,685	100	48	52
April	302,693	17,833	9,473	4,280	5,193	100	45	55
May	294,307	16,949	8,563	3,549	5,014	100	41	59
June	288,575	19,437	13,705	4,970	8,735	100	36	64
July	285,216	21,255	17,896	6,707	11,189	100	37	63
August	287,558	16,262	18,604	6,906	11,698	100	37	63
September	287,840	16,554	16,836	6,008	10,828	100	36	64
October	272,356	33,405	17,921	6,979	10,942	100	39	61
November	235,297	52,407	15,348	5,997	9,351	100	39	61
December	146,965	107,074	18,742	6,117	12,625	100	33	67
Average 12 mos.	278,042	29,840	16,024	6,505	9,519	100	41	59
<b>ALL CASES</b>								
January	353,428	18,238	22,225	10,760	11,465	100	48	52
February	345,369	27,032	18,973	9,496	9,477	100	50	50
March	348,841	14,983	18,455	9,239	9,216	100	50	50
April	339,707	19,254	10,120	4,679	5,441	100	46	54
May	330,568	18,378	9,239	3,880	5,359	100	42	58
June	324,630	21,075	15,137	5,836	9,301	100	39	61
July	320,802	23,219	19,391	7,608	11,783	100	39	61
August	323,359	17,970	20,527	7,963	12,564	100	39	61
September	323,859	18,018	18,518	6,935	11,583	100	37	63
October	308,606	35,015	19,762	7,968	11,794	100	40	60
November	271,235	54,220	16,849	6,852	9,997	100	41	59
December	180,144	111,225	20,134	6,880	13,254	100	34	66
Average 12 mos.	314,212	31,553	17,444	7,341	10,103	100	42	58



TABLE 3. ACCESSIONS AND SEPARATIONS OF UNEMPLOYABLE AND EMPLOYABLE RELIEF CASES DURING 1935 THIRTEEN CITIES

City and Type of Case	Index <sup>a</sup>	Number of Cases					Percent Distribution					
		Closed Cases	Opened Cases			Opened Cases			Closed Cases	Opened Cases		
			Total	New	Re-opened	Total	New	Re-opened		Total	New	Re-opened
UNEMPLOYABLE												
ALL CITIES	120	21,551	18,008	10,676	7,332	100	59	41	6	8	11	6
Atlanta	823	1,606	195	93	102	100	48	52	7	5	7	4
Baltimore	168	1,656	985	523	462	100	53	47	7	9	12	6
Bridgeport	165	220	133	62	71	100	47	53	5	7	10	5
Butte	272	570	209	62	147	100	30	70	10	9	11	8
Chicago	88	8,619	9,786	6,076	3,710	100	62	38	7	12	17	8
Detroit	108	1,036	963	424	539	100	44	56	2	3	5	3
Houston	120	801	669	407	262	100	61	39	6	10	14	7
Manchester	46	88	191	132	59	100	69	31	4	5	7	3
Omaha	103	995	964	641	323	100	66	34	7	8	10	6
Paterson	104	471	452	267	185	100	59	41	5	7	10	5
St. Louis	127	2,531	1,990	1,142	848	100	57	43	6	8	9	7
San Francisco	187	2,491	1,331	764	567	100	57	43	8	6	6	5
Wilkes-Barre	334	467	140	83	57	100	59	41	3	1	2	1
EMPLOYABLE												
ALL CITIES	183	371,519	203,099	83,904	119,195	100	41	59	94	92	89	94
Atlanta	525	21,242	4,046	1,252	2,794	100	31	69	93	95	93	96
Baltimore	208	21,919	10,557	3,719	6,838	100	35	65	93	91	88	94
Bridgeport	247	4,686	1,894	555	1,339	100	29	71	95	93	90	95
Butte	243	5,072	2,088	504	1,584	100	24	76	90	91	89	92
Chicago	168	124,674	74,277	29,650	44,627	100	40	60	93	88	83	92
Detroit	233	67,863	29,105	8,803	20,302	100	30	70	98	97	95	97
Houston	197	12,042	6,097	2,543	3,554	100	42	58	94	90	86	93
Manchester	59	2,231	3,781	1,801	1,980	100	48	52	96	95	93	97
Omaha	124	13,448	10,813	5,843	4,970	100	54	46	93	92	90	94
Paterson	149	9,205	6,189	2,461	3,728	100	40	60	95	93	90	95
St. Louis	199	43,130	21,634	11,069	10,565	100	51	49	94	92	91	93
San Francisco	136	29,334	21,578	11,095	10,483	100	51	49	92	94	94	95
Wilkes-Barre	151	16,673	11,040	4,609	6,431	100	42	58	97	99	98	99
ALL CASES												
ALL CITIES	178	393,070	221,107	94,580	126,527	100	43	57	100	100	100	100
Atlanta	539	22,848	4,241	1,345	2,896	100	32	68	100	100	100	100
Baltimore	204	23,575	11,542	4,242	7,300	100	37	63	100	100	100	100
Bridgeport	242	4,906	2,027	617	1,410	100	30	70	100	100	100	100
Butte	246	5,642	2,297	566	1,731	100	25	75	100	100	100	100
Chicago	159	133,293	84,063	35,726	48,337	100	42	58	100	100	100	100
Detroit	229	68,899	30,068	9,227	20,841	100	31	69	100	100	100	100
Houston	190	12,843	6,766	2,950	3,816	100	44	56	100	100	100	100
Manchester	58	2,319	3,972	1,933	2,039	100	49	51	100	100	100	100
Omaha	123	14,443	11,777	6,484	5,293	100	55	45	100	100	100	100
Paterson	146	9,676	6,641	2,728	3,913	100	41	59	100	100	100	100
St. Louis	193	45,661	23,624	12,211	11,413	100	52	48	100	100	100	100
San Francisco	139	31,825	22,909	11,859	11,050	100	52	48	100	100	100	100
Wilkes-Barre	153	17,140	11,180	4,692	6,488	100	42	58	100	100	100	100

