

JACKSON, MISSISSIPPI -- With the help of the State Legislature, Mississippi's police officers will be more than ready to deal with civil rights groups planning a "Mississippi Freedom Summer."

Governor Paul Johnson has already signed into law five bills designed to halt demonstrations. They prohibit picketing, ban distributing boycott literature, allow cities to extend police aid to other municipalities, permit cities to restrict the movements of groups and to set curfews, and increase penalties for violating city ordinances.

Governor Johnson has asked the legislature to enlarge the power of the state police.

The five bills signed into law by Governor Johnson are:

- House Bill 64 - Authorizes cities to restrain movements of groups and individuals;
- House Bill 546 - Prohibits the unlawful picketing of all public buildings, streets, sidewalks and other places belonging to the city, county and state;
- Senate Bill 1517 - Increases penalties that may be assessed by city courts;
- Senate Bill 1526 - Authorizes municipalities to "pool" personnel, manpower and equipment;
- Senate Bill 1545 - Provides a maximum penalty of \$500 and/or 6 months in jail for printing and circulating material promoting a boycott.

The State Sovereignty Commission - the official segregation watchdog - has suggested the use of other laws to halt anti-segregation protests. They deal with:

- Section 2087-5 - Congregating and refusing to disperse when ordered by a police officer;
- Section 2087-7 - Prohibiting any person from interfering with customers or the operation of any business venture;
- Section 2089-5 - Disturbing the peace or peace of others;
- Section 2155-4 - Making false statements to Federal authorities;
- Section 2155-4 - Issuing false complaints to Federal authorities;
- Section 2292-5 - Obstructing by force or threats lawful arrest;
- Section 2296-5 - Willful obstruction of public streets;
- Section 2409-5 - Encouraging any person to remain on premises of another when forbidden to do so.

The Sovereignty Commission has distributed copies of the old and new laws to state law enforcement officers.

Passage of these laws and the mobilization of state and local officials is the response of the status quo in Mississippi to the threat posed by the "Mississippi Free Summer." Politicians will find the laws most useful in their efforts to restrict the freedom of assembly, movement, and organization which are constitutionally necessary to the four Negro candidates for Congressional office.

But not only is the state seeking to keep Negroes off the streets they are even seeking to keep them out of schools and uneducated. The most recent bill to be introduced in the state legislature requires that all schools be licensed. It reads as follows:

SENATE BILL NO. 1969: BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI:

SECTION 1: Any person, groups of persons, associations and corporations conducting any school in any county within this state shall first apply to the county superintendent of education for a license to conduct such school. If after due examination, said county superintendent of education shall determine the said school is in fact for bonafide educational purposes, that said school does not intend to counsel and encourage disobedience to the laws of the state, and that the conduct of said school is in the public interest, (a license shall be issued.)

SECTION 2: Should any person, groups of persons, etc. conduct any type school without obtaining a license...they shall together with any individuals acting as professors, teachers, or instructors in said school, be guilty of a misdemeanor which shall be punishable by a fine of not less than \$100 nor more than \$500 and/or confinement in the county jail for a period of not less than 30 days nor more than 6 months.

The implications of this bill if passed need hardly be stated here: This is an obvious attempt to undermine the operation of the summer Freedom Schools which are so necessary to the development of decent education and leadership skills among the Negro population of the state of Mississippi,

With these laws, the State of Mississippi is establishing a distorted legality for the unconstitutional system it is struggling to maintain against the mobilizers of "Mississippi Free Summer."