NATIONAL ROUNDUP

By Larry A. Still and Art Carter

WASHINGTON — The black unemployment rate remained virtually unchanged for the past four months when the rate has been in the 11 percent range, the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics reported.

The latest unemployment rates for adult black men, at 8.3 percent; adult women, at 10.3 percent, and youth, at 30.7 percent, also remained about the same as the previous month. The nation's overall unemployment rate was 6.0 percent, up from 5.7 percent in July. In an effort to win the war against unemployment, about 1,000 jobless and economically disadvantaged persons in 16 states will be trained on the job in concrete casting work under a $590,000 laborers' union contract, Assistant Secretary of Labor *Ernest G. Green* has announced.

The Laborers' International Union of North America, AFL - CIO also agreed to its eleventh consecutive contract to encourage employers to provide instruction and develop jobs for 550 workers.

And an additional 450 training opportunities will be developed by Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) prime sponsors using funds from the Private Sector Initiative Program (PSIP) funded under Title VII of CETA. Although these are small battles in the war since March 1967, under ten previous contracts, the laborers' union has trained over 11,550 persons, all with employers who have collective bargaining agreements with the union. The new contract runs through July 31, 1980. Most of the employees have been minority workers.

The contract is funded under Title III of CETA which is administered by the department's Employment and Training Administration (ETA). The ETA defines as "economically disadvantaged" one who is: a client of a sheltered workshop; is confined to an institution; receiving community care; substantially handicapped; or is a member of a family receiving cash welfare payments for an annual income (for four) of between $7,200 and $12,500 depending on location and program.

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The Department of Labor has proposed specific goals in every part of the country for utilization of minority employees by federal and federally assisted construction contractors and subcontractors.

The goals would be the minority workforce percentages of the total workforce.

"Because these proposed goals are comprehensive and would for the first time cover the construction industry on a nationwide basis," the proposal states, "the Department of Labor is inviting comments, suggestions and recommendations from the public for a period of 60 days from publication."

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Clarence H. Featherson has been named to direct veterans and handicapped worker policy for Office of Federal Contract Compliance Program (OFCCP). Featherson, a native of Columbia County, N.C., came from the General Services Administration where he was chief of the Construction Branch, Contract Compliance Division. He lives in Silver Spring, MD., with his wife, Olivia, and their sons, Karle and Troy.

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Dr. Balius Walker, a specialist in occupational and environmental health, has been named to head the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's health standards programs. As head of the directorate, Dr. Walker will be responsible for the development and updating of all health standards — from those covering toxic substances, carcinogens, and radiation to noise, dust and other health hazards.

He also will help decide the agency's health policies, determine priorities, evaluate needs for study and development of health standards, maintain liaison with other agencies dealing with health problems, and represent the assistant secretary of various committees.

Prior to his appointment by OSHA, Dr. Walker was the administrator of the District of Columbia Environmental Health Administration, a post he held since 1972.

Walker has also served as director of health and welfare for the City of Newark; chief of environmental health in Dayton, Ohio; a director and research fellow at the University of Minnesota School of Public Health; a public health instructor at Howard, and a public sanitarian in Eloise, Michigan, and Philadelphia.

When schools reopened this fall, 152 American teachers had changed places with counterparts in Canada, Europe, and New Zealand under a teacher - exchange program sponsored by the U.S. Office of Education.

Teachers from non - English speaking countries are teaching their native language in American classrooms, and their American counterparts abroad are teaching English. Other exchanges include a wide range of subject specialties from art to computer science.

Another 126 American teachers who participated in seminars in Germany, Israel, Italy, Belgium, and The Netherlands under the program this summer have now returned to their U.S. classrooms. These teachers were not a part of an exchange.

Applications for the 1980 - 81 exchange program should be made before November 1, 1979, to the Teacher Exchange Section of the International Education, U.S. Office of Education.

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President Jimmy Carter nominated *Ronald P. Laurent*, of Chicago, Illinois, to be president of the multi - billion dollar Government National Mortgage Association. When confirmed by Congress, Laurent would replace John Dalton, who had resigned.

Laurent, a Fisk University graduate, is senior vice president of McElvain - Reynolds, a Chicago mortgage banking firm, where he is in charge of the cukt-family government insured loan division.

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President Carter nominated *Inez Smith Reid* of New York City to be inspector general of the Environmental Protection Agency. Reid, 42, received a B.A. from Tufts University in 1959, an LL.B. from Yale in 1962, an M.A. in political science from UCLA and a Ph.D. from Columbia U. in 1968 . . . In 1963 - 64, she was lecturer in criminal law at the Ecole Nationale de Droit et D'administration in Congo-Kinshasa and in 1964-65 she was an assistant professor of African studies and political sciences at the State University of New York.

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The Low Income Energy Assistance Program now in Congress calls for $1.6 billion in aid to poor families this winter for heating (and eating) and $2.4 billion each following winter. "This program will address a critical need —alleviating the impact of higher energy prices on those who are suffering most from higher energy prices," President Carter said in a statement released by the White House press office. The special allowance program which will provide $1.2 billion this winter and $2.0 billion annually thereafter for cash assistance to all poor households (new White House figures . . .) When fully operative, the Special Allowance Program will be available to all households with incomes below 125 percent of the federal poverty threshold. The threshold is currently $7,160 for a family of four. This means you are eligible for help with your gas and oil bills if your family earns less than $6,300 a year . . . So-O-O, call the Big House if your energy costs are still too high this year . . . Of course, there is a "trick" in it . . .

The revenues from the special allowance come from the proposed Windfall Profits Tax . . . . "I am asking the Congress to move immediately to make general revenues available for the $400 million emergency program this winter," the president said. Revenues from the windfall tax, when it is passed, will be used to replace the $400 million. — If Congress passes the legislation . . .

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The National Committee on the concerns of Hispanics and blacks joined together recently to put both the Democratic and Republican parties on notice that they will be held accountable for their ability to represent the needs of the nation's poor and minorities if the parties want their support in 1980.

During a two - day working session held in Washington, representatives of more than 35 national black and Hispanic organizations discussed several issues of major concern to nearly 20 percent of the nation's population. At the closing session today, *Raul Yzaguirre*, president of the National Council of La Raza, and *M. Carl Holman*, president of the National Urban Coalition, co-chairmen of the committee, announced the group's agreement