

12-20-68

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THE TIMES-PICAYUNE, NEW ORLEANS, LA., F

Nixon Lawyers Probe Cabinet *Mec*

Guard Against Conflicts of Interest

By WALTER R. MEARS

NEW YORK (AP) — President-elect Nixon's staff lawyers are looking closely into the financial holdings of his prospective Cabinet members to guard against any conflicts of interest.

John D. Ehrlichman, Nixon's White House counsel, is in charge of the inquiry, which

covers the 12 appointees and staff aids to the president-elect. The arrangements made must be such as to eliminate the fact or appearance of:

- "1. Using public office for private gain.
- "2. Giving preferential treatment to any organization or person.
- "3. Impeding government efficiency or economy.
- "4. Losing complete independence or impartiality of action.
- "5. Making a government decision outside official channels or
- "6. Affecting adversely the confidence of the public in the integrity of the government."

The Ehrlichman instructions note that the principle of federal law and executive orders is that "a public official must not be in a position of acting for the government where his private interests are involved."

The booklet makes no attempt

to recommend specific arrangements for the handling of financial interests of Nixon appointees. In some cases, it says, a trust arrangement with the appointee having no control over his holdings could be satisfactory.

But it adds that men named "to some of the more important and sensitive positions, especially in the Department of Defense," may have to go farther. Some possible arrangements the document says, include a trust that would be outside the knowledge as well as the control of the appointee, or provision that the trustee will not invest the funds in interests related to the work of the agency involved.

The booklet also notes that there is the possibility an appointee might divest himself of such financial holdings over a reasonable period of time.

"Where a conflict of interest appears, a legally binding arrangement must be established which will eliminate the conflict," it says.

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