

# Race Relations Commission Organizes; Gets Challenge

Atlanta's new Community Relations Commission, created to help solve problems of racial strife, was officially organized Wednesday and urged to "get out there to the danger spots as quickly as possible."

The challenge came from T. M. Alexander, a member of the commission, set up recently by the Atlanta aldermanic board.

Alexander's comments came after the 20-member commission had been sworn in and was having its first business session.

Alexander and several other members expressed the hope that the commission could move swiftly to head off potential trouble in areas similar to Boulevard and Summerhill where racial incidents erupted in September.

Division of the commission into small groups which could move into these potentially explosive areas "and hear the people" was suggested by Alexander.

Vice Mayor Sam Massell Jr. declared that with formation of the commission "no longer will official concern about community relations come about only as result of crisis and emergency."

Organization of the commission, said Massell, assures that racial problems will "now rightfully take their place in City Hall as a day-to-day responsibility."

The commission, headed by attorney Irving Kaler as chairman, will operate initially on a \$30,000 a year budget. This includes some \$12,000 to \$15,000 for an executive director.

Much of the commission's first meeting was taken up with discussion of the type of person needed for the executive direc-

tor's job.

The Rev. Sam Williams, head of the commission's screening committee, said some 17 applications for the job have already been received.

Massell urged the commission to hold "mass meetings" in Atlanta neighborhoods in order to "catalog grievances" of the citizens.

He also suggested that the commission pursue an application for an Office of Economic

Opportunity grant in the amount of \$130,000 to establish a "fair housing center" as an adjunct Mayor Ivan Allen's campaign for more housing opportunities for the lower economic bracket.

John G. Feild, director of the Community Relations Service of the U.S. Conference of Mayors, told the commission members that they would have to decide themselves what role they wish to play in the city's racial relations.



Massell



Alexander

Feild said they must decide "whether you're going to do it yourselves or see that it gets done."

The Rev. Mr. Williams was named first vice chairman of the commission; Helen Bullard, second vice chairman, and Mrs. Fred Patterson, secretary.