

# Black Caucus Scores Nixon's Response

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WASHINGTON, May 23—The leader of the Black Caucus in the House, Representative Charles C. Diggs Jr. of Michigan, today termed "deeply disappointing" President Nixon's response last week to 60 proposals by the group for aid to minority groups.

The list of proposals, which included a minimum welfare payment of \$6,500 a year for a family of four and a grant of \$50-million to help develop minority-operated businesses, was presented in March to the President by the 12 black members of the House, all of whom are Democrats.

Last Tuesday, Mr. Nixon sent the caucus a 112-page response to its "demands" in which he rejected some of the major proposals, including the one for welfare reform, while saying that he was in agreement with several others.

In an appearance today on the National Broadcasting Company's "Meet the Press" television program, Mr. Diggs and two other caucus members, Representatives Augustine F. Hawkins of California and William Clay of Missouri, replied publicly to the President for the first time.

Mr. Clay accused the President of using the report to "document his present policies" on civil rights and aid to minorities and the poor.

"We already know those policies," he said. "We already contend that those policies are having a devastating effect on the lives of poor and black Americans."

In his rejection of the \$6,500 annual welfare payment proposal, Mr. Nixon noted that his own program for welfare reform, yet to be approved by Congress, "combines a more realistic payment level with fiscal responsibility."

Mr. Hawkins said today that the \$6,500 figure had been established by the Bureau of Labor Statistics as the minimum necessary to provide a standard of health and decency for a family of four. He added that the caucus members believed that, "if we end at once the war in Vietnam, we can reach a plateau of \$6,500 in a matter of just a few years."

## Priority Items

Mr. Diggs said that, of the 60 proposals, those dealing with welfare reform and economic security for the disadvantaged "would have priority over some of the other items."

The list of proposals included such diverse items as expanded hiring programs for minorities, the appointment of more Black Federal judiciary officials, increased aid to black Africa and a review of relations with the Republic of South Africa.

The Representatives had also asked the Administration for

more Federal aid for black colleges. Mr. Nixon last Tuesday that, in his budget for the fiscal year that begins July 1, he was doubling such aid.

Mr. Clay took issue with the President's response, saying, "The fact is that he hasn't given an extra nickel to black colleges."

Representative Diggs said that, in addition to presenting the 60 proposals to the President, caucus members were trying to meet with leaders of both parties in congress in an attempt to generate support for legislation on the proposals.

He said that the caucus had

met with the Republican and Democratic leadership in the House and was scheduled to meet with the Republican leadership in the Senate next month, but that there had been no response to a request for a meeting with the Senate Democratic leaders.