

Lumbee To Unseat McKeldin On Commission For Indians

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[Washington Bureau of The Sun]

Washington, April 11 — President Nixon nominated a replacement for former Maryland Gov. Theodore R. McKeldin on the Federal Indian Claims Commission today.

The new commissioner is to be Brantley Blue, a member of the Lumbee Indian tribe, which is concentrated mostly in North Carolina and Maryland. Mr. Blue, 43, is an attorney in Kingsport, Tenn., and a Republican.

Although the nomination ends Mr. McKeldin's tenure in the \$36,000-a-year post, the White House has assured Senator Charles McC. Mathias, Jr. (R., Md.), that the former Governor and mayor of Baltimore will be under "active consideration" for another federal appointment.

Action Laid To Pledge

Mr. Mathias, who has been Mr. McKeldin's chief advocate in White House circles, said today that he was not being replaced because of the opposition to his appointment by Senator Barry M. Goldwater (R., Arizona), or Senate majority leader Everett McKinley Dirksen.

Mr. Mathias pointed out that during the campaign President Nixon had pledged to appoint an Indian to the Claims Commission at his earliest opportunity.

The opposition to Mr. McKeldin had stemmed from his opposition to Mr. Goldwater's presidential aspirations in 1964, and by the fact that President Johnson had appointed him to the Indian post.

In response to Mr. Dirksen's allegation that Mr. McKeldin was "a Johnson Republican," Mr. Mathias said recently that "people just don't realize what it meant to be a McKeldin Republican in this state," referring to the overwhelming McKeldin gubernatorial and mayoral victories in predominately Democratic Maryland.

Earlier this week Mr. Mathias had arranged an interview for the beleaguered commissioner with a key White House aide.

But even this "last-ditch" effort to protect the McKeldin appointment was unsuccessful.

State Post To Be Offered

Governor Mandel is known to have been waiting for the out-

come of Mr. McKeldin's federal career problems, in order to offer the popular former official the chief post on the newly strengthened state Human Relations Commission.

At Mr. Mandel's request, Mr. McKeldin represented the state of Maryland at the funeral of former President Dwight D. Eisenhower. Mr. McKeldin had placed the general's name in nomination at the 1952 national Republican convention.

Admittedly disappointed, Mr. McKeldin said tonight that "certainly I would have preferred to stay, but I understand, if he made the promise, this is what he had to do."

Pointing out that he had supported Mr. Nixon's vice presidential and presidential campaigns in the past "actively and enthusiastically," he said that "I would be delighted to pursue the possibility of another administration position."

However, he did not dismiss the possibility that he might accept Mr. Mandel's offer. "I have just asked him to wait and see how all this comes out."



THEODORE R. McKELDIN