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UNIONISTS OPPOSE CHOICE OF FRIDAY

3 in Arkansas Call Lawyer
Spokesman for Aristocrats

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LITTLE ROCK, Ark., Oct. 20

—The top three labor officials of Arkansas have attacked President Nixon's consideration of Herschel H. Friday, a Little Rock corporation lawyer, for appointment to the Supreme Court.

The three, representing most of organized labor in the state, called Mr. Friday "an influence-peddling manipulator of public bonds and utility rates" and a consistent spokesman for "aristocrat and the privileged." In a joint statement yesterday they accused his law firm, which is probably the most powerful in Arkansas, of "union busting."

The three labor leaders are J. Bill Becker, president of the state A.F.L.-C.I.O.; Herbert Bingham, area director of the United Automobile Workers, and Odell Smith, state president of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters.

Nature of Practice Noted

The labor leaders' statement about bonds and utility rates referred to two of the main types of law practiced by Mr. Friday and his law firm, Smith, Williams, Friday, Eldredge & Clark.

The firm has long been known for representing management in labor disputes, for representing utility companies in rate cases and other litigation, for advising state political leaders and for advising investment firms — particularly Stephens, Inc., the most politically influential investment firm in Arkansas—on the buying and selling of municipal and other types of public bonds.

Mr. Friday's personal practice has been heavily involved with bonds and utilities. He is a director of the Allied Telephone Company and has represented several other major utilities.

He is also known for legal work in organizing and reorganizing corporations. He is an original director of Little Rock's newest bank, Metropolitan National, which recently won a charter over the protest of several other banks in the area.

The labor leaders accused Mr. Friday's firm, but not Mr. Friday himself, of helping to break strikes. They said the firm had flouted the law by failing to report its attempts to persuade employees not to join unions.

William J. Smith, the senior partner of Mr. Friday's firm, said the firm would have no comment on the labor leaders' charges until they had been "fairly investigated."

Mr. Friday has declined to speak with the press since last week when it became known that the Nixon Administration had sent his and five other names to the American Bar Association for investigation as potential Supreme Court nominees.

School Integration an Issue

Most criticism here has come from black leaders and from the liberal Arkansas Gazette. They regard him as a symbol of the forces that have opposed desegregation since 1958, when Mr. Friday and his firm became the lawyers for the Little Rock school board.

A black group called The Greater Little Rock Minbrity Breakfast Group issued a statement yesterday asking Mr. Friday to withdraw his name from consideration for the court. The group declared:

"We think it ironic that the man who has done more in Arkansas than any other one man to circumvent decisions of the United States Supreme Court is now proposed to be a member of that body."

Mr. Friday and his firm have represented 13 Arkansas vances in Court-ordered desegregation.

Some liberals who have known him many years insist that he was merely doing his job as a lawyer, that his advocacy said nothing about his personal convictions and that he is well qualified for the Supreme Court.

In his personal opinions, he is believed to be a racial moderate.

Some people here fault Mr. Friday for reticence on public issues. A liberal lawyer who is an old acquaintance of Mr. Friday's said yesterday, "If he has expressed himself any time, anywhere or anything, I don't know what it is."