

## Ignoring the Separation Ordinance.

According to the statement of Mr. J. H. Wilson, the president of the Mobile Light and Railroad Company, which appears elsewhere, Mr. Wilson has decided to contest the legality of the city ordinance requiring the white passengers to sit in the front part and the colored passengers to sit in the rear part of his cars; and, to make a test case, he will have his employes ignore the ordinance requiring them to place the passengers, white and colored, as above described.

Mr. Wilson asserts that a great many of the white passengers will not take the seats assigned to them, and that his employes have great trouble in trying to enforce respect for the law. This, while contrary to the general experience, there seeming to be a disposition on the part of all but very few white persons to take voluntarily the places appointed, may be a true statement, for the president of the company is in a position to hear all of the complaints of his men; but it should be accompanied by the statement that his men, who are armed with police authority, have used the authority and have called on the regular police for assistance, and have still been unable to enforce the law. We have heard of no arrests made, except in the case of one colored passenger, who was found guilty and fined \$7.50 or fifteen days' imprisonment—which was a test of the ordinance, and has not been taken to a higher court.

Mr. Wilson says, furthermore, that the separation ordinance has resulted in depriving his company of the patronage of the colored people. That is the real cause of his present action. The company's receipts have fallen off to the extent that he contemplates reducing the number of cars or reducing the pay of his employes; and, as an alternative, he resolves to ignore the law.

It is now the duty of the mayor to see that the ordinance is enforced. Mr. Wilson, by his action, invites the enforcement and promises to test the matter in the courts. He should be accommodated, because, if the ordinance is illegal, it should be so declared, for in its operation it inflicts great injury upon the company's in-

test. Until it is passed upon, however, it should be enforced. It is as much a part of the code as any other ordinance, and defiance of it, either by the company or by the public, will not, we feel sure, be countenanced by the city's executive.

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