

Nixon Gift Said to End Tax Issue

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Vice President Ford said yesterday that President Nixon's promise to give his San Clemente home to the American people should "wipe out" any remaining issue over whether he has paid sufficient income taxes while in office.

Ford said he expected Americans to "feel much better" after Mr. Nixon's weekend financial disclosures although many might continue to wonder "whether he shouldn't have paid a larger tax."

He said the President's agreement to let a joint congressional committee decide whether he should pay more taxes also should "ease the questions" in the minds of some persons.

But even if there was something improper about Mr. Nixon's tax deductions, Ford said, the donation of San Clemente involves "a substantial piece of property that in any event would wipe out any alleged—and I say alleged—impropriety."

Mr. Nixon said Saturday he is initiating legal steps to donate the California home

to the federal government after his death and the death of Mrs. Nixon. He released documents showing that he paid only \$78,651 in federal income taxes for the years 1969 through 1972, partly because of a disputed \$576,000 deduction for donating his vice presidential papers to the government.

Ford said in an interview on "Issues and Answers" (ABC, WMAL) that he expects confidence in President Nixon to increase as the result of Middle East negotiations, which could benefit world peace and the U.S. economy while easing the energy shortage.

He said the President is hoping that aides Melvin R. Laird and Bryce N. Harlow will delay their announced departures to see the administration through the preparation of a new national budget and the 1974 legislative program.

Asked when he would flatly rule out running for President in 1976, Ford said, "I'll try to make it more emphatic as we go along."

In an interview with U.S. News & World Report, Ford said he would not handle the vice presidency the same way as his predecessor, Spiro T. Agnew. "Our style is different," he said. "I don't think I could have as many friends on Capitol Hill as I do, on both sides of the aisle, if I had been contentious or abrasive."