

Strip Atlanta of Capitol, Klan Chief Blast Demands

By JACK NELSON

In an angry blast at the City of Atlanta, the Ku Klux Klan has called for moving the state capitol out of that "buzzard roost."

The Klan held a huge cross-burning rally Saturday night in a large field on the southeastern side of Stone Mountain. The Klansmen were fired up because city officials refused to provide a police escort for their motorcade.

It was the biggest meeting of the Klan since its revival in 1953 by E. L. Edwards, auto assembly plant worker and Imperial Wizard of the KKK. More than 1,000 cars brought an estimated 3,500 persons to the meeting.

Edwards said it was a "national" meeting. Large motorcades of cars, many of them painted with KKK emblems, came from Alabama, Tennessee

and points in Georgia. Two reporters also observed cars from South Carolina, Florida, Louisiana and Virginia. A DeKalb policeman said he saw cars from as far north as Pennsylvania.

DeKalb County Police Chief Ernest Sikes said he furnished police escorts for two Klan motorcades "strictly as a traffic control measure."

Edwards was dressed in a gold robe and hood trimmed in red, white and blue. His followers wore the traditional white robes and hoods. Some of the klansmen—all without masks—were busy trying to sign up new members among the audience during the speeches.

APOLOGIZES

Edwards' speech, as fiery as the three crosses burning behind a large truck bed on which he stood, opened with a blast at Atlanta officials.

"I want to apologize, for the courtesy, help and assistance we didn't get from the city of Atlanta," he said, and added, to a chorus of cheers and amens. "We ought to get our capitol moved out of that buzzard roost."

Earlier, Edwards had told a reporter that the Klan "has more members than Mayor Hartsfield and Police Chief Herbert Jenkins think."

Said Mayor Hartsfield Sunday: "I see no reason to dignify such statements with any comment."

LASHES AT PRESS

Another Klan official from Atlanta, Wesley Morgan, charged the press with "distorting the facts about the Klan."

His comment came while he was supervising confiscation of

film from a camera carried by the only news photographer present. Morgan paid the wire service lensman for the film but said the KKK did not want pictures taken because the press "would use them to distort the facts."

Edwards said the KKK has a "clean record" under his administration.

Asked if Texas Attorney General John Ben Sheppard had not investigated the Klan last year, Edwards replied: "Sheppard sent one of his stooges over here one day to investigate me and he went back to Texas the next day. Since then John Ben has quietened down."