

The New Commission

ATLANTA'S new and official Community Relations Commission has made a fast start in its work to further communications across the city and in effect bring democratic processes into fuller use by those who have been largely beyond them.

The commission was created by the mayor and Board of Aldermen last November. Its 20 members, representing a wide range of community leadership, were appointed in December. In January the commission chose as executive director Mrs. Eliza Paschall, a respected veteran of human relations work whose familiarity with the immediate problems before the commission is deep and of long standing.

The commission, despite the small size of its financial resources, has moved immediately (though cautiously and with circumspection) into some of our most pressing problems. It consequently will annoy some of those who would rather not look at those problems at all, or who feel that they are the special property of standing bureaucracy.

We are especially impressed by the outcome of the first hearings held by the commission in the slum areas. Through this opening of channels and this offering of a forum to people whose views otherwise might not be heard in the counsels of city government, the commission has increased the contact between city government and a very large part of the population of the city.

Already there is the kind of feedback that is badly needed. What the people in Vine City are thinking about recreational needs there, what the people of the Pittsburgh area need in the way of police protection, what Summerhill's people have to say about housing conditions—these are important feedbacks from the commission's work so far.

The commission also has a role to play, and is beginning to play it, in areas that have been in racial transition residentially and need a stabilizing influence.

We think the commission is off to a good start. It deserves strong support from the Board of Aldermen and the city at large.