<sup>a</sup> Closings per 100 openings.

TABLE 4. REASONS FOR CLOSING UNEMPLOYABLE CASES ON RELIEF ACCORDING TO COMPOSITION  
MAY AND OCTOBER 1935 FOR 13 SELECTED CITIES

Reason for Closing	Number of Cases						Percentage Distribution					
	May 1935			October 1935			May 1935			October 1935		
	Total	No Person 16-64	No Worker 16-64	Total	No Person 16-64	No Worker 16-64	Total	No Person 16-64	No Worker 16-64	Total	No Person 16-64	No Worker 16-64
ALL REASONS	1,502	650	852	1,665	625	1,040	100	100	100	100	100	100
Private employment	102	69	33	103	68	35	7	11	4	6	11	3
Works program employment	-	-	-	96	58	38	0	0	0	6	9	4
Change of address	91	31	60	121	39	82	6	5	7	7	6	8
Outside sources of income	362	145	217	231	55	176	24	22	25	14	9	17
Aid by relatives and friends	302	157	145	384	127	257	20	24	17	23	20	25
Married	22	-	22	40	2	38	1	0	3	2	*	4
Transfer to other agency	73	19	54	141	21	120	5	3	6	9	3	11
Transfer to institution	74	18	56	155	51	104	5	3	7	9	8	10
Pension	1	-	1	41	31	10	*	0	*	3	5	1
Deceased	173	34	139	168	66	102	11	5	16	10	11	10
Administrative policy and ruling	109	42	57	65	34	31	8	6	8	4	6	3
Decreased needs	19	8	11	16	11	5	1	1	1	1	2	*
Not ascertainable	174	127	47	104	62	42	12	20	6	6	10	4

\* Less than one-half of one percent

NOTE: The principal items comprising the "reasons for closing" may be described briefly as follows: PRIVATE EMPLOYMENT—job secured, increased hours of work or rate of pay; WORKS PROGRAM EMPLOYMENT—all types under the Works Program; CHANGE OF ADDRESS—left town, repatriated, returned to legal residence, moved; OUTSIDE SOURCES OF INCOME—resources discovered by agency, insurance adjustment, refused to submit insurance policy, legacy or inheritance, sick benefits from fraternal organization, compensation received, payment for jury service, savings released by bank, income from property, income from bonds; AID BY RELATIVES AND FRIENDS—all types of such aid including husband or wife returned, husband now supporting, alimony received, son returned home; TRANSFER TO OTHER AGENCY—also includes transfer to mothers' aid; TRANSFER TO INSTITUTION—all types of institutions including hospital, sanitarium, prison or jail, school for deaf; PENSION—all types of pension cases except mothers' aid; ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY AND RULING—pending investigation, case combined, curtailment of relief funds, not legal resident, refused work secured by agency, refused to cooperate, failed to report for work relief; NOT ASCERTAINABLE—client failed to report, unable to locate.

