

NESSEN SAYS RACE BY FORD IS SURE

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Tells Reporters President's Decision to Run in 1976 Is Unrelated to Economy
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WASHINGTON, Feb. 5 — President Ford plans to seek election to a full term next year regardless of the nation's economic conditions at that time, his spokesman said today.

Ron Nessen, the White House press secretary, told reporters that the President "does expect the economy to be better than it is now" next year but that his decision to seek election "is unrelated to the state of the economy."

Mr. Nessen volunteered his remarks at his daily news briefing to counteract what he said had been the impression that "has gotten around" that if the economy is good Mr. Ford will run but that if the economy worsens he will not seek election. "That is not true," Mr. Nessen said.

The press secretary's remarks went beyond those of Mr. Ford, who said at a news conference in Atlanta yesterday that he thought that "economic circumstances will be good enough to justify at least my seeking reelection" in 1976.

Meetings Continue

Mr. Nessen made his remarks as the President continued a series of meetings to rally support in Congress and elsewhere for his economic and energy proposals.

At the same time, Administration officials disclosed that John T. Dunlop, a professor of economics at Harvard University who headed the former Cost of Living Council under President Nixon, was expected to be nominated soon as Secretary of Labor, succeeding Peter J. Brennan.

Mr. Brennan, the former president of the Building and Construction Trades Council in New York City and New York State, has been Secretary of Labor since 1972. He has reportedly been offered the post of Ambassador to Ireland, but associates said he had indicated a desire to return to New York.

The 60-year-old Mr. Dunlop indicated recently that he was reluctant to give up his post at Harvard unless he received assurances that as Secretary of Labor he would have an active involvement in the setting of economic policy.

180 Representatives

Mr. Ford, who returned late yesterday from a two-day trip to Atlanta, met last night with 95 Republican members of the House of Representatives and had breakfast this morning with about 85 Democratic Representatives to discuss his energy and economic policies.

Mr. Nessen said the President believed "he's won support through this series of meetings." He said Mr. Ford would go to Houston next Monday and to Topeka, Kan., Tuesday to meet with Governors in those areas to explain his programs and to encourage community leaders and the public to urge their members of Congress "to get to work."

Mr. Nessen said there was a "possibility" that Mr. Ford would hold a news conference in Topeka on Tuesday.

Despite a projection in Mr. Ford's budget earlier this week that unemployment would hover at about 8 per cent of the labor force for the rest of this year and next year, Mr. Nessen said that the President expected a decline in the rate of inflation and unemployment next year.

Points for Honesty

He said the budget has reflected the present calculations of economists and said he had remarked to a friend recently.

"How many points do we get for honesty?"

But Mr. Nessen stressed that the economic projections had no relation to Mr. Ford's election plans. Asked if he knew of any circumstances under which the President would not run, he replied.

"I don't know of any."

Asked if Mr. Ford would run regardless of what the economy did, he said.

"That's exactly right."