

Fund Raiser Quits Group Of Rightists

By CHRISTOPHER LYDON
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WASHINGTON, Oct. 5—In the 16 years since Charles A. McManus founded Americans for Constitutional Action, the organization has helped raise millions of dollars for conservative Republican candidates and has compiled the definitive conservative ratings on House and Senate voting records. But Mr. McManus quit the A.C.A. last week—in “total and complete frustration,” he said, with the organization’s imitators in conservative politics, particularly in the fund-raising business.

“They’re splitting up the pot, and there aren’t that many contributors,” he complained. “United we stand, divided we’ll fall.”

The particular target of Mr. McManus’s protest is Richard A. Viguerie, who has been working with some success to unite conservative fund raising under his own direct-mail corporation here. At last count the Richard A. Viguerie Company, Inc., was managing mail solicitations for the Conservative Caucus, the Committee for the Survival of a Free Congress, the National Conservative Political Action Committee, and the Conservative Congressional Committee—as well as for Alabama Gov. George C. Wallace’s Presidential campaign and for The Conservative Digest, a monthly that Mr. Viguerie publishes.

The problem, as Mr. McManus sees it, is that the Viguerie company’s costs absorb most of the money raised by its appeals and, further, that conservative contributors are getting jaded from over-mailing.

Americans for Constitutional Action raised a record \$450,000 for conservative candidates in 1974, most through receptions, Mr. McManus said last week. But its direct mail fund raising for its research and logistical support work is down by half to less than \$100,000 this year—too little, he believes, to support the services that the organization has traditionally offered.

Don Fowler, the Democratic chairman in South Carolina has been speaking out since he became head of the Democratic State Chairmen’s Association—too much so for many fellow members of the Democratic National Committee.

The main bout at the national committee’s meeting here next week will be over a Fowler resolution to let state party organizations name a quarter of their national convention delegates without reference to Presidential preference in their states. The resolution would repeal a rule requiring that at-large delegates reflect the proportional division of support recorded in each state’s Presidential primary or caucuses.

“It makes a lot of sense,” according to one senior party official, “if you like bossism, if you want a brokered convention, and if you think it’s worth the fight to take some delegates from George Wallace in states like South Carolina, Georgia and Florida.”

The strategic question for the last fortnight has been the position of Robert S. Strauss, the Democratic national chairman, on the Fowler resolution.

Senators George McGovern, Democrat of South Dakota, and Barry Goldwater, Republican of Arizona, will work as convention commentators next summer for the American Broadcasting Company. Mr. Goldwater will interpret the Democratic happening in New York; Mr. McGovern will try to explain the Republican goings-on in Kansas City.

The network’s intention, according to an ABC official, was to get each party’s last nominee to tap his memory for anecdotes and insight into what really happens at a convention and how it feels for the principals — reversing parties to let the commentators speak more freely.

But former President Richard M. Nixon, the Republican nominee in 1972 who went on to crush Mr. McGovern, was assumed to be unavailable and never got an approach.

Bob Moretti, like Jesse M. Unruh, is a former Speaker of the California Assembly and a defeated candidate for the California Governor’s office who pines for the excitement and power of big-time politics. And, like Mr. Unruh, who was recently named California chairman of Senator Henry M. Jackson’s campaign for the Democratic Presidential nomination, Mr. Moretti is hoping to find solace in national politicking. He will be named shortly as the California campaign manager for Senator Birch Bayh of Indiana—the only Democrat, he says, “who’s acceptable to all elements of the party and not offensive to any.”