

Seeking A Solution To Segregation

There is no neat, painless solution to the messy, painful problem of racial segregation. And there will be none while race prejudice exists. Society's fair-minded policy-makers are thus strung out in the middle of the ever-tightening wire between those demanding immediate action on the problem and those who seek to stall such action in hopes that the problem will somehow disappear.

Until recently, the Main Line had not been formally drawn into the fight for integration. But it's in it now. The Main Line Branch of the NAACP last week in a restrained but no-nonsense presentation to the Lower Merion Township School Board charged that the Ardmore Avenue Elementary School is a racially segregated institution and said that it cannot ask the 212 Negro children who comprise 81 percent of the school's enrollment to return "to the same deplorable conditions."

Therefore, if the School Board is to take the NAACP at its word, a solution to the situation at Ardmore Avenue will have to be found by September..

The NAACP argues that education in a segregated school teaches children to expect and accept segregation as the established way of life and trains them to regard as real and important the superficial difference in color which ought to

be unimportant and irrelevant. They further contend that such isolation encourages ignorance and misunderstanding and ultimately prejudice.

There is profound logic in this argument. Without contact and communication there can be no understanding, and without understanding there can only be hate, chaos and worse.

Quick, decisive action to end racial imbalance at Ardmore Ave. will not be easy, nor will such action write an end to race prejudice hereabouts. It will, however, eliminate, or at least help minimize, the protracted and ugly debate and conflict that has followed indecision and delay in other areas, both north and south of the Mason-Dixon line.

The NAACP expressed the hope that it can move with the School Board "in friendly cooperation" towards a speedy resolution of the Ardmore Avenue School dilemma.

If ever "friendly cooperation" was vitally needed, now is the time. The School Board has indicated that it will come to grips with the problem. This is as it should be. If a start is made, we trust both sides will consider the difficulties of the other in seeing that start through to the desired solution.