

Fight To Crack White City Jim Crow Rink

The Chicago Committee of Racial Equality, known as CORE, opened a campaign Sunday night against discrimination at the White City Roller Rink, South Park and 63rd street.

In the heart of a colored district, the Roller Rink has maintained a lily-white clientele through the "White City Club," which, CORE believes, is merely a device to keep Negroes from using the Rink.

CORE's action was carefully planned. Several white persons in sympathy with the group went to the Rink, bought tickets, and skated. They were not asked whether they were members of the "club" nor were they asked to show membership passes. Shortly thereafter, Ellsworth Blackwell and three other colored people went in. They were met at the door by a woman who told them that White City Rink is reserved for members and that they could not come in without a membership pass. Blackwell asked for the manager and conducted a friendly inquiry, during the course of which the manager said that he "would not like to go into a place where he was not wanted." Finally,

Blackwell handed the man a leaflet and informed him that his policy of discrimination called for action and that CORE members would distribute the leaflet to persons coming to White City.

The leaflet was headed, "Do YOU have a Membership Pass?" and stressed the fact that White City is evading the Civil Rights Law of Illinois, and that the "club" is merely a device to deprive Negroes of a civil right.

Management apparently feared that white persons without membership passes would turn away, for a person was stationed in the corridor to tell white persons that they did not need a membership pass. Later in the evening, the management announced to the skaters: "You are all the guests of White City tonight."

After the leaflet distribution started, white persons friendly to CORE continued to go into the Rink, bought tickets without membership passes and skated.

By 8:40 persons in the Rink noticed the management taking leaflets from persons whenever they got the chance and publicly tearing them up.

CORE announced that it would ask Negro organizations not to hold dances at the White City Ballroom as long as discrimination is the rule in the Roller Rink. Further means of economic pressure are under consideration. Leaflet distributions are continuing with mixed reactions from the skaters.