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March Until Bus Company Capitulates, Champaign Minister Tells Peoria Negroes

Peo 5 Star PM 6-20-63
"We must march and we must walk until the bus company capitulates," a Negro minister from Champaign told Negroes here last night.

The Rev. Blaine Ramsey, also first vice president of the Illinois Chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, was referring to the boycott of Peoria City Lines, Inc., buses to get Negroes hired as bus drivers.

He told some 150 people at Grace Baptist Church:

"I hope none of you will be a Judas to the cause. We must march and we must walk until the bus company capitulates. We must not be satisfied with the hiring of one Negro driver. We must keep on until every qualified Negro driver is hired."

Yesterday afternoon pickets formed at bus stops at Adams and Jefferson streets in downtown Peoria.

"I would be happy to stay overnight and picket the transit com-

pany," the Rev. Mr. Ramsey said.

THE REV. MR. RAMSEY said the state NAACP leaders are in "full accord with the crusade now being carried on by the Peoria NAACP," the Rev. Mr. Ramsey said in a statement today.

"We call upon the mayor and other administrative arms of government, such as the Human Relations Council, to use the good graces of their office to effect a policy change in the attitude of Peoria City Lines, Inc., as it concerns the employment of Negroes in the operation and maintenance of bus service.

"For a city pledged to progress, it seems paradoxical that such unfair employment practices could go unnoticed."

The Rev. Mr. Ramsey said the NAACP will continue its efforts until "some positive and worthwhile change is made in this situation." Rev. Ramsey is pastor of the Bethel AME Church in Champaign.

Of his participation in a Cairo, Ill., integration demonstration last year, he said at last night's meeting:

"Our cause was a just cause and God would fight our battle. Like Jacob and the angel wrestled all night and we prevailed. In Peoria you must seize the iniquitous practice of unfair employment and wrestle it until you prevail."

Prof. R. F. Williams, a Georgia professor, who is a native Peorian, introduced the Rev. Mr. Ramsey and said: "We are not here to fight. We meet here in a struggle for human rights, not civil rights. If we attain human rights the other rights will come to us."

John Gwynn, president of the local chapter of the NAACP, told the group, "I don't know how to tell you how much I appreciate your cooperation during the bus boycott. Today we picketed four major bus stops, tomorrow we will picket twice as many and on Friday we will picket every major bus stop downtown."

Gwynn said he felt the third day of the boycott was "much better" than the two previous days. The only known incident occurred when Prof. Williams said he was squirted with water from a passing car while picketing.

"and you see Negro bus drivers, but there is not even a Negro janitor working for the Peoria bus company."

Gwynn also mentioned that he was not satisfied with the number of sales clerks or with any phase

of downtown employment in the city.

"We have only taken integration in Peoria. We have to build together. This is something we should have done a long time ago."