Civil Rights Action May Affect University

By BILL PANNILL

A recent proposal by three members of the Civil Rights Commission may pose some problems for continued segregation at Rice.

The proposal was added to the recommendations of the Commission in their report: “Equal Protection of the Laws in Public Higher Education, 1961.” The three members of the Commission included John A. Hannah, former president of Michigan State University, the Rev. Theodore Hesburgh, president of Notre Dame University, and George M. Johnson.

THE PROPOSAL suggested that public funds to private universities which refuse to admit students because of race should be cut off: “It should not be possible for public funds, collected from all the taxpayers of the nation to promote the general welfare of all citizens, to be so disbursed that any group or groups of the population may be precluded arbitrarily from benefitting therefrom . . . those that cannot or will not conform to the national policy of nondiscrimination merely forego the benefit of Federal funds.”

Rice University’s Charter provides for the admission of “white inhabitants.” The only way to remove this provision, according to Dr. Carey Croneisis, Acting President of the University, is for the Texas Secretary of State to approve a change in Rice’s charter, following petition by the Rice Board of Trustees. Since breaking a charter is legally very difficult, it would probably not be tried unless Rice direly needed the Federal monies.

IF RICE ADMITTED Negro students under the present Charter, the University would be risking possible lawsuits by interested parties, who might attempt to put part of Rice’s endowment in jeopardy.

Dr. Croneisis stated that the University uses relatively little Federal money, so that if the proposal of the Commission were to become law, the University would not have to close its doors. Rice got only $633,000 in Federal grants in 1958-59, while Cal Tech received $53,600,000 and Princeton, $17,720,000.

According to Mr. James B. Giles, Director of Admissions, Rice had no Negro applicants in the four years he has been Admissions Director.