

One Test Case Enough For Anti-Discrimination Law

Charges have been made at Toronto that the Ontario Labor Department is "practicing the worst sort of discrimination" in not investigating "all shops" in Dresden accused of ignoring the Fair Accommodations Act.

The charges were made by the "joint labor committee on human rights", sponsored by the Toronto Trades and Labor Council (TLC) and the Toronto and Lakeshore Labor Council (CCL) in a letter to Labor Minister Daley.

Recently, the provincial labor minister announced that Judge William F. Schwenger of Hamilton is to hear one of a series of ten complaints made against five Dresden businesses, accused of refusing to serve colored people.

Judge Schwenger has since set a date for the hearing, upon the results of which further action will be based.

The Fair Accommodations Act, passed last year by the Ontario legislature, was and is legislation of a revolutionary type, interfering as it does with the previously accepted right of a tradesman to determine whom he will not serve.

The procedure under the act, which requires investigation by and authority from the provincial labor minister before a prosecution can be launched, seems a bit cumbrous.

Nevertheless, with such revolutionary legislation, whose validity may quite possibly be challenged, it may be best to "hasten slowly."

For the practical purpose of demonstrating that the act is valid and enforceable, one test case is as good as ten; and one test case, carried to a successful issue, is not merely ample to determine the law in the matter but to bring obedience from other offenders.

The Department of Labor, which drafted the legislation, probably knows best how to go about enforcement.

The charge that the Department is "practicing the worst sort of discrimination" is far fetched, totally unjustified, and is seemingly made for political effect.

The colored people, to whom the act and its enforcement represent a new and, we hope, a better era, may well pray to be saved from their outspoken and vindictive friends.