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Vote on High Court Nominees Put Off a Week by Senators

By FRED P. GRAHAM
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WASHINGTON, Nov. 11 — The Senate Judiciary Committee put off today for at least a week a vote on the Supreme Court nominations of Lewis F. Powell Jr. and William H. Rehnquist.

The delay came after liberal Senators asked for one time to study the hearing testimony regarding charges that assistant Attorney General Rehnquist had been insensitive to the civil rights of Negroes and to the guarantees of the Bill of Rights.

However, no member of the committee has yet announced that he will vote against either of the nominees, and two liberal Republicans who had withheld judgment announced today that they would vote for both nominees.

Senator Hugh Scott of Pennsylvania and Charles Mc C. Mathias Jr. of Maryland, whose opposition to past nominees of President Nixon foreshadowed confirmation trouble, endorsed both nominees and predicted that they would be approved overwhelmingly by the Judiciary Committee.

Senator Scott said at an informal news conference that during the brief meeting of the Judiciary Committee this morning no member indicated, that

he would vote against either nominee. There have been indications that as many as five members might vote against Mr. Rehnquist and might attempt to delay his nomination in the committee and on the Senate floor.

Mr. Scott said he did not expect a filibuster or any floor fight because of the overwhelming approval that the nominees were likely to get from the committee.

Bayh Delays Vote

After today's closed meeting the members disclosed that Senator Sam J. Ervin Jr., Democrat of North Carolina who supports both nominees, moved that they be favorably reported to the full Senate. Brich Bayh, of Indiana, moved that only Mr. Powell be approved today, and then Senator Bayh and John V. Tunney of California exercise their prerogative of delaying a vote on Mr. Rehnquist for a week.

Senator Marlow W. Cook, Kentucky Republican, asked for a similar delay on Mr. Powell. Senator Cook, who supports both nominees, said this was a parliamentary tactic to link the two nominations together to counter the liberals' strategy of accepting the Powell nomination while seeking to delay Mr. Rehnquist's.

Senator Cook justified holding up confirmation of Mr. Powell on the ground that otherwise there would be an eight-member Supreme Court and some cases might result in tie votes.

Senator Bayh called for a news conference this morning to announce his intention to vote for Mr. Powell, but he said "it is unheard of for two nominees to go like Hansel and Gretel on the Supreme Court." He said that Mr. Rehnquist's nomination should be held pending further investigation of allegations that he once took part in an effort to impede voting by Negroes in his home city, Phoenix, Ariz.