

MISS. FARMERS REPORT INCREASED INTIMIDATION

HOLLY SPRINGS, MISSISSIPPI - Intimidation and harrassment have increased in two Mississippi counties following Negro victories in county Agricultural Stabilization Committee elections, the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) reported here.

An Ashland, Mississippi newspaper, the Southern Advocate, refused December 12 to print an advertisement from three Negro farmers who won important committee seats in the December 4 ASC elections. The ad - for which the three were prepared to pay in cash - said they "do not intend to serve our race exclusively. We regard this (election) as an opportunity to serve all citizens of Community B without regard to race as good, honest and true committeemen."

The proposed ad was signed by L. B. Paige, Clabon Jackson and Sarah Robinson, who took the three top positions in the ASC election in Benton County's Community B.

In Holmes County, tenant farmer Lamar Smith, elected chairman of his Community Committee, reported his farm rent was doubled and the owner of the land demanded full payment at once instead of installments as he had done in the past. Smith said he had overheard the Holmes County Sheriff and other white men discuss jailing him on December 7, when ASC election results were announced. He also said a truck which he used on his small farm was repossessed while he was talking to his creditors about payments.

In Valley View, near Canton, a cotton gin owned by a white man was burned to the ground December 13. The gin owner had refused to comply with requests from other whites that he not gin cotton belonging to Otha Williams, local Negro active in Madison County's ASC elections.

In Atlanta, the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) asked Secretary of Agriculture Orville Freeman to "investigate intimidation and harrassment connected with Mississippi ASC elections."

At a recent meeting of Mississippi farmers from a 12 county area decided to contest ASC elections in five counties, even though Negroes did win some posts. They said more Negroes could have been placed on committees if there had been no discrimination in the elections.