

Mitchell's Aides to Visit 50 College Campuses

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WASHINGTON, Sept. 2— Teams of Justice Department officials will fan out across the country next month in an effort to convince college students that the Justice Department's policies are not repressive toward criminal suspects or lukewarm on civil rights.

Assistant Attorney General William Ruckelshaus, who is in charge of the program, said today that at least 50 college and university campuses would be visited in October. The object, he said, is to dispel a belief among many students that the Justice Department is following unenlightened policies and to hear the students' complaints.

It is a coincidence, Mr. Ruckelshaus said, that the month-long effort will take place just before the general election

Aim Is to Convince Students Agency Isn't Repressive or Lukewarm on Civil Rights

Nov. 3. He said that October had been selected because students would be getting settled at the start of the fall semester, and that would be a good time to catch their ears.

Seven teams are being organized. Each will be headed by a top Justice Department official, aided by two lawyers, one who has been working on the department's crime program and another who has been dealing with civil rights. The format will stress questions and answers, Mr. Ruckelshaus said.

He added that the program would not be affected by the Hatch Act, which forbids po-

litical activity by certain Federal employees, because the visits were intended to be informational and not political.

"We will go to rationally convince the students that the Justice Department is not repressive," Mr. Ruckelshaus said in an interview today. He said that although students were mistaken in their impressions of the department, their concern was sincere and apparently widespread.

Attorney General John N. Mitchell first mentioned the idea of visiting college campuses during a television interview early last month. About 200 invitations have come from campuses in reaction to that, according to Mr. Ruckelshaus.

The 50 campuses to be visited will be chosen to span the entire country and to include large, small, public and private institutions. Invitations will not be accepted from student political groups of any orientation, and efforts will be made to have the meetings sponsored by the colleges themselves.

For the last several months, Mr. Mitchell has frequently expressed concern that the Justice Department has acquired a mistakenly harsh image among students. He has begun to appear more frequently before the press and has relaxed into a more genial public demeanor than the unsmiling presence that earned him a "prosecutor" image.

He has also made strong statements in support of the Supreme Court and of the desirability of encouraging dissent.

See also 30 Sep 70, this file.

21 Oct 70, filed Legislation.