

WIDER URBAN ROLE URGED FOR STATES

U.S. Report Scores Lag in Facing Cities' Problem

WASHINGTON, Nov. 20 (AP)—A report issued tonight by a House committee predicted that the Federal system might be gravely weakened unless states increased their role in solving the problems of metropolitan areas.

It said states had lagged far behind Federal and local governments in dealing with such problems and that, as a result, cities had bypassed states and gone directly to Washington for help.

"Minimizing state participation in urban affairs is tantamount to removing state influence from a critical range of domestic issues," the report said, adding that without state participation it is doubtful whether local government can be reorganized to meet its growing responsibilities.

What is seen as an urgent need to re-establish a role for the states is a principal theme of the 168-page report, a product of seven years of work by the bipartisan Commission on Intergovernmental Relations.

It notes that with metropolitan areas growing so fast that some 75 per cent of the nation's population would live there by 1980, the Government would have to provide many of the services individuals could furnish themselves in a predominantly rural economy.

But the report asserted that "poor coordination and conflicts of interest among governments often block effective action to deal with metropolitan problems."

"Changes in the structure of

government within metropolitan areas, and innovations in relations between the Federal Government, the states and local communities are needed to overcome these obstacles," it said.

The report was prepared for the commission by Bernard J. Frieden, associate professor of city planning at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and issued by the House Government Operations Committee.

Much of the report was devoted to the need for state legislation providing greater home rule, metropolitan planning and strengthening of general governmental units, as opposed to school districts, water and sewerage boards and other single-purpose groups.

But it noted that the vast increase in Federal programs aimed at metropolitan areas should serve as a basis for encouraging metropolitan planning for both the central city and surrounding suburbs.

"The Congress and executive agencies should authorize and encourage responsible joint participation in urban development programs by local governments having common program objectives in metropolitan areas that overlap political boundaries," the report said.

William G. Colman, the commission's executive director, said in a statement accompanying the report that "the solutions to metropolitan problems can be developed by the states, by the Federal Government, or by both."

Although the report made it clear that the commission favored such development at all levels, Mr. Colman said that "the decision as to which it will be rests to a considerable extent with the state governments, because if they choose not to act, the metropolitan problem by default, becomes largely a Federal problem."

The report suggested that this had already happened, and said that "the state role has

been lagging far behind both local and Federal activity."

"Yet," it went on, "the states occupy critical position within the American Federal systems and possess the power and resources to strengthen local capacities and stimulate greater cooperation within metropolitan areas."

Specific Proposals

Many of the commission's specific proposals, such as state legislation to limit zoning powers of smaller suburbs and to limit incorporation of separate units within metropolitan areas, have been issued in earlier reports.

Members of the commission include Govs. John N. Dempsey of Connecticut, Nelson A. Rockefeller of New York, Carl F. Sanders of Georgia and Robert E. Smylie of Idaho; Secretaries Henry H. Fowler of the Treasury, Orville L. Freeman of

Agriculture, Robert C. Weaver of Housing and Urban Development; Senators Sam J. Ervin Jr. of North Carolina, Karl E. Mundt of South Dakota, and Edmund S. Muskie of Maine; Representatives Eugene J. Keogh of New York, L. H. Fountain of North Carolina and Florence P. Dwyer of New Jersey; and Mayors Neal S. Blaisdell of Honolulu, Herman Goldner of St. Petersburg, Fla., Richard C. Lee of New Haven, and Arthur A. Naftalin of Minneapolis.