Black candidates imperiled

Over 250 black candidates are running for political office in Mississippi's November elections. The black candidates were made possible by the Voting Rights Act of 1965, under which black registration in the state leaped from less than 20,000 in 1964 to about 275,000 in 1970. But the black candidates are imperiled, black leaders and civil rights activists say, because the U.S. Department of Justice has been doing less than enthusiastic job of enforcing the Voting Rights Act.

Blacks cite these three instances of Justice Department inaction: permitting counties to require voters to re-register without obtaining prior clearance, as is required by the act; failing to oppose the so-called 'open primary law,' which was clearly aimed at the gubernatorial campaign of the black candidate, Charles Evers; and failure to oppose redistricting plans, which discriminate against black candidates. For an examination of the charges, and the response of a Justice Department official, see Jack White's article inside this issue.

Unprecedented Indian unity

On August 26, leaders from 11 of the country's largest and most influential Indian organizations--in a display of unanimity unprecedented in the history of the organizations--sent a letter to President Nixon informing him that, "at this point, the confidence that Indian people have placed in your administration is shaken...".

The leaders said recent events within the Bureau of Indian Affairs have sparked fears among their people that the President has no intention of implementing the new Indian policy he enunciated on July 8, 1970--a policy strongly supported by tribal leaders and Indian activists.

"We believed you," the letter said, "when you told us about a new era of Indian SELF-DETERMINATION... But we ask how your pledge to decisively break with the past and create 'conditions for a new era in which the Indian future is determined by Indian acts and Indian decisions' squares with the following events:

---

The lower courts find considerable leeway in their busing decisions.... Bureaucratic complexity creates problems for minority farmers....