

GROUP HERE SEEKS TO HALT G.E. MOVE

U.S. Asked to Take Action on Alleged Discrimination

By JAMES F. CLARITY

The Suburban Action Institute said yesterday that it had asked the Federal Government, in effect, to block the General Electric Company's plan to move its corporate headquarters from Manhattan to Fairfield, Conn.

Officers of the institute, a nonprofit organization involved in urban and suburban problems, said complaints alleging that G.E.'s plan would discriminate against its minority-group employees had been sent to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and the Office of Federal Contract Compliance in Washington.

Neil N. Gold, a director of the institute, said Fairfield's zoning laws and housing costs would make it virtually impossible for relatively low-paid G.E. employees to live there. He estimated that 8 per cent of the 850 people the company says it plans to move to Fairfield are nonwhite.

Mr. Gold called the planned move "a put-up job, an example of a corporate cop-out for the advantage of a few executives."

The institute's other director, Paul Davidoff, at a news conference at the New York Hilton hotel, estimated that three of every four "executive officers" of the company already lived in Fairfield.

Charges Are Denied

A spokesman for General Electric said that "the availability of a variety of housing was carefully examined and we are convinced that adequate housing is available within reasonable commuting range." He added that, "in short, our proposed move to the greater Bridgeport area involves no racial discrimination whatsoever."

The company spokesman said that only 500 jobs were planned for the first move, in mid-1974, but that others could follow. He said that of the transfers now planned one-third of the people involved already lived in Fairfield County, including one of the company's highest 19 officers. He said he did not know how many nonwhite employees would be affected by the move.

The institute officials said that under Federal law the Equal Employment Opportunities Commission could investigate charges of discrimination, but could not prevent G.E. from moving.

They said the Office of Contract Compliance could, if it found the company guilty of discrimination, cancel its government contracts.

Despite the expectations of institute officials, there was no representative of the city at the news conference. Mr. Gold said that no city agency was formally joining the institute in its action.