

That Nixon is a fast man for a fast buck does not make him unique. What does is that he was a faster man for a faster buck once he became President. His past, as we have seen, is that of a man whose pursuit of money was not jeopardized by concern for the political consequences. More than any other single factor, it seems to have cost him the 1962 California governor's race. Once he became President, there was no inhibition. Nothing was too petty for him to profit financially from it. Nor too large.

Taxpayers'

Millions were poured into his personal indulgences and personal property and at a time when he boasted his efforts at economy. One of these so-called economy moves was the closing of existing government hospitals that served those who otherwise could not afford hospitalization. When Congress resisted this "economy" he vetoed its effort.

But when he was taken ill, it was quite different. He by then was an acknowledged millionaire. His direct income ~~was~~ in tax money, which does not include the incalculable side benefits that cost immeasurably more, was a quarter of a million dollars a year. He had figured out dodges whereby he actually paid no more ^{taxes} on this fabulous direct income than the average family of four with an income of only \$15,000 a year.

In the summer of 1973 he had viral pneumonia. He went to the Bethesda Naval Hospital, where he had an entire elaborate suite. The presence of any resident in a hospital imposes enormous burdens and costs. He could, of course, have afforded to go to any civilian hospital. There, however, he would have had to pay going rates, and suites are costly. So are the other free services provided by the limitless supply of military personnel.

While he was closing hospitals for the poor and ending medical services and killing appropriations for those in urgent need, he managed to dump the entire cost of his illness on the taxpayers. Except for a measly \$1.75 a day.

In reporting this in a tiny squib on July 18, 1973, United Press International noted that "enlisted men are charged nothing."

They also are not paid a quarter of a million dollars a year plus.

Perhaps other presidents enjoyed the same privileges. But other presidents did not go around slashing the medical services available to the poor and proclaim it to be in the interest of the over-burdened taxpayer.