

SENATE DEMOCRATS PICK BYRD AS LEADER; G.O.P. ELECTS BAKER

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Humphrey Bows Out of Contest
—Griffin Is Defeated, 19-18, in
Upset in Republican Vote

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By RICHARD L. MADDEN

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WASHINGTON, Jan. 4—Robert C. Byrd, a West Virginia Democrat, was chosen majority leader of the Senate without opposition today, while the Senate Republicans in a surprise move elected Howard H. Baker Jr. of Tennessee as their minority leader.

At a party caucus shortly before the 95th Congress convened for its opening-day ceremonies, the 51-year-old Mr. Baker defeated Robert P. Griffin of Michigan, the Republican whip since 1969, by a vote of 19 to 18 in a secret ballot.

Senator Baker, who gained national attention as a member of the Senate Watergate committee in 1973 and who is a son-in-law of the late Everett McKinley Dirksen, a former Senate Republican leader, is regarded by some of his colleagues as a potential Presidential contender in 1980.

Seeking More Forceful Voice

His election as minority leader over Mr. Griffin, who had been in line for the post, apparently reflected a desire by the Senate Republicans to gain a new face and a more forceful opposition voice now that the Democrats will control both the White House and Congress for the first time in eight years.

By contrast, the Senate Democrats chose as their leader the 58-year-old Mr. Byrd, a skilled legislative tactician who is expected to work closely with President-elect Carter in the enactment of Democratic administration.

Senator Byrd
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