

TOP police officers from throughout the United States came recently to the University of Oklahoma to take a long, hard look at the most controversial domestic issue of our times. Under the auspices of the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP), an August 7-8 conference at the Oklahoma Center for Continuing Education provided more than 100 police executives with firsthand reports on the implications for law enforcement of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. Rather than discussing the pros and cons of integration, the purpose of the two-day meeting was to acquaint policemen with the new law and how it may affect them and their responsibilities to their communities. The Potomac Institute of Washington, D.C., the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, the Southwest Center for Law Enforcement Education and the Human Relations Center at OU sponsored the event.

At first glance, the assemblage looked more like a pre-season Chicago Bears chalk talk. The physical stature of the men as they strolled along the sidewalks and corridors of OU's adult education center was an impressive sight. Heading the list of guest speakers was Leroy Collins, former governor of Florida and recent president of the National Association of Broadcasters, who was appointed in July by President Johnson to direct the Community Relations Service established by the Civil Rights Act. Other lecturers included Arthur B. Caldwell, assistant

to the assistant attorney general, civil rights division, U.S. Department of Justice; Chief of Police Herbert T. Jenkins, Atlanta, Ga.; Quinn Tamm, IACP executive director, and Nelson A. Watson, project supervisor for the research and development section of the IACP. Caldwell pointed out that contrary to the beliefs of some of those who opposed the Civil Rights Bill in Congress the law will not turn this country, or any part of it, into a police state. "There will be no vast army of federal officials invading the South, or any other region, to enforce the provisions of this law," he said. "It will be enforced, however, by local federal courts presided over by local federal judges . . . The function and obligation of the local police to keep order has not changed, nor will it be changed by this law."

Said Caldwell: "Historically, the primary function of the police has been and still is, to preserve order, keep the peace and to enforce local criminal statutes that outlaw certain forms of misconduct which the legislature has decided shall be prohibited and punished. Thus, criminal laws are punitive in nature. They do not ordinarily provide remedies such as civil laws provide. It is important to remember this distinction in discussing this new law. It is not a *criminal statute*. This new law is remedial in nature. It provides a means of redress. It makes meaningful the rights of the individual which are in the Constitution. For large segments of our popula-

tion these rights had little meaning because adequate remedies were not available. Until 1957 the only laws available to the Federal government to vindicate or protect the constitutional rights of individuals were criminal statutes. These were the old post-Civil War statutes enacted to enforce the provisions of the 13th, 14th and 15th Amendments which became part of the Constitution in the 1860's. Because these statutes were criminal in nature they were most difficult to apply and largely ineffective in those areas where there was most need to enforce them . . .

"There has been much misinformation about the scope and the effect of this law on local communities . . . No one will be arrested under the provisions of the law unless and until he has first had his day in court and a local federal judge has ordered him to refrain from a particular course of conduct, and he then defies that court's order. Such a procedure is not new nor was it created by the passage of this law nor is it limited to civil rights cases"

Although segregation and/or integration are not primarily police problems, Atlanta's Jenkins asked police chiefs to join other community leaders and civic organizations to focus positive attention on the issue. As an example, he pointed to the peaceable and voluntary desegregation of schools in his city.

"The desegregation of the public school system," he said, "is an ex-

Police officials take a

LOOK AT A NEW LAW

By CHARLES LONG

PHOTO BY MIKE DIRHAM

ample of how community pride and cooperation can do things that the small number of men on our police department never could." He added that police forces must come out of their "shroud of secrecy" and take part in getting various community groups together to face problems which are growing out of the current social revolution.

Watson stressed the importance that policemen read, understand and comprehend as much as possible the implications of the Civil Rights Bill for the law enforcement profession. In the face of violence arising from demonstrations, he concluded, police must more and more receive proper

training and must strive to carry out their responsibilities without prejudice and emotion.

Governor Collins called upon the policemen to build their reputations on a high plane as a measure to prevent racial violence in their cities. Collins emphasizes that since civil rights primarily is a concern of the cities—large and small—it is in the cities where "the battle of America to master its racial problems will be won or lost." And this, he adds, places a "truly awesome responsibility" upon officers of the law.

"You know better than I that the greatest causes of crime are the things which spawn the instinct to do crimi-

nal acts—extremely low levels of education, poor standards of health, meagre job opportunities, the absence of parental leadership and care. All of these things mean substandard environments, and from them comes human despair needing only the lighting of the fuse to cause all Hell to break loose.

"As you find these conditions to exist, I urge you to go that extra mile to see that the leaders of your communities who take responsible remedial action are made aware of the needs for reform; and by every means available, stimulate them to move in this behalf.

"A prime goal will be to encourage and promote voluntary compliance with the law, to head off conflicts which might erupt in the streets or work their way into harsh battles in the courts."

"We take the affirmative position that this must be a nation of law-abiding citizens. We will take the initiative in helping to make compliance understandable and as reasonable and acceptable as possible, but we will offer no haven for those who would disregard the law or seek to evade its clear obligations.

"A splendid statement was made a few days ago by Senator Richard Russell of Georgia, who led the opposition to passage of the Act in the Senate. Senator Russell told his people of Georgia, and at the same time the people of the world:

'It is a form of anarchy to say that a person need not comply with a particular statute with which he disagrees. Ours is a government of laws, not of men, and our system cannot tolerate the philosophy that obedience to law rests upon the personal likes or dislikes of any individual citizen, whether he supports or opposes the statute in question.'

"This nation was founded on the principle that all men have a right to equal opportunity whatever their color, race, religion or national origin.

"While this has been a national commitment since the inception of the nation, each succeeding generation has been called upon to see to the business of making it come true in its own time, with its own resources of mind and spirit.

"Now is our time. And we must not fail."



Gov. Leroy Collins addresses leading police executives from across the U.S.