

U.S. Civil Rights Unit Raps Nixon

WASHINGTON — (CDN)
— The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, which pointedly avoided direct attack on President Nixon six months ago over his administration's civil rights record, threw out the etiquette book today.

While acknowledging that some "important steps" had been taken, the commission said that Nixon "in some cases" had "deterred a clear, affirmative direction needed to confirm a strong will by the federal government to enforce civil rights laws."

A Year Later

The six-member panel, headed by the Rev. Theodore M. Hesburgh of Notre Dame University, said the White House "has failed to develop and communicate to the public a sense of urgency over the need to end discrimination."

The criticism came in a "one-year-after" look at how the bureaucracy had responded to the civil rights agency's monumental study of 1970. That survey found

—Turn to Page 18, Col. 4

'Lacks Urgency'

Civil Rights Unit Raps Nixon

—From Page 1
department heads and lesser government officials dragging their feet in starting civil rights programs in their own offices, and weak on enforcing — or searching out for enforcement — strong civil rights policies.

Its latest survey, said Father Hesburgh, found "several key federal agencies making notable progress," but "the over-all performance continues to get low marks."

While the policy-makers had instituted "mechanisms" for civil rights enforcement, they were yet to be put into operations, the report said.

Of 27 offices, agencies and departments surveyed — and two educational programs in Health, Education and Welfare — none was rated adequate.

Only 15 were doing a "marginal" job, and 13 — including the White House, the Justice Department's Law Enforcement Assistance Administration, the Internal Revenue Service and the Veterans Administration — were doing a "poor" job.

While the President's civil rights staff has been increased — from three to nine persons (largely due to the addition of an assistant and his staff to work on school desegregation) — it has not established a routine to "expeditiously" put into effect civil rights enforcement policies, the commission found.

The staff has "failed to take the initiative" and has confined itself largely to "worthwhile, but ad hoc (special purpose)" projects, it said.

"The ultimate source for policy guidance . . . is the President. While firm and

unequivocal policy direction . . . is no guarantee of effective civil rights enforcement it is an essential precondition to vigorous . . . action," the commission explained.

But the "net effect" of the President's statements during the last six months — on

fair housing, school busing and minority school enterprise — "has not been to provide the clear policy direction necessary" to push the bureaucratic chiefs on civil rights enforcement, it asserted.