

Fight Poverty, Slum Areas To Ease Crime--McGovern

By DAVID NORDAN

The new director of the revised Metropolitan Atlanta Commission on Crime and Juvenile Delinquency has called on Atlantans to help alleviate poverty and slum conditions which he said are at the root of the city's crime problem.

James L. McGovern, an FBI veteran who was named to head the commission in January, said that any crime fighting efforts are futile unless these conditions are altered.

He made his remarks at a meeting of the Atlanta Kiwanis Club which he urged to join with other civic groups to help provide recreational facilities in areas of the city where riots occurred last summer.

Mr. McGovern reported that 21 play lots were erected in deprived areas of the city after the outbreaks last year but that the Atlanta Parks Department does not have a budget large enough to maintain and improve them.

HE SAID the recreational areas were built with the help of federal funds, but the funds are not available this year.

The commission director cited

Sears Roebuck for donating four portable swimming pools for the areas and urged the Kiwanians to consider financing the filtering system for at least one of the pools as a project.

"The crime problem is a portrait of a failure on the part of society," Mr. McGovern said. "It breeds not in a vacuum but in a cess pool—poverty, the lack

of opportunity, poor health and so forth."

"Remove these conditions," he said, "and you will reduce crime."

MR. McGOVERN said he spent 26 years with the FBI, but that only recently, after becoming director of the crime commission, did he really become fully aware of the importance of preventive measures in fighting crime.

He lauded the work of the parent of the Metropolitan Commission, the Atlanta Crime Commission, which he said delivered the same conclusions as the President's Commission on Crime and Delinquency several months before the national study group made its report.

He also urged the Kiwanians, almost 100 percent employers, to reconsider hiring policies and not arbitrarily refuse to employ a man who has a criminal record.

He said they and other citizens could do much to combat crime individually through small efforts such as locking automobiles, doors, reporting offenses to police and making themselves available to police as witnesses when needed.