

Group Seeks to Bar RCA Shift Of Executives to New Canaan

By WILL LISSNER

The Suburban Action Institute moved yesterday to bar the RCA Corporation from moving 1,000 executive staff members from New York City and Camden, N.J., to a proposed office in New Canaan, Conn.

The institute, a civil rights agency financed by several foundations, made a formal request to the chairman of the Federal Equal Employment Opportunities Commission that he charge the company with discriminating against "black and brown employes and prospective employes."

RCA Corporation is one of 35 companies considering moving some or all of their corporate headquarters out of New York City because of the tax burden, the high cost of sites and construction, the alleged inability of the police to cope with street crime and other conditions.

The company announced on Tuesday that it would consolidate staff functions performed in 10 locations in New York and New Jersey on a 269-acre tract in New Canaan. It asked the town's Planning and Zoning Commission to rezone the site to allow its use for an office building.

Charge Against New Canaan

Neil N. Gold and Paul Davidoff, directors of the institute, said at a news conference at the Overseas Press Club, 54 West 40th Street, that the ground cited in the complaint was that New Canaan was guilty of de facto segregation, accomplished through the zoning law.

They charged that the town "is a virtually all white, upper-income, exclusionary community."

Suits in several localities, notably Philadelphia and Black Jack, Mo., are challenging the constitutionality of "snob" or exclusionary zoning in the suburbs. Denison Ray, general counsel of the institute, said

the action through the Federal commission was begun to exhaust available remedies.

Mr. Ray said that if the commission did not act, the institute was prepared to go into United States District Court and prosecute its own action, charging a violation of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Mr. Gold and Mr. Davidoff said New Canaan's zoning laws and practices "are designed to and have the effect of preventing black and brown people, typically of low and moderate income, from living there." They said that of 887 headquarters personnel out of the 1,018 the RCA Corporation plans to shift from New York City and Camden, nearly 100 are black.

Charges Denied

A spokesman for the RCA Corporation said he had no figures on the ethnic breakdown of the affected employes but they probably did include 100 blacks. But he said they were not typically of low and moderate income. All the employes involved had special skills and could afford the housing available in New Canaan, he said.

"RCA Corporation will stand on its record of not discriminating against blacks or Puerto Ricans or members of any other minority group in its employment policies," the spokesman said. "That record will be maintained in New Canaan. If they don't like New Canaan's zoning, their quarrel is with the town not with us."

Mr. Gold and Mr. Davidoff said the RCA Corporation had not applied for rezoning to permit low-and moderate-income housing. The company spokesman said it had no present intention of doing so.

Roy Wilkins, executive director of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, and a group of Federal and state legislators from New York City announced support of the institute's action.