

NEGROES' BOYCOTT CRIPPLES BUS LINE

Carrier in Montgomery, Ala., Increases Fares to Offset Loss of Business

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—The boycott of Montgomery bus lines by Negro riders entered its second month this week with no conciliation in sight.

As a result of the bus company's loss of revenue in the boycott, the City Commission Wednesday raised fares 50 per cent: adult fares from 10 to 15 cents, school fares from 5 to 8 cents. The commission also authorized a 5 cent charge for transfers, which have heretofore been free.

Asking for the increase, the bus company cited losses averaging 22 cents a mile since the boycott began Dec. 5. The losses would run even higher, company spokesmen said, except for a curtailment in service that has reduced mileage by 31 per cent.

Shortly after the boycott began, virtually all service to Negro communities was abolished. Two routes, serving predominantly Negro areas, were abandoned entirely and other routes revised so as to exclude Negro neighborhoods along them.

Negro Woman Convicted

The boycott began with the arrest and conviction of Mrs. Rosa Parks, a Negro seamstress employed by a downtown department store. Mrs. Parks had refused to give up her seat when told to do so by the bus driver.

At the time the incident occurred, there were twenty-six Negroes and ten white persons seated in the thirty-six-passenger bus. Law requires the bus driver to segregate the passengers but leaves it within his discretion where the line is to be drawn. Thus, on many routes serving populous Negro areas it is not

uncommon to see Negroes occupying all but a few seats.

When the driver asked Mrs. Parks and three other Negroes to give up their seats, a number of white persons were about to board. There were already some white persons standing as well as a number of Negroes. The driver explained later in court that he was "equalizing" seating facilities.

Mrs. Parks refused to yield her seat and was arrested for violation of a city segregation ordinance. Later the charge was changed to read a violation of a state law, which gives bus drivers the power to assign and reassign seating. The law makes it a misdemeanor for anyone to disobey the driver's orders.

Mrs. Parks was found guilty in City Recorder's Court and fined \$10. Her attorneys filed notice of appeal. At a mass meeting in a local Negro church the night following the court hearing, Negro citizens were urged not to ride the buses. The following morning Negro patronage was down by an estimated 90 per cent. Today it is close to 100 per cent off.

Conditions Laid Down

Negro citizens, led by virtually all the city's Negro ministers, have demanded that three conditions be met before they resume riding the buses. These are:

¶Adoption of a "first-come-first-served" rule as is in effect in other Alabama cities such as Mobile and Huntsville. Under this plan Negroes would continue to load from the rear and whites from the front, but the seating, once established, would remain fixed.

¶Greater courtesy on the part of drivers. Negro bus riders have complained of rude, insulting treatment.

¶Employment of Negro drivers on routes serving predominantly Negro areas.

A bi-racial committee, appointed by the City Commission, has so far failed to resolve any of the differences. The company contends that it cannot adopt a "first-come-first-served" policy and comply with the segregation laws. Negotiations have been broken off, for the time at least.