TABLE 5. REASONS FOR CLOSING UNEMPLOYABLE CASES ON RELIEF CLASSIFIED BY RACE  
MAY AND OCTOBER 1935 FOR 13 SELECTED CITIES

Reason for closing	Total <sup>a</sup>		White		Negro	
	May	Oct.	May	Oct.	May	Oct.
	<i>Number of Cases</i>					
ALL REASONS	1,502	1,665	1,215	1,278	284	371
Aid by relatives and friends	302	384	218	275	84	107
Outside sources of income	362	231	331	196	31	35
Transfers to agencies or institutions	147	296	104	221	41	73
Deceased	173	168	107	107	66	60
Change of address	91	121	84	105	7	15
Administrative policy and ruling	109	65	85	48	24	17
Private employment	102	103	96	97	6	6
Works Program employment	-	96	-	76	-	19
All other specified reasons	42	97	40	79	2	14
Unknown	174	104	150	74	23	25
	<i>Percentage Distribution</i>					
ALL REASONS	100	100	100	100	100	100
Aid by relatives and friends	20	23	18	22	30	29
Outside sources of income	24	14	27	15	11	9
Transfers to agencies or institutions	10	18	9	17	14	20
Deceased	11	10	9	8	23	16
Change of address	6	7	7	8	2	4
Administrative policy and ruling	7	4	7	4	8	4
Private employment	7	6	8	8	3	2
Works Program employment	0	6	0	6	0	5
All other specified reasons	3	6	3	6	1	4
Unknown	12	6	12	6	8	7

<sup>a</sup> "Total" includes a few "all other" cases. Hence, the number is slightly larger than "Whites" and "Negroes" combined.

NOTE: In this summary table, in Table 6, and in Chart 2, the following "reasons for closing" which were listed separately in Table 4, have been combined: (1) "Transfer to other agency" and "Transfer to institution"; and (2) "Pension" and "Deceased needs" forming "All other specified reasons" group.

TABLE 6. REASONS FOR CLOSING UNEMPLOYABLE CASES ON RELIEF IN 13 SELECTED CITIES FOR MAY AND OCTOBER 1935

Reason for Closing	All Cities		Atlanta		Baltimore		Bridgeport		Butte		Chicago		Detroit	
	May	Oct	May	Oct	May	Oct	May	Oct	May	Oct	May	Oct	May	Oct
UNEMPLOYABLE CASES CLOSED	1,502	1,665	146	79	204	126	10	12	36	29	700	490	42	340
	<i>Percentage Distribution</i>													
All Reasons	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Aid by relatives and friends	20	23	36	68	40	16	-	50	19	7	14	15	33	35
Outside sources of income	24	14	27	-	21	17	50	8	25	3	28	20	33	19
Transfers to agencies or institutions	10	18	8	11	9	5	10	17	19	28	9	19	2	27
Deceased	11	10	5	9	6	11	10	8	11	7	13	13	-	6
Change of address	6	7	6	3	-	6	10	17	3	14	9	13	10	3
Administrative policy and ruling	7	4	9	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	11	6	10	3
Private employment	7	6	3	3	10	6	20	-	6	17	4	6	5	1
W.P. employment	-	6	-	1	-	22	-	-	-	-	-	4	-	1
All other specified reasons	3	6	-	2	7	7	-	-	-	-	1	1	7	5
Unknown	12	6	6	3	3	10	-	-	17	24	11	3	-	-
	Houston		Manchester		Omaha		Paterson		St. Louis		San Francisco		Wilkes-Barre	
UNEMPLOYABLE CASES CLOSED	70	70	9	4	80	61	29	39	95	169	51	198	30	48
	<i>Percentage Distribution</i>													
All Reasons	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Aid by relatives and friends	14	25	-	-	23	5	17	23	12	17	12	25	-	4
Outside sources of income	11	3	22	-	8	8	29	3	8	11	20	8	50	8
Transfers to agencies or institutions	13	16	11	25	16	12	3	5	5	10	30	22	3	17
Deceased	18	10	11	-	18	10	10	3	15	14	14	10	20	4
Change of address	9	7	11	25	-	8	-	5	4	7	-	3	7	-
Administrative policy and ruling	-	1	11	-	1	3	-	8	3	8	-	1	3	8
Private employment	1	1	11	50	12	10	14	25	19	8	12	9	7	4
W.P. employment	-	7	-	-	-	15	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	51
All other specified reasons	2	3	-	-	6	13	17	25	3	5	4	18	-	4
Unknown	32	27	23	-	16	16	10	3	31	18	8	4	10	-

