

Nixon Depressed Over Finances

By Jack Anderson
and Les Whitten

Richard M. Nixon, living in lonely splendor in his California seacoast estate, isn't exactly a poverty case.

He has drawn hundreds of thousands of dollars from the taxpayers to help ease the shock of being reduced to civilian status. He collects a \$60,000 annual presidential pension. He is attended by aides, at an additional cost to the taxpayers of \$96,000 a year.

Yet the former President is deeply depressed over his finances. Close friends say he isn't taking in enough cash to meet his obligations. They claim his personal bank account is down to \$500, and he has only \$2,800 left to operate the San Clemente estate until July 1.

Even minor expenditures, such as an eastern trip his wife is planning to take next month, now cause a family budget problem, a friend told us.

Nixon paid off his back taxes with a \$284,740 check, which cleaned out his cash reserves, intimates say. He can't afford to pay an additional \$148,000 tax debt, which is no longer collectible but which he had promised to pay, they report.

He neglected to take out health insurance before he left the White House. He was stuck, therefore, with a \$23,000 hospital bill for his phlebitis treatment. He recently paid off part of the bill with an \$11,000 check, which left only \$500 in his personal bank account.

He had to re-juggle his San Clemente mortgage to reduce the payment schedule. He is left with little more than an acre in his own name, according to a friend. Nixon became so desolate that he asked his Florida

crony, Bebe Rebozo, to sell Key Biscayne houses just to pay off the mortgages.

Instead, Rebozo is leading an effort to raise \$500,000 from the public to purchase the two bay-side homes as a nonprofit center for international study. This would leave Nixon a comfortable profit, since he purchased the homes in late 1968 for only \$125,527 and \$127,800 respectively.

On paper, of course, he is not a poor man. But he lacks the income to sustain his lifestyle. He is desperately looking for ways to increase his cash flow. He hopes to make a substantial sum, for example, for his memoirs. But a \$145,000 advance payment has already gone for research and salaries, said a friend.

Increasingly, the former President is counting upon his hardcore supporters to bail him out of his financial difficulties. Address cards have been prepared on 300,000 people who have written sympathetic letters to him.

These cards have been turned over to the Nixon Historical Association, which Rebozo formed to buy the Key Biscayne homes, and to the President Nixon Justice Fund, which Rabbi Baruch Korff formed to raise legal expenses. Direct-mail appeals have been going out to the 300,000 names.

The mail that continues to pour into San Clemente, meanwhile, is processed by some 70 volunteers working in shifts of about a dozen at a time.

Of the \$100,000 that Congress earmarked for Nixon's transition, interestingly enough, he spent an astonishing \$59,721 for stationery. He purchased a huge supply of paper, according to

one insider, for the mass fund appeals.

Rabbi Korff acknowledged to us that he sends out 5,000 direct-mail appeals each month but denied using stationery supplied by the taxpayers. All expenses for the mailings, including the envelopes and postage, is paid by the U.S. Citizens Congress, he said. This is another nonprofit, patriotic group which he heads.

The rabbi said he has promised to raise \$1 million for Nixon. Of this, \$400,000 has been committed to pay his legal expenses, and the remaining \$600,000 will be turned over to Nixon to supplement his government allocation.

In touching language, the rabbi described the financial plight of the former President. "He broods about finances all the time," said Rabbi Korff. "Oh, does he worry. It saddens me terribly just to listen to him. He is a very troubled man."

Another close friend confirmed that Nixon is haunted by the memory of his childhood

poverty. When he was a boy, his mother used to get up before dawn to bake pies for sale. She scrubbed, cooked and tended furnace so she could stay at a nursing home with an ill son.

Young Richard used to take his turn preparing meals of canned chili, spaghetti, pork and beans and other relatively cheap foods. "There were many mornings," he has said, "when I ate nothing for breakfast but a candy bar."

This experience has driven Nixon harder than most men to seek an affluent life for his family, the friend says.

Medal of Freedom—The Academy of American Poets has proposed Katherine Garrison Chapin, widow of the late Attorney General Francis Biddle, for the presidential medal of freedom. She would be the first woman poet to receive this recognition.

Her nomination has been endorsed by many distinguished poets, including Robert Lowell, Archibald MacLeish, William Jay Smith and Allen Tate.

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