

## But No Civil Rights Problems

# Mayor Day Admits Discrimination in Peoria

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AP 100 - Negro

Mayor Robert G. Day told members of the Suburban Kiwanis Club Tuesday noon that there are no serious civil rights problems in Peoria, but that there is discrimination.

Peoria, said Mayor Day, conforms to the five points advanced by President Kennedy in his civil rights speech to the mayors conference in Honolulu. These points are that cities should set up biracial human relations commissions, that local ordinances should not conflict with the Constitution, that municipal employment should be on a non-discriminatory basis,

that there be equal opportunity for all and that the school dropout problem be dealt with.

"There has been some confusion over civil rights," the Mayor said. "They are legal questions. **But the race problems—unemployment, economic conditions and dropouts are not civil rights questions. They are much harder to solve than that.**"

The Mayor noted he previously had said that we in Peoria do not have the basis for the type of racial tension that exists in Mississippi and Alabama. The head-

line on the story, he said, read "No racial tension here."

"I did not say that."

The race problem, the Mayor continued, is similar to the problem of the slums. It's based on prejudice and discrimination and economic factors. But the problems found in the slum areas are not limited to Negroes, he said. Many are doing much to improve things there.

"These," he said, "are not civil rights problems. They will not be solved by picketing or mass demonstrations."

"There is nothing more discouraging than to find a lack of social acceptance based on discrimination," the mayor said. "There is nothing more unfair for a person to find there are people who regard him as an unsatisfactory neighbor because of his race or his color. In the final analysis, the problem of racial discrimination is a problem of each individual. Racial prejudice is like the kid who won't play baseball unless his team gets four outs to the other side's three."

In a question period following his speech, the mayor noted the

City Council went on record as being in favor of House Bill 755, which called for open occupancy. It did not pass.

WHEN ASKED about recent picketing action, he said "I see nothing wrong with the right of any group to picket peacefully. As a matter of policy, each employer is going to have to decide to hire qualified people solely on the basis of merit or whether he's going to discriminate."

"This is a serious problem — how to convince employers to hire Negroes. This is where a large part of relief comes from — a person can't get off relief until someone hires him."

"There is no legal right for the NAACP to say to Cilco that you have to hire so many Negroes — a moral right perhaps, but not a legal one."

He noted that there apparently had been no violation of the Fair Employment Practices Act since no one had applied and been turned down because of race.

A Kiwanian said he had heard Cilco recently went out of its way to hire a Negro, but found that none had applied.