

Auto dealers hit on bias

San Francisco automobile dealers were bluntly accused last month of failing to live up to the agreement for "affirmative action" for minority job opportunities, which got them off the hook of sit-in demonstrations in 1964.

Rather than increasing minority employment, the auto sales industry here has seen a drop in its proportion of Negro employes from 8.5 per cent to 7.4 per cent between December, 1964 and February, 1966, the Human Rights Commission was told.

That, commented Commissioner Cornelius Wall, manager of the ILGWU Joint Board, is "an indication of affirmative action backward, not forward."

FRANK QUINN, the commission's director, blamed the drop in Negro employment on lack of effort by the Motor Car Dealers Association either to recruit or train minority employes—as they agreed to after demonstrators filled their showrooms in 1964.

"A striking example of what I mean," Quinn said, "is that there was one Negro office worker back in 1964 and today the same person continues to be the one Negro office worker out of 300 office employes."

Dealers agreed to inform the commission of every opening so it could help find and train qualified minority employes. But, said Quinn, the commission has been informed of only one in five job vacancies.

THE AGREEMENT, signed by the employers, the commission and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, ended demonstrations by hundreds of people who sat down in automobile showrooms along Van Ness Avenue Auto Row to protest hiring discrimination.

Many were arrested, and municipal courts were jammed for months at huge cost to the city and with resultant fines or jail sentences for demonstrators.