

Carl Rowan

Racial Peace Needs Bravery

WASHINGTON — Somewhere down that long, hard road called the future this country is going to kick its present flirtation with racism, separatism, ethnic hostility and return to the dream that all Americans can live together in peace.



If it does, the nation will be indebted to a band of courageous men who kept the faith when the mob was howling and stampeding in the other direction.

I mean men like the Rev. Theodore M. Hesburgh, president of Notre Dame University and chairman of the Federal Civil Rights Commission.

And men like G. Holmes Braddock, chairman of the school board in Dade County (Miami), Florida.

Richard M. Nixon named Father Hesburgh chairman of the rights commission. But that does not stop the noted educator from saying publicly that Mr. Nixon is raising "phony issues" when the President goes around the country orating against busing of pupils or in favor of neighborhood schools.

"Forty per cent of American school kids are bused now; you can't say it is a bad thing; it is a reality," says Father Hesburgh.

Thanks largely to the attitude of this administration, busing "for racial balance" has become an intensely emotional issue all over the country, with the "neighborhood school" suddenly a sacrosanct concept. Under these circumstances, Father Hesburgh might easily have held his tongue.

But showing greater loyalty to the truth



Secretary of the Exterior

than to the President who appointed him, Hesburgh noted that "neighborhood schools are not the pattern anywhere," pointing out that all over the country citizens have been consolidating schools for decades in order to give children better educations.

The Southern-born Braddock also refused to bite his tongue when the busing issue came up this summer in testimony before the Senate's select committee on equal educational opportunity.

"If we want to make a difficult problem more difficult, we can continue to dodge the gut issue," Braddock said. "We can make excuses about preserving the neighborhood school, about having freedom of choice, about keeping the Federal government out of the operation of our schools, and on and on.