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Farmer Leaves H.E.W. Job Amicably

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WASHINGTON, Dec. 7 —

James Farmer, the founder of the Congress of Racial Equality, resigned today as assistant secretary for administration of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare.

At a news conference after a 20-minute meeting with President Nixon, Mr. Farmer said his resignation had been prompted more by problems of the Federal Bureaucracy than by the racial policies of the Nixon Administration.

Mr. Farmer, 50 years old, was the most prominent Negro in the Administration. In his letter of resignation, he said he was leaving because of "personal considerations."

Plans a 'Think Tank'

At the news conference, he said he planned to look into the feasibility of setting up a "think tank" for minorities to achieve more influence in planning and direction of the Federal Government.

Mr. Farmer's resignation had been rumored for months. When it finally came, both he and the Administration appeared to go to great lengths to show that the parting was amicable. Mr. Farmer refused to criticize Mr.

Nixon, declaring that he would give whatever negative impressions of the Administration he had after the effective date of his resignation, Dec. 21.

When he joined the Administration in February, 1969, Mr. Farmer said he thought he could best serve blacks from within the Government.

"I have sought, quietly, inside, to pursue the elusive objective of lasting change for my people," he said today. "There have been limited successes. In short range they have been minimal; in the long range, possibly significant. The achievements are not sufficient, or fast enough, to satisfy my appetite for progress."

He continued: "I must confess that I chafe in the ponderous bureaucracy, and long, especially now, for my old role as advocate, critic, activist."

"Especially now, for there is among the young a growing crisis of confidence in government, not this Administration alone, but any administration, any establishment, any government in this land."

Advice to Other Blacks

Mr. Farmer said other blacks should join the Administration, but called the question of joining it an individual one that must be answered by the person involved.

He said that in his talk with

Mr. Nixon, the President had pledged to fight for the family assistance plan next year and that if Congress did not pass it then, "there would be blood on the floor." Mr. Farmer said he suggested that Mr. Nixon should increase his contacts with black leaders and spokesmen inside and outside the government and should set up a national ombudsman to handle the problems of the people. (An ombudsman is a government-supported problem solver, separate from traditional branches of the government, who investigates matters on behalf of individual citizens or groups of citizens.)

Mr. Farmer said he had trouble dealing with the bureaucracy in his attempts to eliminate all forms of discrimination and to improve health delivery systems. He criticized the bureaucracy as self-protecting.