

# 6 Justice Department Lawyers Quit, Had Criticized Plans to Limit Busing

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Six of the Justice Department attorneys who two weeks ago publicly criticized legislation to limit school busing resigned in a group yesterday, refusing to say why.

They called a news conference for noon today to explain their actions.

One Source close to them said it was "not coincidental" that the individual letters of resignation were submitted the same day, and that they planned to go into a venture that could be described as "decidedly anti-Nixon."

The six submitted their resignations yesterday, effective at the end of the working day.

Their decisions to quit the department's Civil Rights Division were apparently made so quickly that by yesterday afternoon only five of the letters had reached department officials.

"We've pretty much agreed that nobody's going to give any kind of statement to the press until after the news conference," said Arthur Chotin, who joined the department in September, 1968.

Pressed for details, he refused to answer most questions, but did admit that "the

decisions (to resign) had to be made very quickly."

Chotin's public protest had been under review by the department ever since he sent a letter to The Post that was published in the Letters to the Editor column six weeks ago. It began:

"As I sit here watching President Nixon make his statement on school busing I am sickened. Sickened because it is the job of the President to unite and lead the nation to the future, not buckle under the weight of political pressure and retreat to a dark and miserable past."

The other five—Rick Green, Carol R. Zack, Tom O'Neill, Arthur Wolfe and Richard L. Master—all signed a protest letter with 90 other Civil Rights Division lawyers that went to Congressional leaders two weeks ago.

Without specifically mentioning President Nixon's two antibusing proposals now before Congress, the April 25 letter urged lawmakers to "reject any proposal which would limit the power of federal courts to remedy, through busing, the unconstitutional segregation of public school children."

A department spokesman said there would be no imme-

diately comment, and denied there had been any internal pressure on the attorneys.

None of the other five were being investigated, the spokesman said. Their brief letters "all said essentially this," he said: "I wish to announce my resignation effective at the close of business today."

"I personally have a very high regard for each of the individuals involved," said Frank Schwelb, chief of the department's housing section, where all but Chotin worked.

At least one other attorney who signed the April 25 letter has since resigned. Robert Feder quit April 28 to return to Fargo, N.D.

Green and Wolfe had been with Justice since 1966, Wilson said, while O'Neill and Zack both came in late 1971. There were no immediate statistics on Master.

The April 25 letter, signed by both black and white attorneys, was written in conjunction with a separate letter sent to The Post the same day and signed by 10 black attorneys.

It called the controversy over busing "nothing more than a thinly veiled attempt to sacrifice the rights of minority children to racist pressure groups and political expedience."