

An FCC Withdrawal

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By John Carmody

Federal Communications Commission nominee Luther Holcomb, vice chairman of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, yesterday asked President Nixon to withdraw his recent nomination to a Democrat seat on the powerful FCC. The request followed disclosure of Holcomb's ardent efforts on behalf of Mr. Nixon and the Republicans during the 1972 campaign.

Letters and memorandums from the EEOC official to various GOP figures,

including Pepsico, Inc. board chairman Donald M. Kendall and White House special counsel Harry Dent, had been leaked to the Senate Commerce Committee in mid-April. The committee had already held confirmation hearings on Holcomb for a seat on the seven-member Commission.

The correspondence indicating the Democrat's ties to the President had been sent to the committee by Carol Foreman, executive director of the Consumer Federation of America.

The Federation had opposed Holcomb's nomination, Foreman said yesterday, because "he brought absolutely nothing to the commission" and because the various memoranda indicated "he'd go straight to the broadcasters" on touchy FCC issues. She would not reveal the source of the correspondence, however.

A subcommittee chaired by Sen. John O. Pastore (D-R.I.), had held two brief public hearings on Hol-

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comb's nomination the first week in April. At that time, a committee aide said yesterday, "Holcomb did a good job" and seemed headed to sure confirmation as a replacement for commissioner H. Rex Lee, a Democrat who resigned in December and whose term is due to expire this June.

The brief time remaining in that term was cited yesterday by Holcomb in his

letter to Mr. Nixon. It is likely, however, that the White House would have renominated him for the seat next summer, if the close Republican ties for of the 62-year-old Baptist minister from Dallas, Tex. hadn't surfaced.

Some of the correspondence in the committee's hands suggested that Holcomb was the Administration's "man" on the EEOC. He had first been appointed to the vice-chairmanship in

1965 by President Lyndon Johnson with strong Democrat and Texas backing. This bipartisan support had surfaced again this spring when Mr. Nixon nominated him for the FCC post.

In a June 23, 1972 memo to Stanton Anderson, a presidential staff assistant, Holcomb wrote that "I wanted you and any of your associated (sic) to know that I voted in opposition to filing suit against General Motors." The commission had

met June 12 to consider an EEOC suit against a GM plant in St. Louis, Mo.

Holcomb's loyalty to Mr. Nixon was expressed often in the memoranda. On May 18, 1972, he wrote Kendall — a close personal friend of the President — of his "total commitment to Pres. Nixon for re-election. It is more than a political matter with me. It will take at least four more years to bring any sense of balance to our country."

The EEOC vice-chairman sent a personal check to Sen. Peter Dominick (R-Colo.) on Feb. 29, 1972 to be used in Sen. John Tower's (R-Tex.) reelection campaign. "I am not a man of means," Holcomb wrote Dominick, "but I do believe that the reelection of Pres. Nixon is a must."

Holcomb wrote to Dent in September, 1972, assuring the White House aide that "my number one interest these days is that of Pres.

Nixon. I do not want to intrude, but if you have any 'fires' to put out or errands that you want me to run, please have someone in your office call and I will know that it is coming from you."

After telling Dent that his 89-year-old father was near death, Holcomb added that "even in such times as these my thoughts turn to you and the President."

Holcomb could not be reached for comment yesterday.