

# Sit-In Demonstrations Could Sway Senate Vote

BY WILLIAM S. WHITE

WASHINGTON—What is real is far different from what is apparent in the Senate's long struggle over civil rights.

The appearance is that practically all the Southerners have been massed like desperate men on a bitter barricade against any additional protection whatever to Negro voting in the South.

The reality is that not a dozen—indeed not more than eight or 10—are actually so massed, in their hearts.

The appearance is that a furious and violent filibuster—a maneuver for, time-killing to prevent any vote at all—is in sight. The reality is that no such all-out thing is, under present conditions, even possible. It takes at least 20 senators to put on an unbreakable filibuster. No such force exists, at present.

The appearance is that the bipartisan civil rights forces are now strong enough to sweep far past the matter of voting rights. It would seem that the Senate has both the power and the determination to go much beyond voting rights and so also to provide powers to force school integration through Federal orders.

Again, the reality is quite otherwise. The Senate will not go that far—again, not under all present circumstances.

## Bill On Voting Likely

Given no grave worsening of national atmosphere, the upshot of it all will be a civil rights bill really guaranteeing the voting right, but going little or no farther. And given no grave worsening in national atmosphere that bill at length is going to pass by perhaps seven to one. The size of the ultimate majority is of the highest importance; the bigger it is the better it will be for all really concerned for Negro suffrage.

Two things, however, could greatly change this outlook, one way or the other.

1. Any dramatic proof of the charge of Senator Richard B. Russell of Georgia that Northern politicians are deliberately inciting Negro sit-down demonstrations in segregated business places in the South. This could change everything on one side. It could force the moderate Southern senators—who now actually well outnumber those refusing to give any ground at all on civil rights—to join their more extreme colleagues. If this should happen, all bets would be off. It would mean a filibuster to end all filibusters.

2. Any widespread violence resulting from such demonstrations, if it seemed to produce law-enforcement unfairness toward the Negroes, could alter everything on the other side. This could create a situation in which the Northern moderates would be pushed away from their present position. They would be forced by emotional pressure to join the Northern immoderates. And, again all bets would be off. As of now, the Northern immoderates, like the Southern immoderates, are only a relative handful.

The long and short of it is simply this: those in the North who really wish to make progress, but rational progress, on race relations are under heavy obligation not to help inflame the South's troubles at this point.

Those in the South who really wish to help solve this problem in an orderly and reasonable way are under heavy obligation to avoid extremism on their own side. If they say "no" to every reform in voting, the Senate in anger and emotionalism may then go very far indeed. And if the Northerners press the South harshly and pitilessly at this point the hard-core Southern opposition, which now is so small, could be expanded and infinitely hardened overnight.

Rarely has a greater obligation lain upon all men to act responsibly. Politics is politics, to be sure. All the same, the best of the politicians themselves will recognize in this situation an imperative duty to their country as a whole. And the fair discharge of that duty will, in the end, be the best politics of all.