

Mitchell Endorses '72 Role by Rogers

NYTimes

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Special to The New York Times

MAR 3 1972

WASHINGTON, March 2—President Nixon's campaign chief says he sees no reason why the Secretary of State, William P. Rogers, should not play a political role in the forthcoming campaign.

John N. Mitchell, who until yesterday was the Attorney General, said that various "surrogates" would be speaking on Mr. Nixon's behalf in primary states and that Mr. Rogers should be allowed to defend the Administration while Mr. Nixon avoids overt partisan activity until after the Republican National Convention.

"If there is anything that involves the foreign policy of this country, I think the Secretary of State has a perfect right to speak to it," Mr. Mitchell declared.

Mr. Rogers has already entered the political arena at least once in the last few

weeks, sharply attacking Democratic contenders who criticized the President's latest Vietnam peace plan.

Despite Mr. Nixon's heavy emphasis on the border and large "battleground" states in 1968, Mr. Mitchell said that this year there would be no sectional strategy. "You don't address yourselves to any particular segment," he said, adding later:

"A decision has been made at the highest level that there will be the same campaign in every state of the union."

The pipe-smoking lawyer brushed aside a question about the impact of Senator Edmund S. Muskie's recent emotional denunciation of William Loeb, the New Hampshire publisher. "That depends on the voters," Mr. Mitchell said. He also sidestepped a question about the threat to Mr. Nixon from Gov. George C. Wallace of Alabama. He described Mr. Wallace as "a problem for the Democrats."

As for the future of Vice President Agnew, Mr. Mitchell reminded reporters that Mr. Nixon had already discussed this matter. In a television interview in January, Mr. Nixon said that Mr. Agnew was his choice at the present time.

Connally Is Praised

Mr. Mitchell had high praise for John E. Connally, the Secretary of the Treasury, who is regarded as a possible successor to Mr. Agnew. Mr. Mitchell described Mr. Connally as a forceful and effective spokesman and expressed the hope that he would continue in that role.

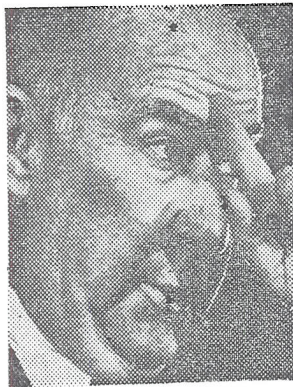
The former Attorney General would not discuss specific issues at any length. He said that the single overriding issue would be "President Nixon's Administration and its record." Without directly saying so, he indicated his belief that the record would survive public examination.

On some controversial issues—such as Mr. Nixon's trip to China and his national security policies—he indicated a belief that Mr. Nixon would be judged to have taken a sensible position somewhere between his critics on the right and those on the left who would take "\$50-billion out of the defense budget."

At the same time, however, he showed marked interest in the school busing question and seemed concerned that the Administration take a firm position that would be clearly visible to the voters.

He said the process of amending the Constitution to prevent busing was too long and cumbersome and that because busing "is a matter of some urgency in some parts of the country" he preferred to meet the problem with a statute.

Meanwhile, in an address to about 1,500 leading Republicans today, Mr. Mitchell extolled the virtues of Mr. Nixon as a Presidential candidate and pleaded for party unity in the campaign.



Associated Press

John N. Mitchell speaking to Republican leaders about the Nixon campaign yesterday in Washington.

Two-Part News Parley

Mr. Mitchell's comments came during a news conference yesterday to which selected reporters had been invited by the office of Herbert G. Klein, director of communications. The news conference was divided into two segments—the first for immediate release, the second embargoed until today.

In the first half hour, Mr. Mitchell gave a spirited defense of his three years at the Justice Department. He also indicated his preference for a law, rather than a constitutional amendment, to halt "excessive" school busing. Mr. Nixon is now considering the various alternatives at his Key Biscayne vacation retreat.

In the last 30 minutes yesterday, Mr. Mitchell turned to politics. He indicated that he will be as tough-minded, terse and cautious with the press as head of the Committee to Re-

elect the President as he was in his old job.