

V. F. Rev - Negro

Gwynn Attacks Mayor Day Statement, Says There IS Racial Tension in Peoria

The president of Peoria Branch, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, took issue Friday with a statement by Mayor Robert G. Day that "there is no racial tension here."

"We know we have racial tension and discriminatory practices in almost every phase of life in Peoria," John Gwynn asserted. "The NAACP again is calling on the mayor to sit down and go over our racial problems."

"THE QUICKER we get down to business and on with the work, the better it will be for both of us," he added.

Mayor Day made his statement in an interview which appeared in Friday's Journal Star. At the same time he said Peoria already has instituted most features of President Kennedy's five-point program to promote and protect the civil rights of minority groups.

Gwynn argued that among problems of discrimination in public places to be resolved are those in the city government itself. Peoria police still are not integrated, he said, because Negro and white patrolmen do not ride together in two-man cars.

"The mayor should take a good

look at the number of Negroes employed in City Hall," the NAACP leader continued. "And we're constantly asking the mayor for action on open occupancy in private housing, which has been tabled so far."

To say there is no racial tension is unfair to the city as a whole, Gwynn said, particularly considering that the very lives of NAACP members have been threatened.

NAACP pickets appeared Friday in front of Central Illinois Light Co., 300 Liberty St., bearing such signs as "Token Integration Must

Co. Cilco Unfair." About 16 pickets were walking back and forth Friday and will continue next week.

"We want complete integration," Gwynn said, declaring that among Cilco's 600 Peoria employes there are only two full-time permanent Negro employes, one a janitor and the other an office worker, and Bradley summer employe.

NEGROES FIRST began appl-

ing for Cilco jobs at NAACP investigation in 1956, he said.

A spokesman for the light company confirmed the presence of the two employes mentioned plus a college student who is working during the summer.

"Central Illinois Light Co. employment practices are based first on need for personnel to fill a job and second on ability and job qualifications to do the work," the statement read.