

DRUG AIDE CHARY ON CURBING RAIDS

Asserts It's Impossible to
Prevent Hurting Innocent

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WASHINGTON, July 5—The retiring head of the Government's drug abuse law enforcement office said today that he could not guarantee that drug raids on innocent people would be stopped.

"I can't tell you that in the future there wouldn't be some knuckleheads who might go off half-cocked on their own to conduct raids," Myles J. Ambrose told a news conference. Mr. Ambrose is retiring this week as Assistant Attorney General in charge of drug prosecution.

"We're trying to find out what can be done," to prevent illegal raids, such as the two that occurred in Illinois, Mr. Ambrose said.

Asked what changes the Department of Justice had made since Federal narcotics agents mistakenly raided the homes of Herbert Giglotto and Donald Askew in Collinsville, Ill., in April, Mr. Ambrose replied: "A million steps have been taken."

He cited two, saying that he had sent a memorandum to every agent and supervisor of the drug abuse office demanding "great care and judgment" in future raids, and that he had put the problem on the agenda for a conference here tomorrow of the regional directors of the drug abuse office.

Incidents 'Minimal'

Such incidents have been "minimal," according to Mr. Ambrose, who is leaving the Government to return to private law practice in Washington.

He said The New York Times had reported three cases of illegal raids by agents of the drug abuse office, "but that was over four years."

"Last year we [Federal, state and local officers] made 527,000 narcotics arrests," he said, adding that he was not trying to "justify" the violations.

According to Justice Department sources, Attorney General Elliot L. Richardson had been planning to respond to a New York Times article citing dozens of cases of mistaken, often violent and illegal raids on innocent citizens by agents in search of drugs. The Attorney General reportedly was dissuaded by officials at the Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs from making a statement now pending an investigation.

Mr. Ambrose said that the agents who raided Mr. Askew's home and Mr. Giglotto's apartment were still on the payroll because Civil Service rules prevented him from filing charges against the agents until a grand jury had finished investigating the two cases. He denied that any Federal agents might be involved in any harassment, as Mr. Giglotto has alleged.

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