

PANTHER BID IS REBUFFED

Annapolis Negroes Said To Discourage Militants

A member of the state Commission on Human Relations said yesterday that militant Black Panthers from Baltimore who are trying to organize a group in Annapolis, have met stiff opposition from Negroes in the state's capital.

"No one would talk to them. They couldn't get to talk to any black people in a position to tell them what is happening in the city so I jumped at the opportunity," said Thomas R. Hunt at a commission meeting. Mr. Hunt is a resident of Annapolis.

Leaders Refused

He said after the meeting that he believed Negro leaders in Annapolis refused to talk with the Panthers because they feel that progress is already being made in the capital.

"Black people have not found it difficult to work with city officials. Sure, nothing is perfect, but there has been social progress," said Mr. Hunt.

He told two other commissioners that Annapolis leads the state in providing recreational facilities, housing and police-force jobs for Negroes.

Mr. Hunt, who is an executive at the Job Corps center in Baltimore, run by the Burroughs Corporation, and also the political action director of the state chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, said he received a telephone call from a woman member of the Black Panthers and met her last Saturday.

"What I wanted to point out to her was that, before deciding to become actively involved in Annapolis, Panthers should determine whether the need was much greater elsewhere," he said. The Black Panther, whose identity he declined to reveal, did not say whether the group would continue to try to organize in Annapolis.

The commission, which was two short of a quorum of five and could not meet officially, nevertheless voiced its unhappiness with a bill proposed by Governor Mandel. The bill, members said, did not go far enough in strengthening the commission.

Investigative Powers

Under the bill, the commission would have the power to investigate complaints of discrimination in state agencies for the first time. The commission would be limited, however, to making reports to the Governor. It would not have power to order an end to alleged discrimination.

William C. Rogers, Sr., chairman of the commission, said he was disturbed by a section of the bill that would require that all activities be "conducted in confidence and without publicity."

Mrs. Sidney Levin, a director of the Maryland League of Women Voters, told the commissioners that Governor Mandel seemed "startled" by the breadth of the section's prohibition. At a meeting with Mrs. Levin last Tuesday, the Governor said he would have the language changed so that only disclosures about investigations would be barred, she said.