

Rights Groups Oppose Poff for Court

By FRED P. GRAHAM
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WASHINGTON, Sept. 20—Civil rights groups are preparing to fight against Senate confirmation if President Nixon selects Representative Richard H. Poff of Virginia to fill the Supreme Court seat vacated by Hugo L. Black.

Clarence Mitchell, director of the Washington bureau of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, said today that the civil rights movement was preparing to repeat the Senate battles that defeated two previous Southern nominees if Mr. Poff is selected.

Mr. Poff, a Republican who signed both "Southern manifestos" issued by segregationist Congressmen in 1956, has been widely mentioned as a leading contender for the nomination.

Southerners Fill List

Mr. Mitchell was a central figure in the efforts by civil rights and labor groups that prevented Senate confirmation of Clement F. Haynsworth Jr. and G. Harrold Carswell to succeed former Justice Abe Fortas. Mr. Nixon finally appointed a non-Southerner, Harry A. Blackmun, and attributed the defeat of his other nominees to anti-Southern bias among Senate liberals.

Since then Mr. Nixon has expressed a desire to fill the next vacancy with a nominee satisfactory to the South. Representative Poff's name has led the list of candidates—all from the South—who have been mentioned in speculation about the vacancy.

Mr. Mitchell said in an interview today that his forces

would not object to a Southerner "so long as he's fair." But he said that Mr. Poff's record was so anti-civil rights that "if he is nominated I don't think the Senate would confirm him."

He stressed that Mr. Poff had taken the "purely gratuitous" step of signing two "Southern manifestos." The first was to protest the Supreme Court's school desegregation ruling of 1954, and the second was to denounce the pending Civil Rights Act of 1957. Mr. Mitchell said that Mr. Poff has apparently never voted for a major civil rights bill.

Mr. Poff and his aides could not be reached for comment.

Other possible nominees being checked out by the civil rights forces include two Federal District judges who have been critical of busing to achieve integration—Walter E. Hoffman of Norfolk, Va., and George C. Young of Orlando, Fla.

Another potential nominee, Charles S. Rhyne of Washington—a North Carolina native who was a law school classmate of Mr. Nixon's—was described as a "great" choice by Mr. Mitchell.

List of Women Planned

In addition, two members of the United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit, which has jurisdiction of the deep South, have been mentioned. They are Lewis R. Morgan of Newman, Ga., and David W. Dyer of Miami.

The White House drew criticism from another quarter today as advocates of women's rights protested the statement by the White House press secretary, Ronald L. Ziegler, that

the President was perusing a list of seven candidates to pick "the best qualified man."

The National Women's Political Caucus sent a telegram to the White House urging the President to appoint a woman. Its staff was preparing a list of potential female nominees, which already included the names of 40 women who are Federal judges, state supreme court judges, law professors or members of Congress.

Senator Birch Bayh, Indiana Democrat, urged the President to pick a woman and suggested four names: Representative Martha W. Griffiths of Michigan; Patricia R. Harris, a former dean of Howard University Law School; Judge Shirley Hufstедler of the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit, and Judge Constance Baker Motley of the United States District Court in New York. All are Democrats.

Mr. Ziegler explained at a briefing today that the "intent of my remark was not to rule anyone out." He said that the President would make his selection "as quickly as possible" and that he would probably pick a "strict constructionist."

Muskie Against Regional Choice

COLUMBIA, S. C., Sept. 20 (UPI)—Senator Edmund S. Muskie said here today that the selection of a new Supreme Court Justice should not be limited to the South.

"To appoint a Justice to the Court I think any President should be willing to go to any region of the country," the Maine Democrat said. "I don't think the region has anything to do with it," he added.