

G.O.P. Considers Miami Beach

By WILLIAM M. BLAIR
Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, April 20—After failing to solve problems in San Diego, Republicans dispatched their chief national convention planner today to confer with Miami Beach officials.

Richard L. Herman, vice chairman of the party's Arrangements Committee, flew to Miami Beach after inconclusive talks with the owner of the San Diego Sports Arena about getting the building ready in time for the Republican National Convention on Aug. 21.

Meanwhile, it was learned that Republican convention officials had been sounding out Miami Beach officials since last week.

Senator Robert J. Dole of Kansas, chairman of the Republican National Committee and chairman of the Committee on Convention Arrangements, disclosed late today that Mr. Herman had been authorized to confer with Miami Beach officials.

Mr. Dole said in a statement that no decision had been made on moving the convention site from San Diego but "the possibility of Miami Beach is being reviewed so that we may be prepared for any eventuality."

Cost Called Prohibitive

The Republicans have been plagued by troubles in San Diego since it was selected as the convention site, reportedly with the blessing of President Nixon, last fall. The troubles include not only difficulties with the Sports Arena and rising costs but also a shortage of hotel rooms and the problem of San Diego meeting its cash pledge.

One informed Republican said today that the cost at San Diego was becoming "prohibitive." He said that the owner of the Sports Arena, Peter Graham, was being "outlandish" in his demands for renovation of the hall.

Billy Graham Pleased By Caliber of Leaders

SPRINGFIELD, Ill., April 20 (UPI)—American political leaders today are of a higher caliber morally and religiously than in any other time in recent history, the Rev. Billy Graham says.

Mr. Graham, here for a Governor's prayer breakfast today, met with Gov. Richard B. Ogilvie who introduced the evangelist to newsmen.

"I would say judging from the men I have met during my travels around the country that we have a rather high caliber of leaders as compared to those during the beginning of my ministry," the Baptist minister said.

"They seem to have more of an interest in religious things—openly—than in any other time in recent history," he said.

Mr. Graham has events scheduled for the arena up to four weeks before the opening of the convention. This, according to the Republicans, leaves insufficient time to make the necessary changes without paying large sums in overtime to workmen.

Some Republican sources said that the cost of getting ready for the convention now appeared to be close to \$2-million. This compares with \$800,000 for the 1968 convention held in Miami Beach where the Democrats will open their national nominating convention on July 10.

Mr. Graham was also insisting, party sources said, that special features added to the arena for the convention should be made permanent installations.

The first call to Miami Beach officials was said to have been made April 13 from San Diego by an undisclosed

Republican official. According to Miami Beach officials, the Republicans who called described the situation in San Diego as "untenable."

Miami Beach at first felt that the approach by the Republicans was part of a move to put leverage on San Diego. However, later calls to the City Commission, Mayor Chuck Hall and City Manager Clifford O'Key carried word that the Republicans were in earnest, and Mr. Herman flew to Florida.

G.O.P. in Earnest

Miami Beach was one of the first cities to offer its facilities to both conventions. The Democrats accepted, but the Republicans turned to San Diego.

Yesterday, Mr. Herman issued a statement saying that there were "major problems in San Diego." It is unlikely, he said, that all can be solved completely, but the party is proceeding with plans to hold the convention there.

However, the statement added, "It is my obligation to attempt to prepare for any eventuality and to be aware of alternatives."

Mr. Herman cited as the "critical problem" the modification of the Sports Arena. "Our architect and contractor informs us that all of the modifications cannot be completed in time unless work can begin sooner than the arena owner presently will permit," he said.

He also said that the San Diego Civic Host Committee "has been having some difficulty in meeting commitments made in its bid to us," including 14,000 to 14,500 hotel rooms. The convention committee has only 11,200 rooms available at this time, he said.

The Republican Arrangements Committee has received \$100,000 of the \$600,000 pledged in cash by the San Diego community, he said. The schedule called for payment of \$200,000 on Aug. 1, 1971, and on Jan. 1 and April 1, 1972.

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San Diego, "GOP
Won't Shift From
San Diego."