

Ford Campaign Officials, Who Questioned Laird and Burch

By CHRISTOPHER LYDON
WASHINGTON, Oct. 19 —

The "board of directors" of President Ford's campaign, a planning group that has been in disuse since August, will meet here tomorrow night.

"It's about time," in the view of

Campaign Notes those Republicans who worry that Howard Callaway is providing too

little strategic direction as full-time campaign manager. But for better or worse, tomorrow's meeting, at Mr. Callaway's invitation, is probably the board's last.

The practical contributions expected of the board members appear to have boiled down to questions about Melvin R. Laird's capacity for trial-balloon mischief and about the ability of the board chairman, Dean Burch, to keep his mentor and friend, Senator Barry Goldwater of Arizona, from straying into the opposing Republican camp of Ronald Reagan, the conservative former Governor of California.

Mr. Laird's most recent activity has not been considered constructive. Word around town has been that he is disenchanted with Mr. Callaway's leadership. Asked about that last week, the former Wisconsin Representative and Defense Secretary said he had "recommended" Mr. Callaway to President Ford, but only to manage the campaign in the South. Mr. Laird's first choice to be national campaign manager was Rogers C. B. Morton, the Secretary of Commerce.

The No. 2 job at the President Ford Committee, which has been vacant since Lee Nunn of Kentucky quit in disgust two weeks ago, will be vacant a while longer.

Lamar Alexander, who was defeated last year in the Tennessee Governor's race, was asked by Mr. Ford at the White House last week to take the organizational post. Today, Mr. Alexander cited family reasons for turning it down, but the Nashville lawyer has been keeping a close eye on the investigation of campaign practices of Gov. Ray Blanton, the Democrat who beat him in 1974. And he was not eager to leave Tennessee as long as there was a chance that further embarrassment to Mr. Blanton might lead to a special election for the Governor's office—in which case Mr. Alexander wants to run again.

Democratic Presidential candidates, nervous about manifest support within the party for Senator Hubert H. Humphrey, have been banking on two factors to keep the 64-year-old Minnesotan a noncandidate. One is a \$900,000 debt from the Humphrey campaign of 1972; the other is the Senator's oft-stated resolution not to run in the 1976 primaries. On both counts Mr. Humphrey's situation appears to be changing.

John J. Hooker of Tennessee, board chairman of the STP Corporation, is taking

charge of an effort to raise \$60,000, which he is told will be enough to settle the unpaid loans from 1972. "It's the easiest money I've ever raised in my life," Mr. Hooker commented last week, nearly halfway to his goal.

The discounting of loan notes (including \$100,000 worth in the hands of Joseph E. Cole) converts the "loans" far from legal liabilities.

apply to debts, creditor to take care of them.

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Activities, Meet Today, Probably for Last Time