

Black Fights for Job on Stadium

By ACEL MOORE

and LEONARD J. McADAMS
Of The Inquirer Staff

Jesse Oliver said Tuesday this is not the first time he has experienced discrimination.

The tall, thin articulate black veteran whose hiring dispute has halted work on Veterans Stadium for nearly four weeks added:

"If I am better qualified than the whites I want the job. I know I am, intelligent enough to do the job. All I want is the chance."

Oliver, 36, father of five children, of 1335 S. Markoe st., said he had been accepted for the job of elevator constructor mechanic's helper by the Westinghouse Corp. Elevator Division which has the stadium elevator contract.

But he said Robert M. Williams, business manager of Local 5, Elevator Constructors Union, told him he wasn't going to give him a

"Somebody has to break the ice, and if . . . they don't want any Negroes and Westinghouse wants to help me in this, it is all right with me."

—JESSE OLIVER

necessary recruit permit "because Westinghouse was not hiring any of my men for the job."

A Westinghouse spokesman said the company interprets the contract as giving them the right to do the hiring not the union.

Oliver said he is an eight-year Air Force veteran who got out of the service in 1961. He said he had been an aviation mechanic and worked on medium bombers and when he returned to civilian life applied to several companies at International Airport for work as aviation mechanic.

But he was told he would have to go to a civilian school first, he said, even though other mechanics had been trained by the companies for adaptation to civilian planes and through the companies got their aviation mechanics licenses.

This was the basis for his remark that the present instance was not the first time he had experienced discrimination.

"Somebody has to break the ice," Oliver said, "and if there is prejudice to the extent they don't want any Negroes and Westinghouse wants



to help me in this it is all "We always need somebody to help and if my fight will enable more blacks to get into this field then I am going through with it."

It seemed to him, he said, that the union is prejudiced "because when I went down there I did not see any blacks working on the elevator job at the stadium."

Union representative Bill Freeman said they do not have an all white union. ONE OUT OF 585

The Human Relations Commission said in the reports required from unions on racial makeup Local 5 said they have one black journeyman out of a total of 585 members. The commission said it has no record of his name.

Charles E. Steele, district field construction manager for Westinghouse, said he is Albert Patterson, a journeyman for two years who he had hired on another construction job. Steele said Patterson had been voted into the union but never notified until a private agency and the manager of a government project moved on his behalf.

Steele said Oliver was among 101 applicants, seven blacks, two whites and one Puerto Rican and he felt he was best qualified with his background.

Westinghouse has hired Oliver as an office worker until the issue is settled. The U. S. Labor Department will hold a hearing Friday on Westinghouse's complaint of violation of the Philadelphia Plan. Oliver has also a complaint before the Human Relations Commission.

