

Crowd Jan Bars Trial Of Negroes

[Virginia takes action, Page A3.]

RALEIGH, Feb. 25 (AP)—Such a big throng turned out this afternoon for the trial of 43 Negro students on trespass charges resulting from lunch counter segregation protests that the trials were postponed for one week.

City Court Judge Albert Doub ordered the postponement after Raleigh Fire Chief Jack Keeter told him the hall, down the stairs and out into the street—constituted a fire hazard. He estimated there were upwards of 700 persons in the throng, most of whom were young Negroes.

The courtroom and halls were so jammed that the 43 defendants and one of their lawyers were unable to get into the courtroom before the decision was made to postpone the trials.

"You couldn't stir them with a stick," said Keeter. "They were jammed in like sardines." He said he had told the judge he considered the jammed courtroom a fire hazard and advised him to hold up proceedings while the courtroom was cleared of everyone except witnesses and defendants.

Next Thursday

However, the judge decided instead to postpone the trials until next Thursday after conferring with attorneys.

Solicitor Prellow Winborne indicated that a bigger hall will be sought next week. He told the throng that, "We'll try to have room so everyone can be accommodated."

Winborne told newsmen that he would try to obtain the use of Raleigh's Memorial Auditorium for the trials. It seats more than 3,000 persons.

Some 41 of the students, from Shaw University and St. Augustine College were arrested Feb. 12 on sidewalks near the F. W. Woolworth store in Raleigh's Cameron Village Shopping Center. The other two were arrested in the same area the following day.

William Worth, vice president of Cameron Village Inc., said the sidewalks in the village are private property and the 43 were arrested after he had warned them to leave and they refused. After the arrests, student leaders announced that lunch counter demonstrations in Cameron Village would be discontinued until after the trial.

George R. Greene, Negro attorney representing many of the defendants, said he agreed with Judge Doub's decision to postpone the trials.

Defendants Blocked

"I think the decision was very wise," he said. "It was a fire hazard under the circumstances."

Greene said that he accompanied the 43 students as they marched from Shaw University up Raleigh's Fayetteville Street to city hall.

The building was so jammed, he said, that "the farthest I could get was the head of the stairs. It was impossible for me to get in the courtroom." He added that the young defendants were unable to get in the courtroom either.

Meanwhile, trial of a white youth accused of assaulting one of the lunch counter demonstrators in a melee several days ago, also was postponed. David Price, 19, had been scheduled for trial Friday on a charge of assault and battery. It was postponed until March 11.

Things were quiet on the lunch counter demonstration in Raleigh and elsewhere over the state. In Raleigh, Negro students braved a steady rain to picket a number of downtown stores—two variety stores, two drug stores and a department store. Most of these have closed their lunch counters as a result of the demonstrations.