

U.S. agency drops bid in

Washington (AP)—The Justice Department yesterday gave up its efforts to represent a top White House aide in connection with a \$1 million civil suit filed against five men accused of bugging Democratic National Committee headquarters.

Reversing an earlier decision, the department decided, in effect, to allow Charles R. Colson, White House counsel, to obtain his own lawyer.

A Justice Department spokesman refused all comment on why an appeal was dropped to a federal judge's ruling that the department may not assign a lawyer for Mr. Colson.

To hire own lawyer

Later, a White House spokesman said Mr. Colson had given his deposition to a lawyer for the Democrats, Edward Bennett Williams, yesterday morning.

The White House spokesman said Mr. Colson decided to hire his own lawyer to avoid fur-

ther delay in the civil case. U.S. District Judge Charles Richey had ruled earlier that a parallel criminal investigation conducted by the Justice Department would create a conflict of interest if a government lawyer were to defend Mr. Colson during delivery of the deposition.

It was Mr. Colson who hired a former CIA agent, E. Howard Hunt, whom reliable sources have connected with the five men arrested in the case, including James W. McCord.

Arrested June 17

Mr. McCord, who until recently was the security chief for the Committee to Re-elect the President, was among those who were allegedly removing electronic bugging equipment inside Democratic headquarters in the plush Watergate apartment complex when they were arrested June 17.

The Justice Department also

decided against trying to represent Alfred Wong, chief of Secret Service technical security at the White House.

Democratic party lawyers also seek depositions from Mr. Wong, who reportedly recommended that Mr. McCord be hired by the Republicans.

On August 14, the Justice Department said it wanted to represent Mr. Colson because he is "involved in many important and sensitive functions."

"As such, any wide-ranging inquiry on a deposition could well intrude into matters relating to his official duties," the department said.