

# Rev. Jesse Jackson blasts Post Office

WASHINGTON — The Rev. Jesse Jackson has accused the United States Postal Service of job discrimination.

Jackson, the director of the Operation Breadbasket arm of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, said that postal reorganization has placed thousands of nonwhites closer to welfare.

He was also critical of the reduction in the number of postal regions and supervisors; this, he said, automatically cut the work force.

He further charged that the new district post offices are being established in white suburbs.

"In Chicago," he said, "a new office is being placed in Cicero, where it is not even safe for blacks to pass through — let alone live."

He added that "the pattern is the same in Washington and I suspect every major city."

Jackson estimated that nonwhites constitute between 61 and 80 per cent of the work force nationally, and noted that employment at Chicago's post offices has dropped from 27,000 to 21,000 in the past three years.

He said that the majority of post office-employed nonwhites remain near the bottom where they are "a post office job away from the welfare rolls."

Jackson cited the discrimination as a result of new-found interest in the postal jobs by whites.

"When blacks were out loading mail onto trucks for \$4,000 a year, nobody else wanted the jobs," he said. "But now that they pay up to \$10,000 and \$12,000, whites have decided they want them."

The SCLC official had the opportunity to tour the main post office building, and he noted that conditions were depressing and paralleled the work set-up to an old cotton plantation.

"In the South it's the cotton sack, but in the North

it's the mail sack," he suggested.

Jackson also met with some workers who complained that they were constantly harassed and treated like second-class employees.

A Postal Service spokesman said the agency has been placed under the Postal Reform Act, which requires that old employees be given priority in job placement in new facilities. He added that jobs had been filled on the basis of competitive tests.