

### **Fortas' Resignation**

Associate Justice Abe Fortas, nominated for chief justice of the United States by former President Lyndon B. Johnson, has resigned from the Supreme Court in the face of mounting pressures and the threat of impeachment.

Mr. Fortas' nomination for chief justice was blocked by partisan opposition. It is just as well. For Mr. Fortas resigns under an ever-darkening cloud of suspicion, the target of severe criticism for entering into an agreement to accept a \$20,000-a-year lifetime fee from the family foundation of financier Louis Wolfson, who currently is serving a jail term for violation of federal laws governing the transfer of securities.

Mr. Fortas entered into the agreement after he became a member of the court and held onto the first \$20,000 payment for 11 months before finally returning it.

Although we supported his nomination for chief justice, his conduct in the Wolfson affair has demonstrated that while he may be outstanding in the narrow field of law, Mr. Fortas is not the man we once thought he was.

Mr. Fortas' resignation was dictated not only because he himself was discredited, but by the need to preserve the good name of the nation's highest tribunal.

The Fortas resignation, coupled with the previously announced resignation of Chief Justice Earl Warren, will give President Richard M. Nixon an early opportunity to alter the current ideological balance on the court.

His decision as to whom he shall nominate for these positions will be among the most important he will make as President, and, as such, will be followed with great interest.