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Ex-Chief of POW Kin Backs Nixon

Washington

President Nixon was endorsed yesterday by the outgoing head of the largest single organization of prisoner-of-war families, a group that has had significant assistance in the past from the Republican party.

A spokeswoman for the group, the National League of Families of American Prisoners and Missing in Southeast Asia, emphasized that Carole Hansen, the outgoing league board chairman, was speaking "as an individual."

Her official duties ceased as of Tuesday, when her term expired, the spokeswoman said. 17 Oct

Mrs. Hansen and two other league members held a news conference to announce their endorsement of Mr. Nixon.

Referring to the President's opponent, Senator George McGovern, Mrs. Hansen said: "I pray to God that Mr. McGovern will not become President . . . Mr. McGovern's proposals would dishonor this country . . ."

Mrs. Hansen, whose husband has been missing since June, 1967, said the Demo-



UPI Telephoto

CAROL HANSEN Harsh words for McGovern

cratic candidate's "naive faith in the willingness of North Vietnam to return our prisoners and account for the missing" was "contemptible."

The league itself, as Evelyn Grubb pointed out, did not make any endorsements during its convention here earlier this week. It was at this meeting that President Nixon made a surprise appearance "to thank the pris-

oners families for their support" not of his candidacy, he said, but of "the cause of an honorable peace."

The league would jeopardize its present tax-exempt status if it were to take a partisan stand. But in 1971, it was given advice and counsel — and the use of Republican National Committee mailing lists — in its direct-mail fund-raising campaign by the national committee.

According to a letter to board members from Joan M. Vinson, the league's national coordinator, the lists were made available secretly with a memorandum on "league solicitations," outlining procedures, by Robert Odell, then executive director of the Republican National Finance Committee and now holding the same title with the Finance Committee for the Re-Election of the President.

The league, which says that it represents the largest number of families of men listed as missing or prisoners of war, was organized in 1969. The President also made an unexpected appearance at the league's annual dinner here in September, 1971.

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