

COUNTERS CLOSE BRIEFLY AS RESULT OF SITDOWN

CHARLOTTE, March 22 (AP)—Several variety store lunch counters closed briefly today in the first major anti-segregation demonstration here in almost a month.

Some 75 Negro students of Johnson C. Smith University, led by divinity student Charles Jones, staged the downtown protest.

No arrests or incidents were reported.

Mayor James Smith termed the demonstration "regrettable." He noted that his biracial committee on racial problems had yet to take full form and that he had thought the students would give it time to do so.

"I felt that was their feeling on the thing. I had no official assurances from them, but I didn't feel it would help anything for them to demonstrate," he said, adding:

"They've gained their point and nothing can be gained by further demonstrations."

Mayor Smith said he hoped demonstrations would have no serious effects on the community. He said the bi-racial committee would continue to form.

He said the demonstration showed "bad faith" in the committee, which was announced two weeks ago.

"It takes time to do something permanent and constructive," the mayor said.

Last week a dozen Johnson C. Smith students visited downtown lunch counters, but Jones indicated it was a splinter group that was not going along with majority sentiment at the school. He said the student body had decided to suspend demonstrations pending action by the mayor's group.

Jones declined comment today.