

Burch Named By Nixon

Head of FCC Gets Post at White House

By a Washington Post Staff Writer

KEY BISCAIYNE, Feb. 15

—Dean Burch, chairman of the Federal Communications Commission, will leave that job to become counselor to the President, the White House announced today.

Burch, an Arizona Republican and former chairman of the GOP National Committee, will become one of three White House aides with that title and the rank of Cabinet officer, according to the announcement.

"Dean Burch will be coming on board as a general adviser and will be involved in special projects that the President will want him to take," said press secretary Ronald Ziegler. "But he is not replacing anyone."

Specifically, Ziegler denied that Burch will take over the role of Melvin R. Laird, who left the White House recently to become a top executive of Reader's Digest.

As chairman of the seven-member regulatory commission since November, 1969, Burch has generally won high marks from congressional overseers and the communications industry, particularly for his workmanlike administrative style. He stepped up the commission's pace from one meeting a week to three and pushed through new rules which unjammed a number of controversies, from cable television to independent domestic satellite systems.

Rep. Torbert H. Macdonald (D-Mass.), chairman of the House Subcommittee on Communications, commented: "I

think the White House made a great choice. I'm not sure Burch made a great decision accepting the job."

Burch, a 46-year-old lawyer from Tucson, is closely associated with Sen. Barry M. Goldwater (R-Ariz.) and Ziegler said the President consulted with Goldwater before making the appointment. In 1964, when Goldwater was the Republican candidate for President, Burch was his choice for GOP national chairman but he was forced out of the job after Goldwater's landslide defeat. Burch, it was widely understood, was prepared to leave the FCC for private industry before the White House assignment came along.

The White House now has two seats to fill on the FCC—the chairman's and that of Commissioner H. Rex Lee, a Democrat who resigned in December. A third vacancy is to be filled by James Quello, who has been approved by the Senate Commerce Committee and is awaiting confirmation.

A long list of candidates has already developed for Lee's place. Ziegler said an announcement will be made "in a week or so."

Broadcast industry sources said that, while the White House has not yet launched a wide search for a new FCC chairman, it is understood that the administration feels "a technical type, an engineer, preferably from the Southwest" would be favored. "They have got enough lawyers on the board already," the source said.

During Burch's tenure, he had some large and small wrangles with critics over the commission's diverse regulatory chores. He was criticized when the FCC decided it didn't have the resources to pursue a full-scale investigation of long-distance phone rates. He was attacked by fellow commissioner Nicholas Johnson for the compromise settlement he arranged for development of cable television.