

## THREE NEGROES RUN FOR CONGRESS FROM MISS.

JACKSON, MISSISSIPPI - For the first time this century, three Negroes are candidates for the House of Representatives from Mississippi.

They are: Mrs. Fannie Lou Hamer of Ruleville, who will seek the seat held by Representative Jamie Whitten of Charleston; James Houston, a 74-year-old Vicksburg man who will run against Representative John Bell Williams of Raymond; and Reverend J. Erle Cameron, a 31-year-old Hattiesburg minister who will oppose Representative William Colmer of Pascagoula.

Mrs. Hamer, who qualified here March 20, is 47. Her husband, Perry Hamer, is employed at a Ruleville cotton gin.

Until 1962, the Hamers lived for eighteen years on a plantation outside Ruleville, but were evicted when she tried to register to vote.

Mrs. Hamer opened her campaign the evening she qualified with a speech at a Ruleville mass meeting. She spoke at a Freedom Day mass meeting in Greenwood on Saturday, March 21, and appeared at an Itta Bena mass meeting on Sunday night, March 22. Her schedule for the first week of her campaign includes speeches in Charleston, Clarksdale and Marks, Mississippi.

The 2nd District, where Mrs. Hamer is campaigning, includes most of Mississippi's Delta, an area of high Negro population and low Negro voter registration.

Mrs. Hamer has announced she will challenge Representative Whitten's right to a seat in the United States House of Representatives if she is defeated.

Two campaign workers were arrested the day she qualified. A Freedom Vote campaign last November, which included Negro and white candidates for the state's top offices, resulted in over 60 arrests in 25 Mississippi towns. That campaign, like Mrs. Hamer's, was supported by the Council of Federated Organizations (COFO), a coalition of civil rights groups working in the state. COFO workers expect additional arrests and harrassments during Mrs. Hamer's campaign, and have included a \$10,000 "harrassment" item in her campaign budget.

The arrest of the two campaign workers was protested to Rep. Whitten and to the United States Department of Justice.