

Negro Who Scored Nixon Policy Is Dismissed From H. U. D. Post

Romney Asserts the Ouster Was Planned Before First Attack on President

By PAUL DELANEY
Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, July 29 — Robert Lee Grant, the only black official of the Nixon Administration to criticize Administration policies openly, has been dismissed from his job with the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Mr. Grant called a news conference this morning to announce that he had received a letter of dismissal from his superior, Floyd H. Hyde, Assistant Secretary for Community Development. Mr. Grant was special assistant to Mr. Hyde.

Last month Mr. Grant got himself in trouble with the Administration when he harshly criticized the President, charging a lack of commitment to solving the problems of minorities. Since then, Mr. Grant has repeated his accusations, and most recently took issue with Vice President Agnew's charge that black American leaders, unlike some black African leaders, were "carping and complaining."

In a one-paragraph letter, Mr. Grant was informed that his job would be terminated as of Aug. 6.

"Since you have sufficient accrued annual leave for the purpose, you need not return to the office between now and that date if you prefer to remain on leave," Mr. Hyde's letter said.

Publicity Move Seen

The letter did not state reasons for the dismissal. However, Mr. Hyde and the H.U.D. Secretary, George Romney, said at a news conference at the White House late today that Mr. Grant had not been dismissed for his criticism of the Administration, but that the assistant, who was in a policy-making job, had been on the way out before his statements.

"I'd say it was a case of a fellow trying to get all the publicity he can get on the way out," Mr. Romney remarked.

However, Mr. Grant charged that he had been dismissed because of his criticism. "The Administration doesn't tolerate any criticism," he said.

Mr. Hyde said the reasons for the dismissal predated any public criticism by his assistant. And Mr. Romney said that Mr. Grant had not "been serving in a meaningful policy role for some time before his dismissal."

Mr. Grant produced a memorandum that showed he had set up and written the agenda for an important policy meeting on June 28, three days after his first critical speech. He



Associated Press
Robert Lee Grant

said he had been barred from the meeting and called to a conference with Herbert G. Klein, White House communications director.

"Mr. Klein told me to stop saying things that could be construed as critical of the Administration," Mr. Grant said. "I tried to impress him with my sincerity in wanting the Administration to do more for minorities."

Warning From a Negro

He said he had not participated in policy-making projects since then and had been warned by Assistant Secretary Samuel C. Jackson, who is also black, that he was finished at the department.

The original critical speech by Mr. Grant was made June 25 at a dinner sponsored by his home town branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People in Hempstead, L. I. In the speech, he said that a confidence gap separated the Nixon Administration and the minorities, the poor and the young.

The speech marked the first time a black official had openly criticized the Administration, although several others had done so in private.

Mr. Grant said he was not bitter about his dismissal, "just disappointed." Although he said he believes the Administration has made some contributions to minorities, he disagreed with the positive record presented Sunday by several black officials at the convention of the National Urban League in Detroit.

Those officials defended the civil rights record of the Nixon Administration, declaring that more had been accomplished in that area than under previous administrations. They attributed Mr. Nixon's negative image among minorities and the poor to poor "style" and a bad press.

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