

'Sit-In' Strikes Debated On National TV Program

NEW YORK, March 1 (AP)

Four white Southerners and two Negro college students debated via television today on the subject of the lunchroom "sit-in" demonstrations in the South.

The students, Betty Johnson, 19, of Virginia Union University at Richmond, and Lacey Streeter, 24, an Air Force veteran now studying at the North Carolina State College for Negroes, denied that the protest movement was inspired or directed from outside the South.

Seated at the right of NBC's Dave Garroway at a conference table for the taping of the "Today" show debate were Mayor George B. Herndon, of Fayetteville, N. C.; Carl Bear, president of the Chamber of Commerce of Montgomery, Ala., and Beverly Lake, of Raleigh, N. C., former assistant attorney general of his state and reportedly about to announce he will try for the governorship.

With the students on Garroway's left was Marion A. Wright, Linville Falls, N. C., attorney and vice president of the Southern Regional Council, an interracial organization.

The polite debate reached its greatest warmth when Lake said he would like Miss Johnson "to say just what rights she thinks she has to go into a private store . . ." and Garroway interrupted with a reminder that, "We've agreed not to cross-question."

Lake predicted that if the Supreme Court should hold that segregation in restaurants is illegal "you would have chaos and confusion in the eating establishments all over North Carolina . . . many of the very well-established restaurants, cafes, will go out of business.

Wright said that "my great regret about the whole lunchroom thing is that it represents a departure by the South from a long tradition of civility and grace and tradition of hospitality."

Bear said he believes that persons outside the South "deliberately are directing their somewhat inflammatory actions toward the youth of our Negro citizenry, and this . . . follows pretty much the pattern of revolution generally throughout the history of this world, as witness the most recent revolution, for instance, in Cuba. . . ."

Young Streeter said he knew integration could work because he spent four years in the integrated Air Force.

Both Streeter and Miss Johnson described the start of the "sit-in" movements in their respective schools as wholly student-inspired.

Miss Johnson said that "we first heard about this protest in North Carolina and the students of my school decided why should we sit by and see other colleges and other people participating in

this fighting for their rights? . . . It was individual action among the students, it wasn't a university project at all, we were acting as individuals."

Streeter said that "in reference to a statement made about the movements being organized by outsiders, well, I'm from Durham, N. C., lived in North Carolina all my life with the exception of the time I spent in service.

"These students at North Carolina College sat down and planned this movement for Durham. It was planned, organized and carried out by students, not by outsiders. . . ."

Mayor Herndon said he thought the Negroes would achieve integration "if they don't take it too fast," adding:

"I think between the good Lord and levelheaded people that it will work out, but it will take time."