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**Ford Considers Woman
For the Supreme Court**

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WASHINGTON, Nov. 12—President Ford is "actively" considering appointing a woman to succeed Justice William O. Douglas on the Supreme Court, according to highly placed Administration sources.

These sources said that an "important factor" was that Betty Ford has long urged her husband to appoint the first woman Justice should a vacancy occur during Mr. Ford's term. As it became clear that Justice Douglas's health was failing fast in the past several weeks, the question of appointing a woman Justice has been discussed in high level meetings, the sources said.

According to her press secretary, Mrs. Ford was surprised to learn of Justice Douglas's resignation and said that she would take the first opportunity tonight to "mention to the President" her desire that he appoint a woman to the Court.

Though the names of several woman lawyers as potential Justices were put forth in the early 1970's, the sources said, this was the first "serious consideration" of a woman candidate. The White House is reported to have at its disposal several lists of suitable women that were prepared with the aid of the Department of Justice.

From a political standpoint, the sources agreed, the President could profit from recognizing the feminist movement by appointing a woman to one of the few Governmental posts denied them in the past. If the woman candidate were Jewish, the sources said, the President could restore the so-called "Jewish seat" on the Court, lost when Justice Abe Fortas resigned in 1969.

Mr. Ford's problem, one source pointed out, is that he must find a woman candidate who is sufficiently qualified to protect him from the charge of "gimmickry" in her appointment. "It has to be a woman with legal stature great enough so that it exceeds her womanhood as a factor in confirmation," a source said. These sources believe that a woman candidate would be less vulnerable to partisan political attack on Capitol Hill.

Another administration source said that if the selection

of the candidate were to be made entirely on the basis of legal qualifications, the nominee probably would not be a woman. But Supreme Court appointments traditionally have satisfied a mixture of political and legal criteria.

Richard B. Cheney, chief of the White House staff, however, said it was "sheer speculation" to suggest that Mr. Ford was likely to appoint a woman. He said that the President had received Mr. Douglas's resignation only at 1 P.M. and that a successor would be given careful consideration.

There is no "final list" of women candidates, other sources said. But a number of names have been discussed in Administration circle during the past several weeks.

¶Carla A. Hills, Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, is a former lawyer for the Department of Justice and was an assistant United States Attorney in California. The 41-year-old Cabinet member is known to be well-liked by both the President and Mrs. Ford. Her husband, Roderick, is chairman of the Security and Exchange Commission.

¶Rita E. Hauser, is a well known New York lawyer and has been a powerful figure in Republican politics. She too is 41, and was a kitchen-cabinet adviser to the Nixon White House.

¶Shirley Mount Hufstедler, a judge of the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit, in Los Angeles, and a former state court judge. She is 50 years old.

¶Soia Mentschikoff, 60, dean of the University of Miami Law School and formerly a professor at the University of Chicago Law School.

¶Susie Marshall Sharp, a 68-year-old state judge in Rocky Mount, N.C.

Among the men regarded by the Administration as well qualified for the Court, sources said, were Robert H. Bork, the Solicitor General, and Edward H. Levi, the Attorney General.

President Ford, at a meeting with students at the Stanford University School of Law in September, said that his choice would be someone in middle-age, not necessarily a lawyer, but a "person of great integrity."