WHEREAS, one of our reasons for refraining from riding the busses is because of the present seating arrangement, and

WHEREAS, our request is not a request for the abolition of segregation on busses but for a fair and reasonable seating of passengers so as to assure all passengers equal treatment, and

WHEREAS, similar cities in the South and in Alabama have similar seating arrangements to that which we are requesting, namely Mobile, Alabama; Dothan, Alabama; Huntsville, Alabama; Macon, Georgia; Nashville, Tennessee and other southern cities, and

WHEREAS, The Montgomery City Lines, Incorporated through its attorney has stated that it "is willing to reinstate bus service into every district of the City and operate under [any] arrangement of seating the races that will meet with the approval of the City Commission . . . "

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED, The Negro Ministers of Montgomery and their Congregations, (The Methodist Ministerial Alliance, The Baptist Ministers' Conference, The Inter-Denominational Ministerial Alliance) and The Montgomery Improvement Association, representing approximately 50,000 Negroes in the city and county of Montgomery, in meeting jointly called upon the City Commission of the City of Montgomery to adopt the following seating arrangement on busses operated within its jurisdiction:

That the seating of passengers will be on a "first come-first served" basis. This means that the Negro passengers will begin seating from the rear of the bus toward the front, and the white passengers from the front toward the rear until all the seats are taken.

TD. MLKP-MBU: Box 6.

From Earl B. Dickerson

11 January 1956
Chicago, Ill.

Dickerson, president of Supreme Liberty Life Insurance, agrees to join the committee of Chicago African-American leaders to lobby National City Lines. He applauds King

1. Earl Burrus Dickerson (1891–1986), born in Canton, Mississippi, earned his B.A. (1914) at the University of Illinois and his J.D. (1920) at the University of Chicago. After serving as general counsel for Supreme Life Insurance Company for more than thirty years, Dickerson presided over the company from 1955 to 1971. In 1940 he successfully argued before the U.S. Supreme Court the landmark case Hunsberry v. Lee (1940), which affirmed the unconstitutionality of racially restricted real estate covenants. He was a national board member of the NAACP (1941–1980) and served terms as president of the Chicago Urban League (1939–1947, 1951–1955) and the National Lawyers Guild.
and the MIA for using economic pressure as “a means of obtaining complete equality in our great American Democracy.”

Rev. M. L. King, President
Montgomery Improvement Association
309 South Jackson Street
Montgomery, Alabama

Dear Rev. King:

I have your communication addressed to me under date of December 27, 1955 regarding the matter of your citizens with the Transit Lines of Montgomery. I shall be happy to sit down and confer with Dr. Archibald Carey, the Chairman whom we designated, when, and as soon as he makes the request for a meeting of the committee.

Meanwhile, let me congratulate you and your associates for the fine work you are doing in protesting the unfair treatment of the Transit Lines of Montgomery. It seems to me that unless the Negro people are prepared to boycott companies and organizations which discriminate against them, we shall never be able to solve the problems involved in segregation and discrimination. Economic pressure is a weapon which we must now use as a means of obtaining complete equality in our great American Democracy. And I congratulate you again and trust that you will hold steadfast to the end in your opposition to the unfair and unchristian-like practices of this company.

Very truly yours,

[signed]
Earl B. Dickerson
President

From H. Edward Whitaker

18 January 1956
Niagara Falls, N.Y.

Whitaker discusses plans for King’s visit, scheduled for 25 March but later rescheduled to 22 July. King noted “to be answered soon” on the letter and responded on 30 January.¹

¹ See p. 113 in this volume.